

Patronage and the Building Arts in Tokugawa Japan

©Lee Butler

University of Michigan

In modern parlance, the term *daiku* 大工, like its English counterpart, “carpenter,” refers to one who builds houses. It is a generic term, suggesting most commonly, however, someone who is involved in the basic construction, as opposed to a specialist who is called in to lay the floor, install the roof, or complete a similarly narrow task. Neither term, *daiku* or carpenter, connotes a level of ability or quality of work; *daiku* can be skilled or unskilled. However, both *daiku* and carpenters deal primarily with rough work, where tolerances of as much as a centimeter can be acceptable and where structural integrity means more than appearance. Finish carpenters, as the name implies, deal with façade rather than structure, something that is reflected in their greater concern with detail. Nonetheless, they still work at a level that is less precise and less refined than that of a furniture maker or *shōji* 障子 maker.¹

This present usage of *daiku* differs significantly from that of the late sixteenth century, at the beginning of the building boom of the early modern era. In fact, the terminology for many craftsmen in the building arts developed and changed considerably between the sixteenth and late-nineteenth centuries. An examination of those changes reveals much about the building arts, the lives of the individuals engaged in them, and the role of patronage in architecture and its construction, the subject of this paper. To some degree, we can trace the fate of Tokugawa period (1600-1868) *daiku* through analyzing the changes in the titles by which they were referred.

In the ancient and medieval eras, *daiku* referred to the leaders of groups of craftsmen. The term, meaning “principal craftsman,” was

not limited to those who worked in wood, but included thatchers, plasterers, shinglers, and so on. Individuals of lesser ability or status, or who were subordinate to the *daiku*, were *shōku* 少工, 小工 or “minor craftsmen.”² In the warring states era (1467-1568), *daiku* came to refer only to carpenters — those who worked with wood — apparently because of the fundamental nature of their work, and because they generally oversaw the whole construction process; their head usually functioned as a “general contractor.” By the late sixteenth century, the head *daiku* of a project was distinguished from his woodworking subordinates by the term *tōryō* 棟梁 (master builder), or literally the “beams and girders” or “ridgepole” of the group.³

The following three-quarters of a century was a period of remarkable prosperity for those in the building arts, and by the end of it changes in terminology had begun to appear. The feudal lords of the reunification and early Tokugawa eras were rich and powerful, and they desired to express those attributes through physical symbols.⁴ This meant that master builders enjoyed nearly unequivocal support for the projects they directed. This was patronage as traditionally practiced, though its breadth and intensity — as witnessed in the dizzying pace of construction throughout the land — was new. For common *daiku*, this was a time of profitable and steady work; indeed the large undertakings required vast numbers of workers, more than had been trained in the relevant crafts. A few of the many craftsmen were fortunate enough to be patronized by powerful lords and they saw their

² Nishi Kazuo, *Edo jidai no daikutachi* (Kyoto: Gakugei Shuppansha, 1980), pp. 191-93.

³ Coaldrake, *Way of the Carpenter*, pp. 14-15; *Daikō* 大工 entry in *Kokushi daijiten* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1979-97), vol. 8, p. 730.

⁴ In English, the political uses of monumental architecture are examined in William Coaldrake, *Architecture and Authority in Japan* (London: Routledge, 1996). See particularly the chapters on “Castles,” “Tokugawa Mausolea,” and “Shōgun and Daimyo Gateways.”

¹ William Coaldrake discusses the craft of carpentry in Japan in *The Way of the Carpenter* (New York: Weatherhill, 1990). He puts particular emphasis on practices of the early modern era and the historical development of tools.

stars rise dramatically.⁵ The privileged and personal ties they enjoyed assured their descendants of continued patronage throughout the Tokugawa era. That patronage came, however, with reduced levels of support and in the form of bureaucratic offices and titles rather than as mandates to create impressive edifices. A document dated to 1859, *Osakujikata yakuyaku tsutomekata* 御作事方役々勤方, reveals that much had changed for craftsmen working in the Tokugawa Bakufu.⁶ No longer was the master builder the *tōryō*; instead he was the *daikugashira* 大工頭. Working with him was the *shimobugyō* 下奉行 an official who oversaw finances and dealt with officials from other branches of government. Beneath these two were officials who worked, respectively, on physically constructing buildings or managing funds and keeping records. In all, there were eleven such lesser officers subordinate to the *daikugashira* and *shimobugyō*. Among the carpentry officers were the *daitōryō* 大棟梁 or “great ridgepole,” the *daiku tōryō* 大工棟梁 or “head carpenter,” and the *ōnokogiri daiku* 大鋸大工 or “head sawyer.” All three titles were new. A “great ridgepole” (*daitōryō*) was necessary because subordinate to him were lesser “ridgepoles” who headed their respective crafts of carpentry, lumber sawing, shingling, and plastering. The reality was that these distinguished titles came with limited authority. Whereas prior to the seventeenth century the term *tōryō* had reflected the influence and abilities of a handful of master builders who personally associated with powerful lords, after 1650 it was a middling bureaucratic post. The loftier titles of *daitōryō* and *daikugashira* were only incrementally better; none offered its holder the opportunities or influence enjoyed by *tōryō* predecessors of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

With the ending of the era of monumental construction by 1650, most carpenters and related craftsmen had no choice but to look beyond the warrior lords for their livelihood. Even some

close associates of master builders found themselves outside the reach of patronage. And so they sought work elsewhere and found it in the economic marketplace. They benefited greatly from an expanding economy that put surplus funds into the hands of those who previously had none, including newly affluent warriors and commoners. Having acquired a modicum (or more) of riches, these individuals sought to better their lives as the upper reaches of society did. To the benefit of craftsmen, well-crafted homes appeared early on the list of necessities for this group. In the process, architectural styles and details that had been produced for and restricted to the elite came to be adopted by lower classes. Thus, even though the rate of new construction commissioned by the Tokugawa and other lords slowed significantly by the mid-seventeenth century, the building boom continued. This was reflected in a new set of titles for carpenters and related craftsmen who, in order to meet the demands for well-crafted homes and other structures, became increasingly specialized in their work. The first to appear were “temple carpenters” (*miya daiku* 宮大工), whose primary work was in constructing temples and shrines, many of them in villages that previously had none. They were thus distinguished from “residential carpenters” (*ie daiku* 家大工 or *yagata daiku* 屋形大工), and woodworkers such as cabinet makers (*sashiminoishi* 指物師) and door and window makers (*tategushi* 建具師). From the middle of the Tokugawa period, further specialization among workers in wood occurred, as seen in the appearance of “ship carpenters” (*fune daiku* 舟大工), water-wheel carpenters (*suisha daiku* 水車大工), and loom carpenters (*hata daiku* 機大工). Finally, to distinguish carpenters who worked for commoners from those patronized by military lords, the terms *machi daiku* 町大工 and *goyō daiku* 御用大工 were used.⁷ Clearly much had changed in the world of carpentry between 1600 and 1850. Not only had carpenters and their associates become more specialized in their work, but the narrow bounds of patronage had been

⁵ Nishi Kazuo discusses several of these important individuals in Nishi, pp. 29-56.

