

Samurai and the World of Goods: the Diaries of the Toyama Family of Hachinohe

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Introduction

Samurai are often depicted in popular representations as indifferent to—if not disdainful of—monetary affairs, leading a life devoted to the study of the twin ways of scholastic, meaning largely Confucian, learning and martial arts. Fukuzawa Yukichi, reminiscing about his younger days, would have us believe that they “were ashamed of being seen handling money.” He maintained that “it was customary for samurai to wrap their faces with hand-towels and go out after dark whenever they had an errand to do” in order to avoid being seen engaging in commerce. Always claiming to be an iconoclast, Fukuzawa proudly stated, “I hated having a towel on my face and have never worn one. I even used to go out on errands in broad daylight.”¹

Of course it is problematic to take Fukuzawa’s comments as representative of all samurai, or even those of his lowly economic status. In fact we know that samurai had a much more complicated relationship with money and the principles of commerce and trade. While some might have felt on a certain level that arithmetic was the tool of the merchant, the lowest social estate in the Neo-Confucian scheme, Dazai Shundai (1680–1747) was representative of a number of prominent intellectuals who did not see “trade and market economies as functionally specific to the merchant class...”² Whatever public face some samurai may have put on, the

vast majority, who were based in urban centers, could ill afford to be indifferent to money and commerce. Largely divorced from the land and incumbent upon the lord for their livelihood, usually disbursed in the form of stipends, samurai were, willy-nilly, drawn into the commercial economy. While the playful (*gesaku*) literature of the late Tokugawa period tended to portray them as unrefined “country samurai” (*inaka samurai*, i.e. samurai from the provincial castle towns) a reading of personal diaries kept by samurai reveals that, far from exhibiting a lack of concern for monetary affairs, they were keenly price conscious, having no real alternative but to learn the art of thrift. This was true of Edo-based samurai as well, despite the fact that unlike their cohorts in the domain they were largely spared the forced paybacks, infamously dubbed “loans to the lord” (*onkariage*), that most domain governments resorted to by the beginning of the eighteenth century.³

While this characterization of engagement with the commercial economy holds for most samurai, it was particularly true of the Edo-based retainer. During periods of service to his lord in Edo, who was in turn in attendance on the Tokugawa shogun, the domain samurai had ample spare time to take part in the commercial economy of the Tokugawa capital by dining at restaurants, food stalls and drinking establishments; searching for medications to treat bodily ailments or simply to maintain health; going to public baths; making pilgrimages to local shrines and temples, as well as attending festivals there; and, of course, shopping.

Alternate attendance, therefore, by definition, created an instant class of consumers, separated from home and family. The domain samurai, like the commoner on pilgrimage, is well known to have bought souvenirs, or *miyage*, while on duty in Edo for family and friends back home.⁴

¹ Fukuzawa Yukichi, *The Autobiography of Yukichi Fukuzawa*, trans. Eiichi Kiyooka (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), p. 11.

² Tetsuo Najita, “History and Nature in Eighteenth-Century Tokugawa Thought,” in John W. Hall, ed., *Cambridge History of Japan*, vol. 4: *Early Modern Japan* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 611.

³ For Tosa, see Luke Roberts, *Mercantilism in a Japanese Domain: The Merchant Origins of Economic Nationalism in 18th-century Tosa* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 92–95, 155–56, 171–73.

⁴ See Constantine Nomikos Vaporis, *Breaking Barriers: Travel and the State in Early Modern Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Council on

This, however, only partially describes their activities as consumers. Some samurai of more substantial means used the opportunity of a year-long tour of duty in Edo to collect material objects of artistic and/or martial interest. Tosa retainer Mori Masana, for example, purchased at least twenty-one sword guards on his trip to, and stay in, Edo. He was also an avid collector of art of various types, including calligraphy, scrolls, poem cards and woodblock prints.⁵ Others, like Tosa Confucian scholar Miyaji Umanosuke, took advantage of their presence in the largest city in the land to purchase a vast array of commodities for household and personal use.⁶

While a tour of duty in Edo could have a transformative effect on an individual's career and life, a samurai serving in Edo could also become an integral part of a wider human network, across which the material culture of Tokugawa Japan was dispersed throughout the country. Using personal diaries brushed by two retainers, father and son, from Hachinohe domain, this article will analyze the Edo-based domainal retainer's engagement with the commercial economy. Specifically, it will focus on the types of commodities purchased, rather than the other types of activities mentioned above, and offer an assessment of the meanings of these goods. In doing so it will explore the hierarchy of values implicit in them for samurai and the larger society in which they lived. Furthermore, it will be argued that consumption may be driven as much by fashion as economic necessity, and that many of the commodities samurai purchased reflected concerns with personal appearance, a taste for

amusement and activities for relaxation—parts of a consumer society that in Japan, as well as in Europe, is “nearly four hundred years old.”⁷

The Toyama and their Diaries

The Toyama family had a history of service to the lord in Edo. With the exception of the founder, the other seven generations completed at least one tour of duty there. Both Heima, who assumed the family headship in 1791, and his son, Tamuro, who succeeded him in 1825, made multiple trips. The last three generation-heads maintained diaries, spanning more than a century, from 1792–1919, and 109 volumes. The first and second of these, Heima (father) and Tamuro (son) both kept detailed diaries of their lives in Hachinohe and Edo, designating different volumes for their experiences in each locale, even though much of the contents of what they wrote demonstrates the extent to which the two were intertwined. Their accounts over a period of six years, from 1828–34, are particularly well documented and thus serve as the chronological focus of this essay.

