

CHAPTER 3

MIGRATION OF PEASANTS IN WEST MINO PROVINCE

1. Introduction: Objectives, Range, and Sources for This Study

Historical demographic studies have already revealed the following characteristics of population movement in Nishijo-mura, Anpachi-gun, Mino province in the latter half of the Edo period:¹

(1) The volume of migration was clearly much larger than common sense would dictate. According to individual life history surveys, of all the people born in the village and surviving past age eleven, 50% of men and 62% of women experienced *dekasegi*, or labor migration, at least once in their lives.

(2) The demographic effect caused by this migration was such that the rate of return, either to place of birth or to a nearby village, was approximately half of this number—44% of the men and 55% of the women—and that consequently, the migration from the farming villages to the non-villages (cities and towns) worked directly to reduce the village population, or at the very least, to suppress its growth.

(3) Moreover, since the average age of the returnee, whether male or female, was around twenty-six *sai* or twenty-seven *sai*, this migration caused the age at marriage to come late, in particular for women, creating a situation whereby the number of births was reduced, which fact in turn acted, as expected, to reduce population growth.

(4) There was a difference in social stratum among the people leaving for labor migration, the rate of labor migration being lower the higher the social stratum. Since the number of women who experienced labor migration among the tenant-farmer stratum approached 75%, for example, differences arise in reproduction rates among the different strata, resulting in a great many branch families and few extinct families among the upper strata, whereas, among the lower strata, the number of extinct families exceeded the number of branch families.

1 See this book, Chapter 8.

(5) This gap in the reproduction rate among social strata is, however, concealed by the creation of branch families among lower strata, namely, that branch families of landlords worked for themselves, and branch families of small farmers became tenant-farmers.

All of the above five points are important and cannot be overlooked when considering Tokugawa rural society. However, these observations derive from a case study of only one village with a population of approximately three hundred people, and are limited temporally as well to a single century in the latter part of the Tokugawa period. Moreover, the method of analysis used relies upon individual life history surveys,² the effects of which are not yet fully understood.

Although this method of analysis is optimal for historical demographic research using SACs, it does require a long continuous run of surviving records which can be processed statistically and are rich in detail. The SACs from Nishijo-mura that I used cover a span of ninety-seven years from 1773 to 1869 continuously without a single break. They are rich in the diversity of the information they record, and, in addition to items normally included in SACs, record the movements of people born to a given family even after they have left the village for marriage or for labor migration. They may be considered ideal sources for tracing an individual's total life history. For observations using sources from Nishijo-mura, this approach thus has its merits.

However, excellent data such as can be found in Nishijo-mura cannot be found in such numbers elsewhere. Village documents from the Tokugawa period remain in large quantities, but there are no such numbers of good quality demographic sources. In order to pursue demographic historical research in the Nōbi region as I have done, the SACs that could be collected were taken from fifty villages and towns³—provided there were at least thirty volumes that could be used per town or village. However, there was nothing amounting to the quantity of continuous sources found for Nishijo-mura. Even supposing their existence, as in the cases cited later, the period covered is quite short or, even if it is long, either the majority of entries are insufficient for detailed analysis or insufficient for conducting individual life history surveys.

On the other hand, however, no matter the facts and relevancies observed and discovered through research into Nishijo-mura, questions still remain, such as whether Nishijo's circumstances were unique, how far the findings for Nishijo-mura can be

2 For details, see data processing method, Chapter 6, Part II.

3 Although the collected data is centered on the west Mino region, the SACs themselves for Ōgaki domain, which comprises the greater part of the region, contain absolutely no record of labor migration (*dekasegi*), so information pertaining to population movement is unobtainable. There are also reservations and conditions when conducting general demographic analysis. For example, in the case of villages where there is a great deal of labor migration, the population as cited in the sources is greater than that of the resident population, and thus the elderly population is also inflated.

generalized, or what the situation was during periods before that of Nishijo. The need to address these lingering doubts is all the greater in light of the fundamental challenge that the results from study of Nishijo-mura posed to preconceptions that many researchers, including myself, had vaguely held concerning the migration of peasants during the Tokugawa period.

The purpose of this chapter is to expand the results observed for Nishijo-mura as far as is both necessary and possible for the time being in light of the questions posed above, allowing us to determine a basic index of the geographical movement of peasants. However, as stated earlier, the Nishijo data sources are the best and all other sources are in one way or another flawed by comparison.