⁶ This document is quoted and analyzed in Nishi, pp. 73-82.

⁷ See entry for *daiku* in *Kokushi daijiten*, vol. 8, pp. 721-22.

eclipsed, or at least breached, well before the end of the Tokugawa era.

Master Builders: Feast and Famine

In Japan's medieval era (12th-16th centuries), most skilled carpenters produced structures and carried out repairs for temples and shrines. Nearly all such individuals acquired their positions hereditarily, as of course did those who served the imperial court generation after generation. The upheaval of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries left many *daiku* in difficult straits, as patrons were unable to afford the expenses of rebuilding structures destroyed by war or fire. But with the move toward stability late in the sixteenth century, powerful warriors emerged as new patrons, and within several decades the old patrons of the Kyoto court and priesthood once again had the means to fund extensive building projects. The demand for *daiku*, from master builders to moderately skilled workers, rose dramatically, offering opportunities to men of varying backgrounds. Indeed, it was during the six decades from 1560 to 1620 that all important hereditary *daiku* families of the early modern era were established. Though some could trace a family head back to medieval times, all flourished, most under new patrons, during the reunification era at the beginning of the early modern period.

The *daiku* of influence were craftsmen of the highest order, who served both as architects and construction managers and worked within the traditional bounds of patronage. Their patrons were men who understood that system and expected to see building projects begun at their pleasure and on their time schedules. In exchange, the *daiku* received employment, protection against competition, and benefits such as tax exemptions. In many respects the ties between powerful warriors and the master builders they employed were feudal ties; in several cases, the *daiku* even served their warrior lords as fighting men in addition to working as builders. For example, Okabe Mochitoki 岡部以言 (-1582), the master builder for Azuchi Castle (completed in 1579), served Oda Nobunaga as a warrior more than two decades previous to that time. He dis-

tinguished himself at the Battle of Okehazama 桶狭間の戦い in 1560, probably one reason he became Nobunaga's chief architect and builder. Mochitoki's close relationship to Nobunaga kept him frequently at the lord's side, resulting ultimately in his death, along with Nobunaga's, at Honnōji Temple 本能寺 in 1582.⁸

Another *daiku* who combined military arts and building arts was Nakai Masakiyo (1565-1619), the most significant master builder of the era.⁹ Masakiyo appears as a vassal of Tokugawa Ieyasu in 1588, age twenty-four, a recipient of a 200-*koku* stipend of rice, but his first building activities were not recorded until 1602 when he was put in charge of erecting a small outbuilding, possibly a tea house, at Fushimi Castle.¹⁰ The important position Masakiyo held under Ieyasu is seen in the events surrounding the 1614 "Bell Controversy" of the Great Buddha Hall of Hōkōji 方広寺 (which some say led to the attack on Toyotomi Hideyori in Osaka Castle). Besides condemning the Toyotomi for including phrases in the bell inscription that were disrespectful of the Tokugawa, Ieyasu also denounced them for failing to include the name of the master builder, Nakai Masakiyo, on the ridgepole register. Masakiyo was hardly an innocent bystander in this affair: that same year Ieyasu sent him to call at Osaka Castle, with instructions that he prepare drawings of the interior after his return. In addition, Masakiyo himself joined the winter campaign against Osaka Castle, providing muskets and thirty men on horseback. As the fighting progressed, Masakiyo led carpenters in the construction of barracks and other temporary buildings and had blacksmiths forge spears for the Bakufu armies.¹¹ Another influential *daiku* of this era was Kōra Munehiro 甲良宗広. Originally from Ōmi, Munehiro formed ties with Tokugawa

⁸ Nishi, p. 32.

⁹ See references to Nakai Masakiyo in Karen Gerhart, *The Eyes of Power: Art and Early Tokugawa Authority* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999), pp. 79, 101.

¹⁰ *Nakai-ke monjo no kenkyū, Takumiryōbon zumen hen* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 1976), vol. 1, pp. 4-6.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

Ieyasu and from 1596 resided in Fushimi. There he fulfilled Ieyasu's local building needs. Later he built a large gate at the Konoë chancellor's residence in Kyoto, carving one of the two doors himself, for which he was rewarded with the lower sixth rank at the imperial court. Munehiro also contributed work on Tōshōgū Shrine 東照宮 at Nikkō.¹²

Leading builders like Okabe Mochitoki, Nakai Masakiyo, and Kōra Munehiro were relatively few in number, primarily because their power and influence was a result of the close personal ties they enjoyed with the greatest military lords. The title by which they were known, *tōryō* 棟梁, was an appropriate one, drawn from their work: *tō* or *mune* is a building's ridgepole, and *ryō* or *hari* are its beams or girders. Together they represented the structure that supported the roof and sheltered the building's inhabitants. In terms of the practical work they did, these master builders were known for their breadth of ability and skill. They were not only master builders, but also architects. Writing in 1610, the *daiku* Heinouchi Yoshimasa 平内吉政 noted that a skilled builder was expected to be proficient in five areas: laying out plan lines with a square, making computations based upon plans, doing hand work (sawing, chiseling, jointing), drawing up designs to be carved, and doing the carving.¹³ For *daiku*, these were the skills that offered one the possibility of establishing ties of patronage, the only means to exert significant influence within one's craft.