The locale in which the Toyama household originated, Hachinohe, was a small, branch domain of Morioka, located in northern Japan, established in 1664. Its ruling family, the Nambu, presided over a domain with an assessed total agricultural output of only 12,000 *koku*, just 2,000 more than the minimum required. In the mid-eighteenth century the domain had a total population of roughly 71,352, which included 2,833 people (4%) belonging to the *bushi* status group.⁸ Hachinohe was also among the minority

East Asian Studies, 1994), pp. 205, 222–24; Laura Nenzi, *Excursions in Identity: Travel and the Intersection of Place, Gender, and Status in Edo Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), especially chapter six.

⁵ I first explored the shopping habits of domainal samurai in “Edo e no tabi. Tosa hanshi Mori-ke nikki nado ni miru sankin kōtai no sugata,” *Kōtsūshi kenkyū*, vol. 34 (December 1994), pp. 52–67 and Constantine Vaporis, “To Edo and Back. Alternate Attendance and Japanese Culture in the Early Modern Period,” *Journal of Japanese Studies* 23, 1 (1997), pp. 44–46.

⁶ Vaporis, “To Edo and Back,” pp. 47–49.

⁷ Ann Bermingham, “Introduction. The consumption of culture; image, object, text,” in Ann Bermingham and John Brewer, ed., *Consumption of Culture, 1600-1800: Image, Object, Text* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 6, argues that “consumption is driven largely by fashion and not economic necessity.” The quote is from Bermingham, p. 3.

⁸ Hachinohe shi hensan iinkai, ed., *Hachinohe shishi tsūshi hen* (Hachinohe: Hachinohe shi, 1976), pp. 234–35. Figures for the first year of Meiji (1869) indicate that there were 63,374 commoners and 3,968 who were of former *bushi* status.

of domains, roughly twenty per cent of the total, in which retainers continued to hold actual—in contrast to fictive—fiefs. However, their ties to the commoners residing there were more circumscribed in Heima and Tamuro's time than was the case in the seventeenth century.

In economic terms, the Toyama family was relatively well off. In the late-eighteenth century, when Heima had become househead, the family had a landed estate (*chigyō chi*) valued at 100 *koku*. In Hachinohe only eighty-five of the 375 samurai in the daimyo's retainer corps had holdings of 100 *koku* or more. This put the Toyama in the top quarter of the retainer corps—the upper ranks of Hachinohe's samurai. As was typical, their fief was dispersed, in two areas, the main one being located at a considerable distance from the castle town. However, the family also purchased some farmland near the castle town, actually working a portion of it themselves while tenant farmers tilled the rest.⁹ Househeads were appointed to positions befitting their status as upper samurai, most often to that of Inspector, Magistrate of Shrines and Temples or City Magistrate.

The Toyama household consisted of Tamuro, his father Heima, two grandparents, his wife, two brothers and two sisters and an equal number of step-siblings born to his father's second wife. Tamuro himself only had one child, a daughter named Omasa. Though not part of the immediate household, Tamuro's uncle, Ōta Kimanta, who also served in Edo multiple times, played an important part in the life of the Toyama family.

Life in Edo

The purpose of the Toyamas' presence in Edo was to serve their lord, Nambu Nobumasa (1796–1842). Both father and son filled several different positions at different times, including that of Domain Products Manager (*sanbutsu torishimari gakari*), which entailed broad responsibility for domainal commodities moving between the two

points of Edo and Hachinohe. More specifically, it included responsibilities such as oversight of the transport between Edo and Hachinohe, the fixing of prices for domainal products in Edo as well as the sale of these commodities to wholesale merchants there. Their jobs might have made them more knowledgeable about the Edo market and more disciplined recorders of this data than many other diarists, but there is little about their experience as consumers which would mark them as exceptional for samurai of their status. As will be argued below, samurai could gain knowledge of the Edo market quickly, through repeated service there, or for newcomers, from those who had served before in the capital, as well as through guidebooks. Given their economic means, the Toyomas certainly purchased more than samurai of lesser means. However, in terms of the types of commodities purchased and the practices by which they either made purchases for others in Hachinohe, or made requests of others stationed in Edo to purchase goods for them while back in Hachinohe, they were quite typical.¹⁰

Official duties, while important, did not consume Tamuro's time in Edo, in part because most jobs, those held in Edo as well as in the domain, were shared. During a three-month period in 1828, for example, Tamuro worked forty-eight out of sixty-eight days.¹¹ In other words, he had roughly three days off for every ten worked; in actual terms this meant that he was off every third or fourth day. In addition, on the days he was required to perform his official duties, work usually entailed one of three shifts—the early shift (*hayaban*), the second shift (*atoban*) and the overnight shift (*hayadomari*)—which left him with ample time off. The early shift left most of the day free for other activities, and on days when he had the second shift he could go out beforehand. It was also fairly easy for a retainer to adjust his work schedule for convenience sake, as when, for example, Tamuro found someone to

⁹ Information on the Toyama fief and household comes from the explanatory preface in Miura Tadashi, ed., *Toyama ke nikki*, vol. 1 (Aomori: Aomori ken bunkazai hogo kyōkai), pp. 3–7. In 1845 the family received an additional 25 *koku* cash supplement.