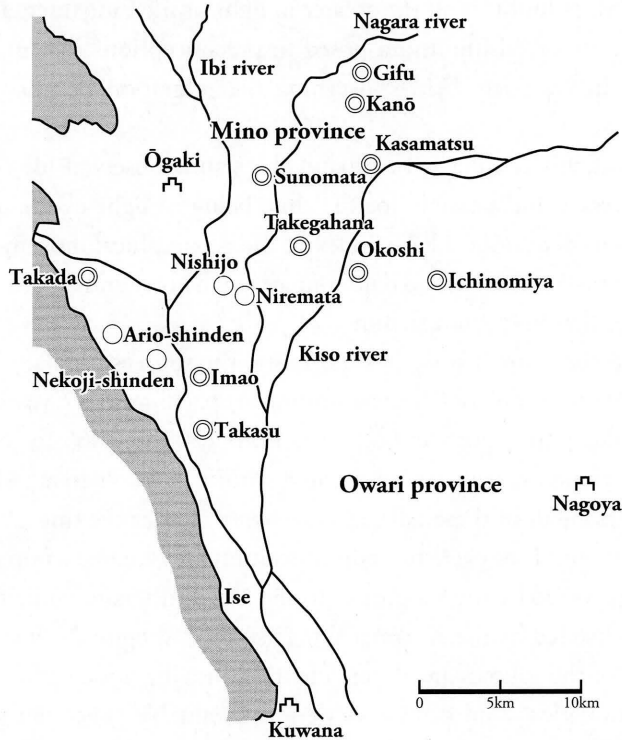
In addition to the sources from Nishijo-mura, the sources used are SACs spanning 43 years from 1796 to 1868 for Niremata-mura, Anpachi-gun; 77 years from 1702 to 1800 for Ario-shinden, Tagi-gun; and 53 years from 1709 to 1865 for Nekoji-shinden, also in Tagi-gun.⁴ These four villages are located within 15 kilometers radius and during the period in question, all of these villages were *tenryō*, under the direct authority of the Tokugawa government. However, the administration of Niremata-mura, like Nishijo-mura, had been entrusted by the shogunate to the Ōgaki domain, while the two *shinden* villages were administered by the Kasamatsu magistrate, a shogunal official.

The contents of the sources are almost identical, leaving aside differences due to the period under examination, and can be viewed as a valuable collection given that they provide detailed information on such issues as labor migration. Nevertheless, the earlier period sources are flawed in that, for example, they do not record the age of an employee who comes to work in the village, and in the case of Nekoji-shinden in particular, there are also doubts that the entries for labor migration are complete. In certain analyses I have omitted data from these sources from the research sample.

The geographical location of each village and its surrounding area is shown in Figure 3-1. Niremata-mura ought to be called the parent village of Nishijo-mura, adjoining it to the

4 The Niremata SACs were held by the Tanahashi family, Niremata, Wanouchi-chō, Anpachi-gun, Gifu prefecture, and are currently entrusted to the Gifu Prefectural Archives. In all probability, what are thought to be the oldest SACs in all Japan, the initial volumes dating from 1638 (see *Gifu-ken shi shiryōhen kinsei* 9, 1973, pp. 504–510) until 1684 and the SACs from 1796 to 1828, as well as those from 1851 to 1868, which were the sources for this chapter, are stored here. There are, however, missing years during this period. The Ario-shinden SACs are stored in the Katano Memorial Hall, Shigō, Wanouchi-chō, Anpachi-gun, Gifu prefecture, where the SACs from 1685 to 1800 are preserved. In this book, I used the SACs from 1702 onwards, because of the problems in the contents and the missing years contained in the initial volumes of Ario-shinden SACs. There are only two missing years from 1742 onwards. The Nekoji-shinden SACs are stored in the National Archives, and, although it is possible to use both the period from 1709 to 1725 and from 1802 to 1865, there is a considerable number of missing years. See Akimoto 1973a. Nishijo-mura SACs are stored in the Rikkyo University Archive, Tokyo, as stated previously. I am indebted to late Professor Hayashi Hideo and archivist Ms. Asai Megumi for allowing me to use the collections.