An examination of the Nakai family reveals the importance of the personal ties of patronage they forged with the Tokugawa, ties that allowed them to maintain positions of influence and prosperity for the whole of the period. As noted, the tie between the Tokugawa and the Nakai was in some ways a feudal one between lord and vassal. Masakiyo, who served Tokugawa Ieyasu, was descended from low-level officials associated with a Shinto shrine in Yamato province. Masakiyo's father had been adopted into a family of artisans, where he learned carpentry, though he

had also fought occasionally for a local military house. Masakiyo learned the same arts of war and architecture as his father, and in 1588 became a vassal of Ieyasu. Though the feudal tie between the two men was significant, there is little question that Masakiyo became Ieyasu's head of construction because of his skill. Considering the numerous construction projects undertaken by the Bakufu in its first decades, Masakiyo was a busy man. As head of construction, he was responsible for surveying land, drawing plans, overseeing construction expenses, dispersing payments, and directing each project in a broad sense. Among the projects he directed either in whole or in part were Nijō castle, Fushimi castle, Chion'in 知恩院, Edo Castle, Zōjōji 増上寺, Sunpu castle, Nagoya castle, the imperial palace, the retired emperor's palace, the empress's palace, and mausoleums for Ieyasu at Kunōzan and Nikkō.¹⁴

The exceptional stature that Masakiyo acquired is reflected in the court rank he attained through Ieyasu's efforts: in 1606 he received the Junior Fifth Rank, Lower Grade, and in 1609 the exceptional rank for one of his occupation of Junior Fourth Rank, Lower Grade. In addition his stipend was raised, first to 500 *koku* and then to 1000 *koku*.¹⁵ Wealthy and powerful as the Tokugawa were, Masakiyo had virtually unlimited resources at his disposal as well as a patron who desired that those resources be put to use in expressing Tokugawa power and munificence. Furthermore, because of his close ties to Ieyasu, Masakiyo enjoyed personal authority and income that other carpenters could only dream about; and this accrued to his descendants as well. Thus, whereas Nakai family heads who succeeded Masakiyo received stipends of 500 *koku*, an office allowance for 40 workers, and continued authority for all building projects in the Home Provinces (Kinai), the head of construction in Edo received only an 80-*koku* stipend and a 20-worker office allowance.¹⁶

¹² Nishi, pp. 49-51.

¹³ Ōta Hirotarō and Itō Yōtarō eds., *Shōmei* (Tokyo: Kajima Shuppan, 1984), pp. 308-309.

¹⁴ *Nakai-ke monjo no kenkyū*, vol. 1, pp. 5-6; Tani Naoki, *Nakai-ke daiku shihai no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Shibunkaku, 1992), p. 163.

¹⁵ *Nakai-ke monjo no kenkyū*, vol. 1, p. 6.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

Masakiyo was not the only carpenter based in the Kinai who benefited from the flood of Tokugawa building activities. Masakiyo had a number of assistants and their duties were divided among the following: coordinating building plans, acquiring timber, directing sawyers, inspecting raw materials, inspecting finished materials and workmanship, directing workers, overseeing finances (including paying for materials and issuing wages) and keeping account books. With many of the early projects requiring hundreds of thousands of man-hours of labor, it is not surprising that a considerable number of managers was required. All of these managers were beneficiaries of Tokugawa patronage, and many of their descendants occupied hereditary positions within one of the Bakufu's bureaus of construction.¹⁷

Despite what appears to have been an ideal situation for the Nakai family and its assistants, by the end of the seventeenth century decline had begun. This is seen in a petition of 1692 written by the Kyoto city magistrates on behalf of the Nakai. It reads as follows.

In recent years [all building contracts have been decided] by bid. Until the bids are accepted and the work is begun, expenses for initial services, preliminary sketches and other renderings, wooden models, wages for administrative officials [other than the Nakai], rent, copying, and all other manner of costs must be paid beforehand [by the Nakai], and this has added up year after year. . . . Last year it amounted to the sum of approximately 200 *ryō* 兩.¹⁸

The first problem, which struck at the very heart of Tokugawa patronage of the Nakai, was the practice of putting up jobs for bid. In other words, although the Nakai head would still oversee a given project, acting in essence as "general contractor," the various jobs would be distributed to "sub-contractors" according to low bids. This practice of opening public construction to private craftsmen and private capital was rarely seen in

the first half of the seventeenth century, but it became increasingly common thereafter. A representative call for bids, posted in the capital by the Kyoto city magistrates in 1669, reads:

Announcement: To Those Desiring to Bid on the Construction of the Sanjō Large Bridge 三條大橋

Carpenters, Lumber Suppliers, Blacksmiths, Rock Wholesalers, Day Laborers

A Temporary Bridge; Temporary Huts and Transportation for Them (for Rent); Various and Sundry Tools (for Rent); Demolition of the Existing Bridge; Buyers of Scrap Metal; Small Tools

Any and all of the above.

Concerning the above listed [items and services]: Those who desire to provide some or any should proceed to the Third Street Bridge office within the Danō 丹王 王 temple grounds on the upcoming 4th, 5th, or 6th [days of the month], and enter a bid in the register book there.

Announced to the Citizens of Kyoto

1669 The City Magistrates¹⁹

This practice of soliciting bids was a dramatic shift from the earlier custom in which the Nakai hired carpenters, artisans, and other workers that they saw fit to hire, and then directed their work and paid them a wage and daily food stipend.²⁰ As it turned out, the workers' food stipend — a portion of which the Bakufu provided to the Nakai before any work was undertaken — was a source of "soft money" which the Nakai were able to draw upon to cover initial (and extra) expenses. But with the change to the bid system, the Nakai no longer had food stipends to draw upon, and as the petition of 1692 noted, the Nakai

¹⁷ Tani, p. 163; Nishi, pp. 58-62, 73-82.

¹⁸ Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 178.

¹⁹ Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 192.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 178-188.

were forced to use their own income (to the extent of 200 *ryō* in 1691!) to make up the difference.²¹ At the recommendation of the Kyoto city magistrates, the Tokugawa government agreed to change the system, making it more stable than before. Though funding for building projects would never again be as copious as in the first half-century of Tokugawa rule, there was now greater regulation, and unexpected expenses did not fall on the shoulders of the Nakai, who were to be reimbursed promptly for expenditures. In addition, the Nakai were to work closely with the city magistrates on all aspects of their work, both on matters that directly affected them and on others such as payments to suppliers of goods and services by bid. Under this new system, the ties of personal patronage that had marked the Nakai's relationship with the early Tokugawa shoguns was replaced with a less personal, more bureaucratic structure.