¹⁰ See Vaporis, “Edo e no tabi” and Constantine N. Vaporis, *Tour of Duty: Samurai, Military Service in Edo and the Culture of Early Modern Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), chapters 5–6.

¹¹ *Toyama ke nikki*, vol. 1, pp. 71–80.

take his overnight shift so that he could go to Asakusa to watch puppet theater. As a result of a flexible schedule and light work duties, over the course of his nearly year-long tour of duty (336 days), Tamuro was able to go out on as many as 145 days.

For leisure, Tamuro, had a variety of choices. Like the majority of Edo-bound retainers, though, most often he got together with friends informally, to talk, drink tea or sake, and play games like *shogi* or *go*. However, when he left the compound his passion appears to have been the puppet theater, which he attended eight times during a period of two months in 1828 at various locations in the city, such as Kawarake, Shinbashi, Sukiyabashi, Nishikubo and Akasaka.¹² On days off he often followed a routine: first a bath at the public *senjo*, then he had his hair dressed, followed by a night at the theater. On three occasions during this time he went to public festivals, at Kumano, Konpira and Akiba shrines. At other times he combined activities, shopping, for example, on the way home from a day's outing, as when he stopped by Shinjuku on his way back from Konpira shrine to buy an unlined kimono (*hitoemono*).¹³

Shopping

Retainers serving their lords in Edo are well known to have bought souvenirs like woodblock prints for friends and family at home, but this comprised only a portion of their commercial activities. Samurai like Tamuro were fully engaged with the urban economy, and this engagement presumed a certain level of knowledge about its dimension and particularities. It was dependent upon important information concerning the city's layout, especially the location of key recreational and shopping areas. This information could be gained first-hand through a prior tour of duty, via word of mouth from others who had served previously in Edo, as well as through guidebooks, maps and personal investigation.¹⁴

¹² *Toyama ke nikki*, vol. 1, pp. 71–80.

¹³ *Toyama ke nikki*, vol. 1, p. 75.

¹⁴ For a recent study of Edo's printed culture, see Mary Elizabeth Berry, *Japan in Print: Information and Nation in the Early Modern Period* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

An early example of a guidebook aimed at samurai in Edo, dating from 1689, ran only twelve folios in length but contained a wealth of information, including city maps, locations of shrines and temples, and a list of alternate readings of local place names; in terms of consumer activities, it also contained lists, with addresses, of doctors, dentists, internists and a wide range of stores for books, cloth, armor, swords and other weapons.¹⁵ A more contemporary example of a similar shopping guide is the *Edo kaimono hitori annai*, which dates from 1824.¹⁶

Although Tamuro purchased commodities on many occasions, most of the time he only wrote in his diary that he was going shopping (*chōmotsu e mairi* or *totonoe ni makari idashi*). In fact there are only nineteen instances during his second tour of duty when he identified either the type or location of stores he frequented. While this might not seem like a large number of occurrences, it is quite unusual, in my experience reading diaries, for this type of information to be given at all. For example, Tamuro visited a pipe store named Fujita-ya once and a tailor named Kiyobei seven times, both at Shiba Shinmei; used clothing stores in the Mita area, twice; Matsuzakaya, a dry goods store and branch of Echigo-ya, twice; and, Daimaru, another dry goods store at Nihonbashi, once. He also shopped at unidentified stores in Hikage-chō four times, Akabane once, and took cloth to be dyed at a store in Kōjimachi.¹⁷ Based on this limited data, he appears to have carried out his shopping in areas such as Shiba Shinmei, Hikage-chō and Mita, which were located fairly close by his do-

Guides such as *Edo kaimono hitori annai*, published in 1824, informed consumers where to shop. Sectional maps such as the *Edo kiriezu* helped them to navigate the city. On the development of publishing in Edo, see Nishiyama Matsunosuke, *Edo Culture: Daily Life and Diversions in Urban Japan, 1600–1868*, trans. and ed. by Gerald Groemer (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), pp. 64–69.

¹⁵ Ms. "Edo zuroku kōmoku" (Edo: Sagamiya Tahei, publisher, Genroku 2 (1689)).

¹⁶ *Edo kaimono hitori annai*, 2 vols. Kyoto: Nakagawa Yoshiyama, Bunsei 7 (1824).

¹⁷ *Toyama ke nikki*, vol. 1, pp. 71–80.

main's residence at Azabu, the headquarters of Hachinohe in Edo.¹⁸ As these spots—particularly Shiba Shinmei and Hikage-chō—were quite active, bustling commercial areas, probably he did not feel the need to go further away to Nihon-bashi or Asakusa to find the same goods and services.¹⁹ Moreover, having served in Edo before, he was already familiar with these places and therefore may have had less desire to travel to more distant shopping areas.