Fig. 3-1 Places Referred to in Chapter 3



southeast. People migrated between both villages through both marriage and employment.⁵ Ario-shinden lies beyond the Ibi river and close to the Tado mountains, approximately eight kilometers south-southwest of Nishijio. Nekoji-shinden is also located approximately eight kilometers to the southwest on the opposite bank of the Ibi river. Both *shinden* villages were established in the early years of the Tokugawa period.

2. Resident Population, Registered Population, and Labor Migration

First of all, let us look at the population trends in the four villages. From the nature of the source records, it is possible to observe both what would be termed the “resident population” and the “registered population.”

⁵ This fact is verified by mutually supporting SACs. For example, when a family member is recorded in the Niremata sources as going on *dekasegi* to a specified family in Nishijio, the fact that somebody from Niremata is currently in service in the *dekasegi* target household is entered in the Nishijio sources. From such facts, we also receive the impression that the labor migration entries were accurate.

The former is simply a count of the people recorded in the SACs, and includes the people born elsewhere who have come to work in the village (hereinafter called in-migrant, or *irikasegi*, workers) but excludes those people born in the village who have gone to work elsewhere (hereinafter called out-migrant workers, or *dekasegi* workers). In this case, various considerations are necessary when studying the records of those people who have gone to work elsewhere.

Firstly, three stages of migrant work are distinguished in the population record, namely, “work,” “tenant,” and “move.” For example, an entry may take the form, “Daughter Hatsu: This person has gone into service for a silk merchant in Nishijin, Kyoto,” followed by, “Younger brother Kojirō: This person is a tenant in Nagoya, Owari province,” and finally, “Son, Tamekichi: This person has moved to Doshō-machi, Osaka.” These distinctions probably reflect the way in which the person left the village. The first, service (*hōkō*) probably referred to leaving unmarried to live and work in the house of a city merchant or village employer. The next, tenant, could include, in the case of a merchant house, people who have moved on from being apprentices to being clerks or managers and have moved out of their employer’s households and formed their own households. The third, “move,” can be taken to mean people who have moved away and expressed the intention never to return to the village.

Here, people taken to have been out-migrant workers fall into the first two of the three categories above, and can be considered as people for whom the possibility of returning to the village of their birth still remained. In reality, there are also several cases in which someone in service did not return to their village for a very long period of time and died aged eighty or more in the town where they worked. But, because it is difficult to determine from the sources themselves the likelihood that some out-migrant worker later returned to their birthplace, they are categorized as above in accordance with the entry.

The second point to be considered is that there are entries in the sources for the two villages of Nishijo-mura and Niremata-mura concerning out-migrant workers whose households disappeared for some reason—the majority being extinct families—recorded at the end of the document as “those at present without a home to return.” In certain periods, there are individuals entered in this column because of the extinction of their original families, who were entered as nephews and nieces in entries pertaining to other families in later SACs. In practical terms, however, there is no reason to differentiate between out-migrant workers entered here and ordinary out-migrant workers.

However, the appearance of such entries in the records for Nishijo-mura and Niremata-mura may result from differences in the format of the documents, which in turn arose from different administrative systems, since administration of these villages was entrusted by the Tokugawa government to the Ōgaki domain, in contrast to Ario-