The real threat to the Nakai's position as the favored architects and builders of the Tokugawa was not financial. By granting contracts for public works from bridges to buildings according to bids, the Bakufu threatened to make the Nakai irrelevant. Rather than acting as architects, overseers, and master craftsmen who designed, directed, and participated in all aspects of a building project, the Nakai were to become mere managers, whose control over the selection of building materials, workers, and the work itself was slight. This happened, but not completely. The reason was that although the Bakufu now granted contracts for public works such as bridges and canals based on bids, the reconstruction and repair of edifices such as Nijō castle, the imperial palace, and temples and shrines supported by the Tokugawa were carried out as before, by laborers, sawyers, blacksmiths, and carpenters whom the Nakai personally hired and directed, and who received daily wages and food stipends.²² In other words, the Nakai remained fully in charge of constructing important political and religious structures.

Nonetheless, the situation worsened in the eighteenth century and never improved. Neither

Nijō nor any other Bakufu castles were rebuilt again and only the most basic repairs were carried out, and so master builders who had become vassals of the Tokugawa soon found themselves with little to do and with limited incomes.²³ Some decided to abandon the building crafts. Two significant cases appear in the early eighteenth century. The first occurred in 1720, when Tsuru Buzaemon 鶴武左衛門, a building administrator under the Nakai, gave up that duty and took a position as a "river barge official" (*kawabuneyaku* 川船役). The Tsuru family was one of four (including the Kōra, Heinouchi, and Tsujiuchi 辻内) that occupied the weighty position of *daitōryō* ("great ridgepole"), and the family had an important pedigree: the first Tsuru carpenter had served Date Masamune 伊達政宗 (1567-1636), and was known for the temples and shrines he built and for his skill as a wood carver. Nonetheless his descendant Buzaemon quit because, as he explained, he "couldn't make a living as a construction official."²⁴ Though we might be inclined to attribute this in part to the failings of a hereditary system of employment, which retained mediocre abilities but rewarded them badly (and unlike many positions in the bureaucracy, this was one which truly required talent), such was not the case with Tsuru Buzaemon. Evidence of his abilities is seen in the decision to send him to Edo in response to a request by the shogun, Yoshimune 吉宗 (1684-1751), for a skilled builder to work on the palace interior.

The second case occurred just two years later and involved the Fukui 福井 family, the head of which occupied the position of Nijō Castle Foreman. During the seventeenth century, the Fukui and "Fukui group" of *daiku* had kept busy in managing the upkeep of Nijō castle, an important duty supported with a large budget. But after several decades with little budget and few duties, the family head in 1722 decided to resign his post for one within the "Office of Kyoto Measurements" 京枡座 — the governmental organization that regulated measuring devices. In his place, two lesser *daiku* officials were assigned to

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 178.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 192-195.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 204.

²⁴ Nishi, pp. 62-63.

inspect Nijō palace annually for damage and conduct repairs if needed.²⁵

Since major reconstruction of Nijō and other castles as well as most “public” edifices all but ended by 1700, one would think the Nakai too maintained only a nominal position as architects and master carpenters. What saved them were the public buildings associated with the imperial court. On the occasions when those burned or needed complete refurbishing (which occurred several times in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries), the old standards were followed, with the Nakai managing the projects and employing artisans and laborers as in the past.²⁶ The reasons behind this Tokugawa attentiveness to the court’s physical needs are complex, but they lie in part in precedents set by Ieyasu, who greatly expanded the imperial palace soon after he came to power.²⁷ Just as significant, such “service” to the court was a mark of prestige for the *daiku* and other officials involved, as reflected in a detailed record, complete with a sketch of participants, of the ridgepole raising at the imperial palace in 1613. Participants included Nakai Masakiyo (who was in charge of the ceremony) and the Kyoto magistrate, Itakura Katsushige 板倉勝重 (1545-1624), both men in appropriate court attire; Masakiyo’s top assistants, twenty in all; and thirty-six individuals representing the trades of the artisans involved, including blacksmiths, roof tilers, plasterers, lacquerers, sawyers, tatami makers, painters, cabinetmakers, and so on. It was a grand affair and an obvious honor for those invited to participate.²⁸

The Fate of Common Carpenters

As we have seen, one result of the limited reach and personal nature of patronage was that the architects and builders most significantly affected by its permutations were the talented individuals (and their hereditary successors) who began the Tokugawa era linked to patrons with power and influence. Some, like the Nakai, were able to maintain privileged positions throughout the period. Others, like the Tsuru and Fukui, despite being highly favored by Tokugawa Ieyasu, were eventually relegated to meaningless positions that they chose to abandon. A rare example of a group of craftsmen, rather than individual craftsmen, who maintained ties of patronage in the Tokugawa era were those of Hamamatsu, Tōtōmi province. Hamamatsu was a castle town built by Tokugawa Ieyasu while he resided there from 1570 to 1586. Though Ieyasu later moved to Sunpu and then to Edo, Hamamatsu flourished during the early modern era because of its links to the regime’s founder. The privileged crafts and craftsmen of Hamamatsu were known as the “Three Products and Ten Crafts” (*sanpin jūshoku* 三品十職), and consisted of those who dealt in fish, salt, and yeast, as well as carpenters, sawyers, tatami makers, tilers, workers in cypress (*himonoshi* 檜物師), blacksmiths, plasterers, coopers, and roofers. As such, they served as the domain lord’s personal builders, conducting work as he requested and receiving exemption from the land tax and protection from competition. Though limited in scale, these privileges of patronage persisted where many others did not. And they were an important source of pride to the Hamamatsu *daiku*, some of whose descendants still possessed in the twentieth century gifts of pottery embossed with the hollyhock motif of the Tokugawa or documents from Ieyasu granting them residential land in Edo.²⁹

If we look beyond the Tokugawa rulers and the individuals they patronized, we see a similar pattern. Patronized *daiku* were few in number and those like the Teshima 豊島 and Nosaka 野

²⁵ Tani, p. 204.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 204-205.

²⁷ For more on the ways that the early Tokugawa rulers supported and dealt with the court, see Lee Butler, *Emperor and Aristocracy in Japan, 1467-1680: Resilience and Renewal* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2002).

²⁸ Nishi, pp. 45-49.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 148-152.