While Tamuro did purchase some goods and procure some services for himself, much of his commercial activities were on behalf of other people and the goods purchased reflected diverse consumer needs. In fact, even before setting out for Edo Tamuro's father gave him a list of twenty goods to purchase there, with a total price tag of over five *ryō*. This included: a wicker trunk (*tsuzura*); a mirror; three bags of cotton yarn; 1,000 sheets of gray, recycled paper (*kirigami nezumi*); a small chest; a woman's umbrella; tea; cotton padding for futon; a woman's hair comb box (*kushibako*) of black lacquer; a woman's pipe²⁰; a cloth pouch for tissues made of damask or *sarashina*; white cotton cloth; 1,000 sheets of *hankami*, a thick, higher quality paper used for wrapping or for documents such as letters; three rolls of silk cloth (one crepe silk, the two others with a flower pattern); one roll of calico for his grandmother; a collar (*juban eri*) for his mother's kimono; a second-hand unlined kimono; and, material for an unlined kimono for his wife.²¹

In this list of goods ordered by Heima, we see a variety of goods. The majority of purchases consisted of cloth, mainly for sewing kimono. While this essay focuses largely on consumption,

the act of appropriating goods in the market place, it was inevitably linked with the production of meanings.²² In this case the cloth was transformed by human labor into high-quality, high-cost items which aptly reflected the key place that cloth and clothing occupied in the samurai household budget. Clothing in Tokugawa times was far more precious than today. In fact, it was a woman's only personal source of wealth, something which in theory even her husband could not dispose of freely.²³ The underclothing purchased, on the other hand, consisted of a mix of new and used material, indicating a certain thriftiness. Secondly, we find a variety of handicraft items for women's use, such as the small chest, mirror, hair comb box, umbrella and cloth bags. Finally, there were also a number of goods that we might classify as daily necessities, such as the tea, pipe, paper, cotton wadding and yarn.

The elder Heima tapped into his considerable store of knowledge about the commercial market in Edo, acquired over the years of service, which included three tours of duty, to give Tamuro detailed instructions on where he might find the goods, what specifications they should have, particularly color, and what their approximate price should be.²⁴ He made special note of where

¹⁸ For a study of Hachinohe's various residences in Edo, see Miura Tadashi, "Hachinohe han no Edo yashiki to hanshu no kōyū," *Rekishi techo* 18, 3 (1990), pp. 4–13.

¹⁹ For a contemporary description of the Shinmei area, with its shops, small theaters, *misemono* and other diversions, see Asakura Haruhiko, ed, *Edo hanjōki* (Heibonsha, 1975), pp. 21–45.

²⁰ See Koizumi Hiroshi, *Edo o horu* (Kashiwa shobō, 1983), pp. 117–28, for a discussion of pipe types, as found in Tokugawa-era excavations.

²¹ *Toyama ke nikki*, vol. 1, pp. 19–21.

²² T. H. Breen writes that "as soon as a consumer acquired an object, he or she immediately produced an interpretation of that object, a story that gave it special significance." There were, in other words, "aspects of a single cultural process." T. H. Breen, "The Meanings of Things: the consumer economy in the eighteenth century," in John Brewer and Roy Porter, ed., *Consumption and the World of Goods* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 250. Of course the range of possible meanings attached to a commodity influenced its desirability.

²³ On clothing for women in the samurai status group, see Kate Nakai's translation of Yamakawa Kikue's memoirs, *The Women of Mito Domain* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), particularly pp. 39–41.

²⁴ Heima served in Edo in 1794, 1798 and 1800, holding various jobs including that of Guard for Edo castle and domain purchasing agent (*sanbutsu torishimari gakari*).

something could be found for a better price, as was the case with the small chest, which he informed Tamuro should be acquired at Kanarokuchō in the Nihonbashi area. From word of mouth or personal experience with comparison shopping, he came to form opinions about which stores were reputable and sold products at reasonable prices. For example, the material for Tamuro's mother, Heima instructed, should not be purchased from Owari-ya, whose goods were not satisfactory, but rather from either Ebisu-ya or Daimaru. The padding, he noted, could be bought second-hand, and because it would be bulky should be sent on the domain boat from Edo.

Tamuro in turn exhibited an unabashed concern for the price of commodities he was considering purchasing. He routinely recorded the cost of items he bought or was considering buying (e.g. "Tea can be obtained at Yamamoto-ya for two *shu*") as well as where various items could be found more cheaply and on a number of occasions he was able to save money by purchasing goods second-hand, including kimono. The fact that he noted this fact when he purchased cotton padding for futon bedding demonstrates his concern with cost.

It is not surprising that Tamuro took avail of his time in Edo to make purchases for various family members back in Hachinohe, which were known as "goods sent down" (*kudashimono*). His younger sister, for example, sent him a shopping list, and money to pay for the goods, in preparation for her wedding later that fall in 1828. Tamuro had to rearrange his work schedule, swapping shifts with someone else to leave the domain residence, but failed to record the items that he purchased.²⁵ Tamuro's cousin Tomoji also wrote to him requesting a number of items, which included woodblock prints, cotton thread, white paper, gray recycled paper and tea.²⁶ As a wedding gift for his cousin, Tamuro purchased a formal set of clothing (*kamishimo*) made of linen and sent it by boat together with the items Tomoji had ordered and some Yamamoto tea ordered by a woman only identified as Yasu.

Tamuro also purchased for a wider circle of

contacts a range of commodities on a number of occasions during his tour of duty, from 1829/6 until the following fourth month. In fact, he received orders to purchase at least eighty goods from nine different people in Hachinohe, other than immediate family members. These included regular and great uncles, in-laws and two people with whom there was no apparent familial relationship.

The nature of the goods purchased for this circle of family and presumably friends can also be analyzed by breaking them down into a number of broad categories. As with Heima's shopping list earlier, the largest category of commodities sent from Edo to Hachinohe consisted of cloth material and clothing, and most of it was for his family, primarily his mother. The majority of the items were cloth rather than finished, ready-to-wear kimono. In other words, materials like unlined kimono cloth, linen for several types of kimono and more formal *kamishimo* wear, and crepe silk were transported as rolls of cloth back to Hachinohe, where they were sewn into finished clothing. Some light kimono and kimono underlinings were also purchased second-hand; in this case usually a new collar was purchased and sometimes the sleeves were replaced with new material. This was an economical way to build a wardrobe. Clothing was supplemented with foot ware, including both *tabi* and *geta*. Clothing was accessorized with bags for tissue paper, tobacco pouches and umbrellas. Items for personal make-up and hygiene included hair chords, white powder (*oshiroi*), hair oil for men, lipstick, camellia oil (for women's hair) and a toothbrush. A number of other types of cloth (cotton and silk) material, some in scrap form, were purchased for various uses, including stuffing for futon, to make *furoshiki* (wrapping cloth used to transport goods) or possibly to repair other clothing. Bags of cotton thread, to be used back in Hachinohe, as well as a number of ready-made wraps and hand-towels rounded out the purchases in this general category of cloth and clothing. In terms of household items, there were orders for two small chests, mirrors, sewing needles, inexpensive tea bowls (100), brooms, five pieces of luggage (*nimotsu*) of an indeterminate type, a woman's pipe (for his wife) and writing supplies. The latter consisted of brushes, ink and

²⁵ *Toyama ke nikki*, vol. 1, pp. 84–85.

²⁶ *Toyama ke nikki*, vol. 1, pp. 130–31.

multiple types of paper—a total of 2,000 sheets—including the recycled grey-colored paper noted above.

Since Edo at this time was the main center for publishing, it is not surprising that there were also orders for a number of books, including literature, dictionaries (e.g., *Bunsen jibiki*) and other reference works. Some of the books he acquired, such as the book of heraldry, *Daibukan*, and works of literature (e.g., *Edo sunago*) were directly associated with Edo, the first of them being a who's who of elite members of the samurai status group in the Tokugawa capital.²⁷ All of these books would have been valuable resources back in Hachinohe, where the Toyama were one of thirty-eight samurai families who were members of a book cooperative which pooled resources to purchase what in the early nineteenth century amounted to 2,588 volumes in both Japanese and Chinese.²⁸ Domainal retainers posted to Edo thus served as an important conduit through which books found in Edo could be acquired for use in Hachinohe.

Tamuro's contacts ordered only a limited amount of food—a variety of teas and brown sugar, and tangerines (*mikan*)—probably due to the problem of spoilage during transport. Tangerines, however, were a popular gift at year's end, and could hold up during the two weeks it often required for shipping to Hachinohe. In the middle of the Twelfth month of 1828, with two feet

of new snow on the ground, Heima noted in his diary that Tamuro sent fifty-nine tangerines as gifts—seven for each of two people and five each for nine different people. Likewise, when both he and Heima were back in Hachinohe, they received over sixty tangerines, three other type of citrus fruit known as *kyūnenbo* and one citron, from a total of seven people.²⁹

Sugar was a highly valuable commodity in Tokugawa Japan—according to one source, in the closing years of the period seven times as expensive as rice³⁰—and therefore it only made infrequent appearances in Tamuro and Heima's accounts. Largely an import item until the early eighteenth century, when Shogun Yoshimune implemented policies for import substitution, domestic sugar began being produced in a number of areas in western Japan, particularly in northern Shikoku (Sanuki and Awa), but to some extent in the Kantō region south of Edo as well.³¹ Sugar was used not only for sweets but in a variety of cooking. Carried to Hachinohe from Edo, it would have made a most welcome gift. Unfortunately the quantities Heima and Tamuro purchased on these occasions often are not indicated or are not very clear. As part of a large year-end shipment of goods in 1830, Tamuro sent “sugar packaged in four bags” and a round container (*magemono*) of sugar. On yet another occasion he purchased a jar (*kame*) of sugar for a

²⁷ *Toyama ke nikki*, vol. 2, pp. 267, 287. Also, as befitting the samurai status to which those ordering goods from Tamuro belonged, there were a few orders for short swords, various types of standards (flags used by warriors for identification), material for sword hilts, sword mountings (*koshirae*) and one request to have a piece of armor repaired.

²⁸ Kobayashi Fumio, “Buke no zōsho to shusho katsudo—Hachinohe han shomotsu nakama no shokai,” *Rekishi hyōron* 605 (2000), pp. 68–71. The members pooled their resources to purchase books, which were then available to all on a lending basis. The collection was housed in the residence of a domain Senior Advisor (*karō*). The volumes formed the founding collection for what in Meiji times became the Hachinohe City Library.

²⁹ *Toyama ke nikki*, vol. 1, p. 186.

³⁰ Harada Nobuo, *Edo no ryōri to shoku seikatsu* (Shogakkan, 2004), pp. 102–03.

³¹ The areas mentioned produced white sugar. Brown sugar, originally only an import from Ryukyu, via Satsuma, was later produced in Tosa, Izumi, Suruga, Tōtōmi and Mikawa. Nihon fūzokushi gakkai, ed., *Zusetsu Edo jidai shoku seikatsu jiten* (Yūzankaku, 1989), pp. 163–64 and Kitagawa Morisada, *Kinsei fūzokushi (Morisaka mankō)*, vol. 5 (Iwanami shoten, 2002), pp. 1125–26. The Toyama's were most likely dealing with white sugar, which was used in a variety of sweets, in tempura, and fish paste (*kamaboko*), to cite a few examples. On Tosa's attempts to begin a sugar industry in the late-eighteenth century, see Roberts, *Mercantilism in a Japanese Domain*, pp. 189–93.

friend in Hachinohe.³²

Food and clothing are economic necessities but the commodities the Toyama purchased were to a large extent “non-essentials that made life more pleasant, interesting, and comfortable.”³³ Cloth and clothing were available to the Toyamas in Hachinohe; the purchases made in Edo reflected a concern for price in some cases but also, to be sure, for selection and quality. Tangerines and sugar were not essential for human life but rather commodities whose relative scarcity in Hachinohe made them luxuries.