坂, hereditary craftsmen for Itsukushima Shrine from the 1600s to late 1800s, were fortunate indeed.³⁰ Most families of *daiku* enjoyed no such luck after the building boom of monumental architecture ceased. As large “public” building projects of the seventeenth century — including castles and palaces, Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines, grand mausoleums, and splendid *shoin* 書院 — came to an end, the thousands of craftsmen and laborers who had worked under the direction of master builders lost a significant source of income and indirect (but very real) patronage. To survive as craftsmen, they had no choice but to turn to the open market, to peddle their wares and talents to anyone willing to pay. For them, the security of patronage was replaced by the vagaries of the commercial market.

Daiku gained some stability through local organizations known as *kumi* 組 or groups.³¹ Like medieval guilds (*za* 座), each *kumi* worked to protect its interests by limiting the group’s numbers (thereby ensuring regular employment and income for all) and regulating the activities of its members for the good of the whole. A representative set of builders’ regulations, set forth by the Furuhashi group 古橋組 in Kawachi province in 1805, can be summarized as follows. First, group members were enjoined to avoid encroaching on other members’ work. This appears in three articles: one was meant to protect *daiku* who enjoyed more or less permanent contracts with temples and shrines, a regular and periodically rich source of work and income; another concerned the fair posting of work bulletins, which were to be respected by builders who came late to a potential job; and the third was an exhortation to avoid bothering or interrupting *daiku* at work on a project, “even if one’s reasons for visiting are valid.”

Second, members were instructed as to where they could work and even the places they could

frequent. Because the local building organizations depended above all on stability — in the number of *daiku*, the skill of the *daiku*, the size of the market in which they worked, and so on — it was imperative that members work within the group’s guidelines and physical boundaries. Thus if one desired to take a job outside the *kumi*’s established working region, one needed the group’s permission, and there was no guarantee it would be given. Not only did internal concerns need to be considered but so did external ones, such as the worry that an outside job might result in conflict with a neighboring workers’ group. The restrictions on the personal movement of individuals were of a different nature, but similar in their import, since the group’s image as a whole could be harmed, for example, by one individual’s visits to the pleasure quarters.

The third general injunction contained in the regulations concerns the place of apprentices and their treatment. Because apprentices represented the future membership of the *kumi*, their selection, training, and treatment was critical. One article thus exhorts members not to make the mistake of treating a temporary or unskilled worker as an apprentice, and another stipulates that apprentices must not be employed by anyone besides their masters. These local regulations reveal how far *daiku*, who at one time had depended heavily on the patronage of powerful warriors (or temples) for work and support, now sought stability through their group.³² Yet in at least one respect, the tie between craftsmen and warrior lords was not broken. This is reflected in the first article of these 1805 regulations:

The Furuhashi builders group is to keep foremost in mind the needs of the state (御公用), avoiding negligence and working in earnest on all matters. If we receive a building request from our lord (御公儀様), we are by all means to follow it.³³

Although this may appear as nothing more than a reminder to curry favor with the domain

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 191-199.

³¹ On *daiku kumi*, see Kawakami Mitsugu, *Kinsei kamigata daiku no kumi, nakama* (Kyoto: Shibunkaku Shuppan, 1993); also see the relevant essays in Kawakami Mitsugu, ed., *Kinsei kenchiku no seisan sōshiki to gijutsu* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 1984).

³² Nishi, pp. 176-178.

³³ Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 176.

lord, it was more than that. Local groups were licensed and regulated by the state, meaning domain governments or, in the case of Bakufu lands, the Nakai or other regional officials. Furthermore, many local *kumi* were heirs to bonds of patronage established decades before between their ancestors and the domain lord. The wording of the 1805 article suggests that the Furuhashi craftsmen no longer realized much benefit through this arrangement (perhaps the result of a parsimonious or heavily indebted lord), but we can assume that it had earlier been (and might again become, at least for a season), a valued source of work and income. And so the Furuhashi were bound, legally and dutifully, to those in power. In fact, the members of the Furuhashi *kumi* committed to the Nakai (who headed the bureau of building affairs, the Nakai Yakusho 中井役所, in the Home Provinces) to obey these self-proclaimed regulations; in short, they were sanctioned by the Bakufu.

For their part, the Nakai issued tallies or permits (at a cost), without which *daiku* were not allowed to conduct work. These, and a yearly “hammer fee” (*tsuchidai* 槌代) provided the Nakai the funds to administer their bureau.³⁴ In return, these *daiku* of lengthy heritage and legitimate standing occasionally received summons to work on “public” projects. They also expected to benefit from governmental regulations that prohibited unlicensed, uncertified builders. The reality, however, was that governmental regulation of crafts and craftsmen became increasingly ineffective in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries — a casualty of the complexity of the marketplace and the limited reach of the Bakufu bureaucracy. Increases in unlicensed craftsmen — which were particularly common after earthquakes, floods, and fires, but also came with less dramatic disasters and simple demographic shifts — inevitably brought petitions from those holding tallies. They complained of “novice builders” (*shiro'uto no daiku*, 素人の大工) and “unskilled builders” (*muyaku daiku* 無役大工) ap-

pearing in large numbers and ignoring regulations.³⁵ A petition to the Nakai in 1817 contended that one effect of this intrusion was that tallied craftsmen might have difficulty complying with a summons to work on a public project (such as the imperial palace), if the novice builders went unregulated.³⁶ Despite this warning, Bakufu responses by this time rarely took the form of anything more than injunctions against those working without license.

Architectural Pattern Books and the Marketplace

Clearly the vast majority of individuals engaged in the building arts after 1650 were independent, “non-patronized” *daiku* of the sort we have examined above. What, then, did they build, and for whom did they work? The answers seem obvious, since they surely built homes for those needing them and able to afford them. And because Japan lacked, as far as we can tell, a tradition of owner-built construction, *daiku* must have built homes for most of the population. But that answer is simplistic and incomplete.