While sugar was still an unusual and expensive commodity, and therefore not frequently purchased in Edo by domainal retainers, a surprisingly large number of vegetable seeds and roots, as well as full plants, made their way north. Eggplant, daikon radish, winter greens (*fuyuna*), Chinese cabbage and celery were just a few of the seeds bought in Edo for use in Hachinohe. A large bag of Nerima daikon radish, in root form, was purchased as well. Given the largely agricultural nature of early modern Japan, and Hachinohe domain in particular, we can safely assume that seeds for these vegetables were available locally to the people who requested them, so there had to be special reasons why they requested them from Edo. Perhaps they simply wanted to try seeds from a different part of the country, although except for the daikon radish root, which is named after a locality in Edo, none of the other items have any apparent specific geographic association.

The same was true of the variety of plants, including trees (willow, pine, cherry and maple), which Tamuro purchased for people in Hachi-

nohe. Several types of bushes (azalea, rose and laurel) were sent in barrels, sometimes together with the tree seedlings. In this, Tamuro was like Tosa retainer Shimamura Mueemon, who in 1704 brought back azaleas from Edo to Kochi azaleas. Some of these he gave or sold to a landed samurai (*gōshi*) named Fukushima Yasaku, who cultivated them for profit.³⁴ The plants that Tamuro purchased all give evidence of the boom in gardening experienced in Edo and elsewhere in the early nineteenth century. Of course, Tamuro himself was caught up in this fad and gave plants he cultivated to relatives as well as to merchants with whom he did business.³⁵

When in Hachinohe, Tamuro in turn made use of the human networks of friends and colleagues who were serving in Edo. In 1840 (Tenpō 11/10/3), for example, he sent his own shopping list to Edo, requesting that the following items be purchased for him³⁶:

- *woman's cloth bag for tissue paper
- *pipe and tobacco pouch
- *cord for tobacco pouch
- *two tobacco pouches
- *lipstick (*beni*)
- *material for a narrow *obi* (*koshi obi*)
- *metal-working tool (*shirogana mono*)

This list included typical requests such as tobacco-related paraphernalia, make-up and cloth, but also one unusual item, a tool for applying metal to armor. For purchasing these commodities, Tamuro, like his father, gave his colleague

³² *Toyama ke nikki*, vol. 1, pp. 257–58. In Europe during the late-sixteenth and seventeenth centuries sugar was the central ingredient in confections, created by a new profession of sugarbaking, the consumption of which was a mark of gentility. By the late-seventeenth century “substantial amounts” of sugar were regularly consumed at the middle levels of society. Woodruff D. Smith, *Consumption and the Making of Respectability* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 97–99.

³³ Ann Bermingham, “Introduction. The consumption of culture; image, object, text,” p. 6.

³⁴ Shimamura had purchased these from the merchant Kirishimaya Ihei. Hirotani Kijūrō, “Tosa no sankin kōtai to jōhō denpa,” pp. 20–21. According to Hirotani, by the mid-eighteenth century azaleas were grown across the country. Today, azaleas are the official flower of Kōchi city. Hirotani Kijūrō, “Engyōji no satsuki,” in his *Kōchi shi rekishi sanpo* (Kōchi shi bunka shinkō jigyōdan, 2003), pp. 160–61.

³⁵ *Toyama ke nikki*, vol. 1, p. 476; vol. 2, pp. 194, 257, 287. On gardening culture, see Iwasa Katsuji, *Bonsai bunka shi* (Yasaka shobō, 1976).

³⁶ *Toyama ke nikki*, vol. 1, (Tenpō 11/10/3), p. 546.

Tomabechi suggestions about where he could obtain some of them at a reasonable price and of good-quality, thus demonstrating his knowledge of the Edo market. If his friend could not find a bag for tissue paper for five or six *monme*, for example, then, Tamuro said, he should look in Shiba Shinmei at Kiyobei's store, where he could find one with thick material and an attractive pattern. For good quality pipes, again, he recommended Shiba Shinmei. For other items he might have recommended a general location to look, without specifying a particular store. This implied that his friend had some knowledge of the area—indeed this was Tomabechi's second tour of duty—and could make good choices on Tamuro's behalf. In some cases Tamuro gave some specifications for the items requested. For example, the pipe should be long, like those made in Hachinohe (*gozaisho fū*). In requesting material for the narrow *obi*, which was used to keep a tucked-up kimono in place, Tamuro was, like his father Heima, earlier, quite clear about his color preferences. Under no circumstances should his friend purchase light blue material—pink, however, would do just fine. Also like his father, Tamuro listed the estimated price of the items to guide his friend in his shopping. This also informed his friend as to the approximate ceiling price Tamuro was willing to pay for items. To cover the cost of these various goods, which he calculated would run one *ryō*, he had that amount transferred via a bill of exchange (*ka-wase*) from the domain accounting office (*ginmi tokoro*) to the corresponding office in Hachinohe's main residence in Edo, where his colleague could collect it.

The Toyama family also received goods from friends and colleagues serving in Edo as well. Heima's brother occasionally sent commodities when he was serving in the capital but both Tamuro and Heima were in Hachinohe. There were also the year-end gifts sent by friends and extended family to the Toyama household while Heima and Tamuro were home, as in late 1828 when a man named Genzō sent a tobacco pouch for Tamuro's wife and mother, some sugar for his grandfather, three hairpins for his younger sister and his daughter, and two kites for Junnosuke, whose relationship to the Toyama family is not known.

Edo as National Commodity Center

Given the extent of these purchases that Tamuro made for people back in Hachinohe, and the trouble involved in seeking out, purchasing and transporting them, it is important to consider further why these commodities were bought in the first place. Were those goods purchased in Edo not available or difficult to obtain in Hachinohe? If they were available back home as well, was there some positive value associated with their purchase in Edo? Or was it simply a matter of price: was it less expensive to buy them in Edo? Given the lack of consistent price information in the diaries, it is difficult to come to sweeping conclusions, but some evidence from a household budget ledger kept by the Toyama household several decades later, in the 1860s, is suggestive in that it reveals that it was more economical to purchase material for everyday clothing in Edo.³⁷

Certain types of goods, and in some cases particular brands, were clearly associated with Edo. Such was the case of the several varieties of tea which Heima and Tamuro purchased. The only brand name mentioned was Yamamoto-yama, an Edo-based operation whose product was therefore intimately associated with Edo and thus desirable as a place-marker, tangible evidence that the gift-giver had been in the capital. Yet, Yamamoto-yama tea was also desirable on its own terms, for its quality, since locally-produced tea was no doubt available in Hachinohe. Known as one of Edo's famous products (*meibutsu*), the Yamamoto brand frequently appears in the nineteenth century in Edo-based retainers' shopping lists, in the quantity of one-half or a full *kin* (1.32 pounds).³⁸

³⁷ Iwabuchi Reiji, "Hachinohe han Edo kinban bushi no kōbai kōdō to kunimoto," in Chihō shi kenkyū kyōgi kai, ed., *Rekishī to fūdō* (Yūzankaku, 2004), pp. 197. He gives the cost of a flower-patterned cotton material as between 3 *shu*-1 *bu* per roll in Edo compared with a price of 2 *bu* 2 *shu* in Hachinohe. [note: 1 *bu* = 4 *shu* in late Tokugawa]

³⁸ The Yamamoto family came out with a new tea in 1816 called Gyokuro that quickly became popular among samurai. The sixth-generation

In the case of some other commodities, they appear to have been purchased in Edo because of their high quality. For example, the Toyama household purchased hair oil (*binzuke*) in Hachinohe for everyday use, but acquired more high-quality types, scented *tsubaki abura* and oil for dyeing hair black (*kuro abura*) in Edo. They applied the same principle to their strategy of acquiring paper, purchasing only recycled paper locally and higher quality paper from Edo.³⁹ The request of a man named Muraji, who ordered a set of sewing needles (*hari*), which Tamuro purchased for him in Akabane and sent to Hachinohe via a paid transport service (*hikyaku*), is more difficult to understand. Were such needles not available in Hachinohe? Without more information it is difficult to draw any conclusions. The request to have a piece of armor repaired in Edo might indicate that there was some special service available in the shogun's capital not available in Hachinohe. Another commodity from Edo, books, would have been highly desirable, since Edo was the closest major publishing center where retainers from northern Japan could find a wide selection of books (retainers from western Japan also had the option of purchasing books in Osaka).⁴⁰

Although Kyoto retained its reputation for high-quality handicraft production in Japan, by the nineteenth century Edo had become established as a center in its own right, particularly for what we might call personal accoutrements (*sōshingu*). This was especially true of bags or

head was appointed an official tea master (*goyō chashi*) in Edo castle. See the official website of Yamamoto-yama company; accessed 09/28/2006. http://www.ijinet.or.jp/ynp/shinise/07_yamamoto.html

³⁹ Iwabuchi, p. 198. Iwabuchi makes this conclusion based on a comparison of goods purchased in Edo vs. Hachinohe in a Toyama household budget ledger from 1862.

⁴⁰ While Kyoto was also an important publishing center, the number of western daimyo allowed to stop there was highly regulated and even when they gained such permission the number of retainers and attendants who accompanied the lord were few. Vaporis, *Tour of Duty*, pp. 51, 148–49.

pouches. In the Toyama family's records of goods purchased these pouches are most often identified as being for tissue paper or tobacco, the latter being a product which seems to have been widely enjoyed by this time, by both men and women.

The nature of Edo in Japan's urban hierarchy and its central position as fixed by the system of alternate attendance accounts for much of the attraction of commodities purchased there. Since Edo was a city in which goods from across much of the country flowed, acting in effect as an entrepot, it was a place where retainers could purchase commodities from distant localities that may not have otherwise been available in their home domains. Such was probably the case with the seeds and plants Tamuro bought. Regional specialty products from distant areas—e.g., the Hida lacquerware (*shunkei*), Osaka *tabi* and archer's arm protector from Echizen—also found their way to Edo, where retainers like Tamuro could purchase them, as he did on behalf of a man named Hikoemon. Tangerines, which were typically given in units of 5–10 fruits during the year-end season, were a valuable gift in Hachinohe, where the climate made cultivation difficult.⁴¹ Although the place of origin is not recorded, the sugar that Tamuro ordered from Heima while he was in Hachinohe and later purchased himself in Edo most likely came from western Japan or the Kantō.