We know little about the types of residences that most Japanese lived in during the seven-

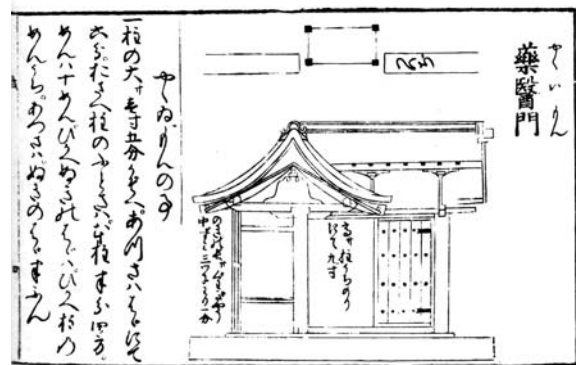


Plate 1: Gate in the style “yakuimon.” From *Daishō hinagata*, vol. 23 of Aoki Kunio et al., *Edo kagaku koten sōsho*, 46 vols. (Tokyo: Kōwa Shuppan, 1976-83).

³⁴ The “hammer fee” paid to the Nakai is noted in Kitagawa Morisada, *Morisada mankō*, Asakura Haruhiko and Kashikawa Shūichi, eds., (Tokyo: Tōkyōdō Shuppan 1992), vol 1, p. 159.

³⁵ Nishi, pp. 171-172.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

teenth century and earlier. This is particularly true for the homes of commoners but includes also those of warriors of all ranks beneath that of daimyo and their close associates. Archaeological work has provided insights into the size, location, and basic layout of homes in certain areas, but architectural details are known only through written descriptions as found in diaries and in illustrations such as “Folding Screens with Scenes in and around Kyoto” (*rakuchū rakugaizu byōbu*) and “Folding Screens with Scenes in Edo” (*Edo zu byōbu*).³⁷ A cursory look at seventeenth-century screens of Kyoto and Edo gives the impression that commoners’ homes and shops differed from the elites’ homes more in size than in style, but a closer examination makes clear that such impressions are mistaken. In the first place, the screens fail to provide the detail necessary to make such a distinction. Most scholarly discussions about the homes of townspeople in these screens are limited to roof styles and the changes in roofs over time — because that is all that can be gleaned. And though the screens offer a limited view of the front room of shops facing the streets, nothing more of the interior is revealed. As to the size of commoners’ homes, scholars have shown that the shops and homes of townsmen in these screens are inaccurately represented; for example, fewer of them appear on a city block in the screens than actually existed.³⁸

What this points to is the extent of our ignorance about the architectural and building practices for most residential structures of the time. It is possible that many homes were more rudimentary and less uniform in style and construction than our impressions of extant structures — all of them built for the elite — would suggest. The best indication that things were changing appears in evidence from the late seventeenth and

early eighteenth centuries in the form of architectural pattern books (*hinagatabon* 雛形本).

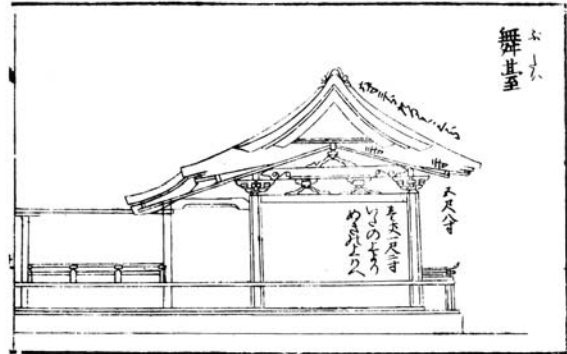


Plate 2: Nō stage. From *Daishō hinagata*, vol. 23 of Aoki Kunio et al., *Edo kagaku koten sōsho*, 46 vols. (Tokyo: Kōwa Shuppan, 1976-83).

These pattern books, which functioned as instruction manuals for builders and artisans, were largely unknown before the sixteenth century. The few in existence were manuscripts, passed on within families or shops as digests of secret transmissions (*hidensho* 秘伝書).³⁹ More important were the practices learned on site and passed on by word of mouth. However, with the building boom that accompanied the late sixteenth-century reunification, changes occurred in the way *daiku* worked and managed themselves. On the one hand, the demand for builders quickly outran the number available, drawing many untrained builders into the field. On the other, powerful warriors patronized those whom they wanted to patronize, ignoring the hierarchies and practices that local guilds had established. The effects of these developments upon residential construction of townsmen’s and common warriors’ homes, which were likewise erected in in-

³⁷ For illustrations of renowned *rakuchū rakugaizu byōbu* (including the Machida, Uesugi, and Funagi screens), see Ishida Hisatoyo et al. eds., *Rakuchū rakugaizu taikan*, 3 vols., (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1987); for the Edo screen, see Suzuki Susumu, ed., *Edo zu byōbu* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1971).

³⁸ See, for example, the discussion of townsmen’s homes in Suzuki, pp. 74-77.

³⁹ The best known instruction manual for builders and architects, written in 1610, is that of the Heinouchi family, entitled *Shōmei*. See the reference in note 13 to a recently transcribed and published edition. For further discussion of the widespread use of *hidensho*, see Nishiyama Matsunosuke, *Edo Culture: Daily Life and Diversions in Urban Japan, 1600-1868* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), p. 11.

creasing numbers in the new age of peace, are not immediately evident. But it seems likely that many homes reflected the work of untrained builders, whose labor was in high demand in an era of increasing population and, for many, prosperity. The appearance of architectural pattern books after the mid-seventeenth century supports this contention because they point to a demand for careful engineering, thoughtful sizing and proportion, and high quality craftsmanship. The basic construction information contained in some of them were of ready use to untrained builders; and these books, appearing as they did in block-printed (and thus affordable) form, were available to craftsmen of even modest means.

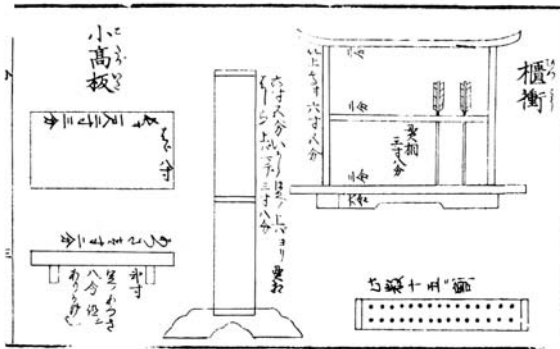


Plate 3: Arrow stand and short-board stand. From *Daishō hinagata*, vol. 23 of Aoki Kunio et al., *Edo kagaku koten sōsho*, 46 vols. (Tokyo: Kōwa Shuppan, 1976-83).