Of course, Edo, being the largest urban center in Japan, offered samurai from the domains, particularly those from smaller ones such as Hachinohe, choice—a bountiful selection of stores, markets and goods from which to choose.⁴² The

⁴¹ Iwabuchi, pp. 195–96. The return gift was 2 *sho* (3.6 liters) of sake, indicating the high value of mikan.

⁴² Perhaps the Toyama's health was better than most, but many other samurai on a tour of duty in Edo made many purchases of medicine. Edo's numerous pharmacies offered great selection in product and price. While in the capital, Tosa's Miyaji Umanosuke, for example, was in constant search of efficacious, and affordable, medicine. Vaporis, "To Edo and Back," p. 47. On Edo's pharmacies, see Tatsukawa Shōji, "Edo no kusuriya," in Tōkyō jin henshū shitsu, ed., *Tōkyō*

possibilities could be so overwhelming that a guidebook, or the advice of men with prior service in Edo, was necessary.

The cost of transporting goods purchased in Edo, added to the cost of the goods themselves, might have inhibited the consumer activity of samurai. Such was not the case, however, as there were several means available for transporting commodities that did not entail an outlay of cash. Tamuro could of course simply carry some—if they were light, compact objects—when he returned to Hachinohe. Otherwise, he could also ask this of his friends and acquaintances. There was ample opportunity for this, as the diaries kept by the Toyama as well as numerous other domainal retainers reveal that there was a fairly routine level of traffic between the domain castle town and Edo, not just when the lord, followed by his entourage, made his trip of alternate attendance. For example, when a number of retainers were returning to the domain on 1828/7/7, Tamuro asked one to carry a type of wrapping paper for some person named An-no-jō and two standards and a collar-piece for a set of armor for another, unidentified, person.⁴³ Several months later one of the domain's sumo wrestlers (in Edo for a tournament) delivered to Tamuro a request from An-no-jō, together with money, to purchase a book, and this was later sent with a foot soldier returning to Hachinohe.⁴⁴ There were of course limits to how much one could carry, or ask others to carry, as when a samurai only identified as Chūbei declined Tamuro's request because of the large volume of goods.⁴⁵ Except for this one occasion noted, however, there always seemed to be someone available to bring back to Hachinohe a purchase made in Edo. Bulky or heavy items—like the padding for futon—could be sent on a domain ship. These vessels, which periodically carried foodstuffs and other commodities to Edo for the use of the do-

o tsukutta hitobito: Bunka no kurie-ta-tachi (Toritsu shuppan, 1993), pp. 178–97.

⁴³ *Toyama ke nikki*, vol. 1, p. 80.

⁴⁴ *Toyama ke nikki*, vol. 1, p. 95.

⁴⁵ *Toyama ke nikki*, vol. 1, p. 74. Indeed, Tamuro's comment that "this time he could not" implied that he had taken things back to Hachinohe before for him.

main's population there or domain monopoly goods to the Hachinohe's warehouses for later sale on the Edo market, would otherwise be returning home empty. Sometimes Tamuro and others employed a delivery service (*hikyaku*), although it is not clear whether this method was resorted to when there was some urgency or when the other means described above were not available.⁴⁶

Conclusion

Alternate attendance separated large numbers of retainers from their domains and forced their participation in the commercial economy, a process that also occurred in many domains that drew the samurai off the land and required them to live in castle-towns.⁴⁷ It also was a major mechanism for the circulation of commodity goods, on the level of the domain as well as that of the individual. Furthermore, it had a cascading effect, drawing in much larger numbers of people than directly participated in the system with its biennial requirements of attendance in Edo.

The shogun's capital offered domainal retainers the country's largest market—a wide selection of commodities at numerous locations across the city. For retainers from outside the Kantō area, Edo provided access to regional products probably not otherwise available; for samurai from Hachinohe this meant from a large part of the country, from the Kantō region south. In this Edo served as a collecting point into which goods from across the country flowed.

⁴⁶ As suggested above, the transport charge could add considerably to the overall cost of the item. Tosa retainer Ōgura Sadasuke spent 120 *mon* to send 150-*mon* worth of some candy to his household. Ōgura Sadasuke, Ms. "Kaiei ni nen [1849] haru toradoshi shohikae, sōgatsu jun yori," folios 16–24 (Kōchi Prefectural Library).

⁴⁷ Of course villagers in many parts of Japan, particularly in the southern provinces of central Japan, were drawn, for different reasons, into the market economy. E. Sydney Cawcours, "Economic Change in the Nineteenth Century," in Marius B. Jansen, ed., *Cambridge History of Japan*, vol. 5: *The Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 587–88.

There, they were either consumed or sent out again to Japan's castle towns, through a human network, carried by hand, in horse packs or shipped by boat. The personal diaries maintained by two generations of the Toyama family of Hachinohe domain have also revealed how the Edo-based samurai could act as conduits for mercantile exchanges for members of their social nexus in the domain. While in other years—those not covered in this chapter—members of the Toyama family might have bought some other items, the same patterns of purchasing for self, home and network of family, friends and colleagues continued, with much the same types of goods and the same varied pattern of transporting them. Far from abjuring material goods, the samurai we witness in the Toyama diaries were astute consumers, the contents of their accounts revealing the considerable extent to which they and those in their social nexus were engaged with the commercial economy.