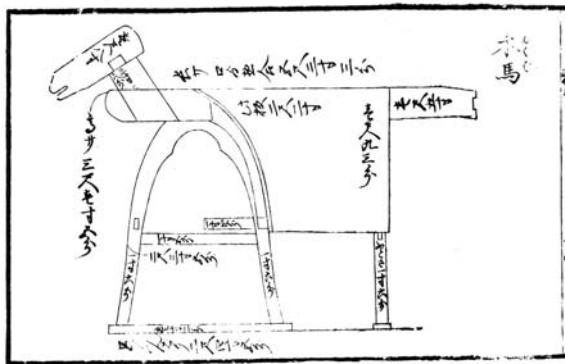


Plate 4: Wooden horse. From *Daishō hinagata*, vol. 23 of Aoki Kunio et al., *Edo kagaku koten sōsho*, 46 vols. (Tokyo: Kōwa Shuppan, 1976-83).

The earliest block-printed pattern books appeared in the latter half of the seventeenth century, but the number increased dramatically in the early eighteenth century.⁴⁰ The subjects addressed were Buddhist temples, Shinto shrines, teahouses, gates, and split-level shelves, as well as technical matters such as methods for calculating roof angles. These suggest that the early market for builders' services, at least for structures requiring technical skill, was dominated by religious organizations and warriors of some means. An important pattern book from this period, *Daiku hinagata* 大工雛形 (1717), is illustrative of these qualities.⁴¹ The book consists of five volumes, each with an individual title and focus: "Shrine Pattern Book" (*Miya hinagata* 宮雛形), "Warrior-house Pattern Book" (*Buke hinagata* 武家雛形), "Teahouse Pattern Book" (*Sukiya hinagata* 数寄屋雛形), "Courtyard Implements Pattern Book" (*Kotsubo kiku* 小坪規矩), and "Courtyard Implements Pattern Book, Supplemented" (*Kotsubo kiku tsuika* 小坪規矩追加). Except for the first volume, this book was directed at warriors and their interests. The bulk of volume 2 consists of designs for gates, the massive and ostentatious symbols of influence that stood at the entrance to important warriors' residential property, although the broad choice of gates allowed a mid-level warrior to mark his entrance properly as well. The remaining items depicted in this volume are a *nō* stage, a kickball ground, a grand room, an upper hall, and a horse stable. The *nō* stage and kickball ground reflected the warriors' interest in engaging

⁴⁰ See, for example, the pattern books for builders and architects reproduced in Aoki Kunio et al., *Edo kagaku koten sōsho*, (Tokyo: Kōwa Shuppan, 1976-83), vols. 23 and 35. The pattern books here are *Daishō hinagata* 大匠雛形 (properly *Daiku hinagata* 大工雛形; the covers of the Naikaku Bunko versions that are reproduced here note the title incorrectly), *Sukiya kōhōshū* 数寄屋工法集, *Daishō tekagami* 大匠手鑑, *Hidensho zukai* 秘伝書図解, and *Daiku kiku shakushū* 大工規矩尺集.

⁴¹ In *Edo kagaku koten sōshō*, vol. 23, as *Daishō hinagata*. See *ibid.*

in refined arts and showing themselves the equals of the Kyoto courtiers. The grand room and upper hall were highly decorated places to entertain and impress one's visitors; the architectural detailing there was intricate and of the finest quality. Patterns and descriptions of these items would have been indispensable to builders who had limited experience constructing them.

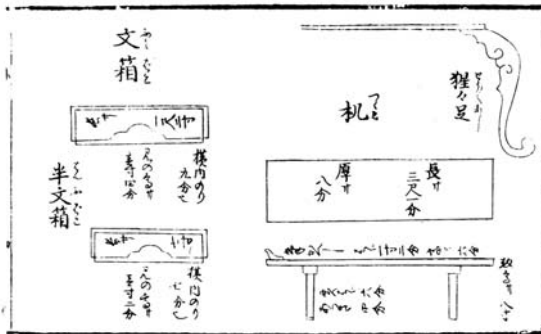


Plate 5: Desk and writing-brush boxes. From *Daishō hinagata*, vol. 23 of Aoki Kunio et al., *Edo kagaku koten sōsho*, 46 vols. (Tokyo: Kōwa Shuppan, 1976-83).

So why the horse stable? It was included because the other side of warrior culture emphasized a military past, dignified and resplendent. Any warrior worth his salt expected to be properly outfitted, and he was just as ready to spend funds on the accoutrements of military service as on refined arts. Indeed, volumes five and six of *Daiku hinagata*, dealing with “courtyard implements,” include patterns of items that would be of use to a warrior: stirrup stands, arrow stands, display cases for bows and arrows, hawk rests, a hawk house, a helmet stand, a wooden horse (for riding practice), a musket stand, and so forth. Most of the remaining items depicted in these volumes reflect literary and performing arts, including desks; reading stands; linked-verse tables; cases for brushes, inkstones, and paper used in calligraphy; flute cases; and the like. The ideals of the literary (*bun* 文) and the military (*bu* 武) were plainly represented here, providing craftsmen a view of warrior interests and the material items that supported those interests. Even though patronized *daiku*, skilled and knowledgeable as they were, presumably would have pur-

chased few of these pattern books, they were indispensable to common *daiku*, who needed examples of the goods they could offer to build for their new, strictly market-based, patrons.

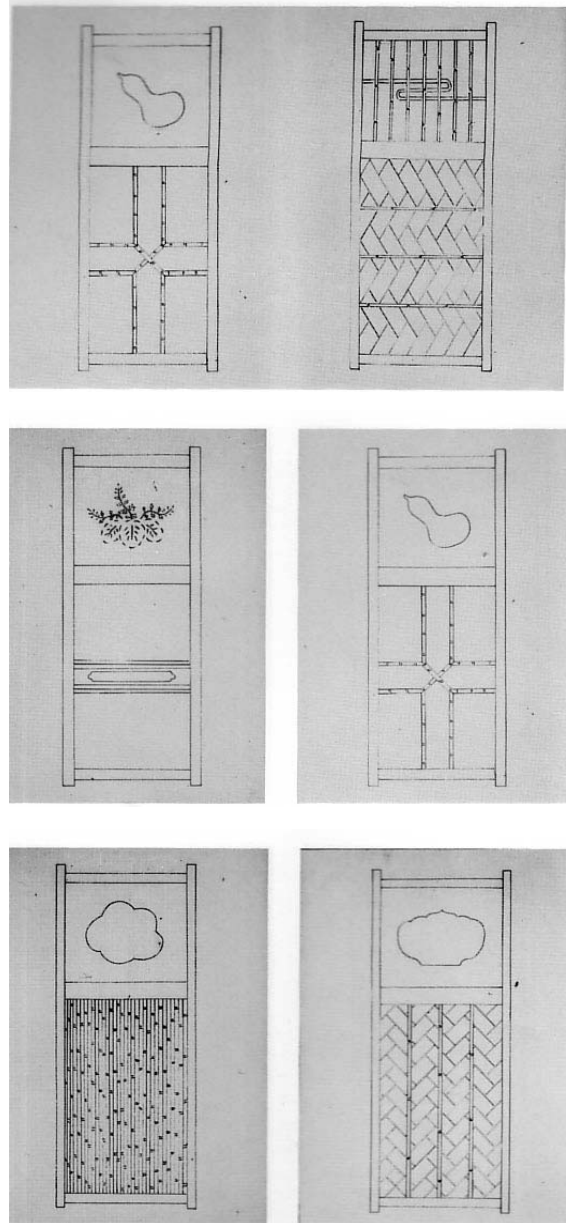


Plate 6: Residential doors. From *Shōji ezu*, in Okamoto Mariko, ed., *Kinsei kenchikusho--Zashiki hinagata*, in *Nihon kenchiku koten sōsho* 5 (Kyoto: Tairyūdō Shoten, 1985).

The next significant development in pattern book publishing occurred in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when volumes on residential doors and transoms began to appear.⁴² These did not displace the earlier works, but supplemented them, and the large number of styles, many of them of distinctly new design, suggests not only stylistic innovation but also a broader market. It seems likely that by this time both pattern-book publishers and *daiku* were aware that thoughtful design and fine craftsmanship had a place among an ever-growing percentage of the population, prosperous farmers and middling townsmen included. Furthermore, it is easy to imagine craftsmen showing clients these pattern books with their many styles, suggesting the types of doors, transoms, shelves, and so forth that they were able to construct.

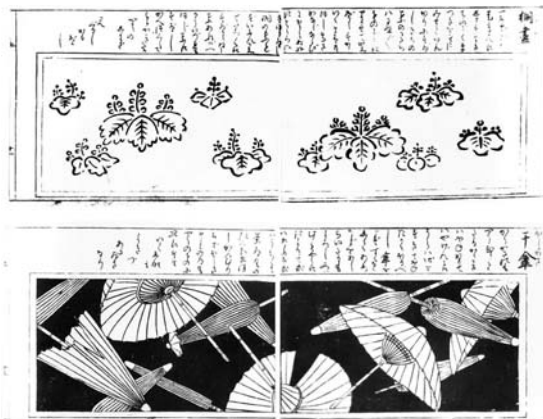


Plate 7: Transoms (*ranma* 欄間). From *Ranma zushiki*, in Okamoto Mariko, ed., *Kinsei kenchikusho—Zashiki hinagata*, in *Nihon kenchiku koten sōsho* 5 (Kyoto: Tairyūdō Shoten, 1985).

Conclusion

Architecture, like so many other aspects of Japan's early modern political, social, and economic structure, followed a path that diverged from that laid out by the sixteenth and seven-

teenth-century unifiers. Perhaps they expected the system to develop largely as it did, stable (at some levels, stale) and bureaucratized. Yet it is difficult to imagine them looking fondly on local lords who allowed castles lost in fires to go un-built, or on a society in which vitality resided more with the commercial classes than the ruling class, or in which the government's building activities slowed to a trickle after a half-century of rule and remained that way for over two hundred years. In addition, they surely would have been surprised to see the positions of the descendants of architects they patronized reduced to meaningless bureaucratic posts or worse. The remarkable vitality of the patronized building arts during their day makes the contrast to later periods particularly sharp. Architects and related craftsmen had been patronized in ancient and medieval times, but never in such number and never within an era of such dramatic economic growth and social change. Because of these larger social and economic developments, the cessation of much of the architectural patronage after 1650 did not mean that the building arts contracted in any significant way. The demand for new structures — less imposing than the grand “public” edifices yet not simple and rudimentary as in the past — was enormous. And many of those creating that demand had the funds and taste for work of high quality. They expected their homes, gates and tea houses to mimic those erected by the elite of society, in style if not in size. The same was true for local communities desiring or needing a temple or shrine; it was only natural for them to expect their religious halls to resemble the structures raised through a wealth of resources.

As we saw, the way that craftsmen filled the wishes of patrons in the marketplace is found in pattern books, which served as primers for builders and showcases or samplers for potential buyers. Some of the pattern books could in fact have been used as plans, though not all provided the details necessary to plans, and some consisted primarily of prose instructions rather than illustrations. The pattern books were guides, providing sizes, proportions, and possibilities. Much was left to the craftsmen to determine, and the finished structure or piece depended ultimately upon their skill and care with a wide range of hand tools. Although the same qualities of skill

⁴² For many of these, see Okamoto Mariko, ed., *Kinsei kenchikusho — Zashiki hinagata*, in *Nihon kenchiku koten sōsho* 5 (Kyoto: Tairyūdō Shoten, 1985).

and care determined the strength and appearance of the grand edifices of the Tokugawa era, pattern books for those structures, where they exist, are much different.⁴³ Most significantly, they appear only in manuscript form, not as wood-block printed books. Thus they remained the possessions of a handful of families, the privileged and patronized *daiku* who specialized in such work. These pattern books were never published due to their specificity and complexity of design. There was no market for them, and no commercial press had an interest in printing them. Instead the market existed at a lower level, just below the wants of the narrow elite and extending broadly to a significant portion of the population. Architectural patronage was not dead by the late Tokugawa period, but the dynamism of the art was found outside of it, primarily in the homes of commoners, whose tastes and incomes became its driving force.

⁴³ For illustrations of a number of these, see the reproductions in Kawata Katsuhiko, ed., *Kinsei kenchikusho — Dōmiya hinagata*, in *Nihon kenchiku koten sōsho* 3 (Kyoto: Tairyūdō Shoten, 1988).