Fig. 3-2 Trends in the *De facto* (Resident) Population

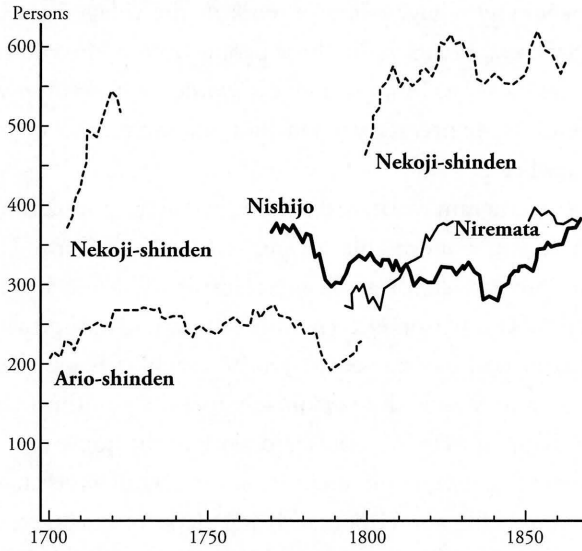
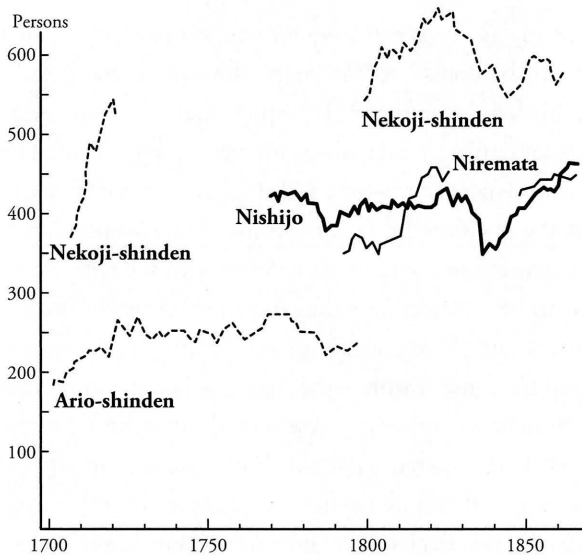


Fig. 3-3 Trends in the *De jure* (Registered) Population



shinden and Nekoji-shinden, which were administered by the local magistrate.⁶ As will be discussed below, the fact that in the case of both Nishijo-mura and Niremata-mura, the

⁶ Nishijo was not directly under Ōgaki domain control. It was Tokugawa government land whose administration had been entrusted to the Ōgaki domain. Nekoji-shinden is regarded by Akimoto Hiroya in his aforementioned essay as part of Ōgaki domain, but this is an error, and during the period under consideration in this book, it was Tokugawa land. (Gifu-ken Kyōikukai 1923–24, final volume, pp. 724–808.)

numbers of out-migrant workers are higher than the other two villages may be considered partly due to this difference in administration.

Bearing these points in mind, the resident population can be determined by subtracting the number of in-migrant workers to the village from the registered population and adding the number of out-migrant workers (including, in the cases of both Nishijomura and Niremata-mura, people entered in the “those at present without a home to return” column). Figure 3-2 shows the trend of the resident population and Figure 3-3 shows the trend of the registered population for each of the four villages.

On examination of Figure 3-2, there is no conspicuous change in the resident population in any of the four villages during the period under consideration. However, the increase in Nekoji-shinden during the early period is abnormal, showing a 47% increase from 371 people in 1709 to 547 in 1723, a period of just fourteen years, which is extremely high given the mean annual increase of 3%. The total number of births during this period was 136 and, since this is not a particularly large number, the increase can only be explained logically by an influx of population. Because of flaws in the source entries for the initial period, I shall avoid making a detailed inspection of their contents here.

Similarly, Nekoji-shinden shows a sharp increase of 17%, from 464 to 542 people during the five years from 1802 to 1807. This case can be explained by the fact that, while 90 people left the village for labor migration in 1802, the number leaving had fallen to 69 in 1807, while at the same time the number of births rose to 96 (the mean annual birth rate reached 48%).⁷

In the case of both Ario-shinden and Nishijomura, which yielded continual figures across a long period of time, there is no major difference from start to finish for the period for which sources remain, but Ario-shinden experienced upward surges followed by decline, with peaks during the 1720s and 30s and again in the early 1770s. Nishijomura, by contrast, experienced dips, reaching its troughs in the 1790s and again in the late 1830s. If, however, the two villages are compared for the period between 1773 and 1800, when the population data can be observed in parallel, the trends are

Table 3-1 Population of Nishijomura and Ario-shinden

	Years	Nishijo	Ario
Population	1779	379	248
	1790	299	194
Population changes	Ratio	-21.10%	-21.80%
Births and deaths	Births	94	64
	Deaths	113	70
	Average birth rates	24.4	24.8
	Average death rates	29.3	27.1
<i>Dekasegi</i>	Leaving	70	44
	Returning	23	14
Changes	Total population	-80	-54
	Natural growth	-19	-6
	Social growth	-47	-30
	Other	-24	-18

7 According to Akimoto1973a, this change came about because, “there was an increase in the demand for labor within the village,” but this is not demonstrated specifically.

astonishingly alike.

The 1780s were the period of the notorious Tenmei Famine, when because of repeated bad harvests, the probability is that fertility fell and mortality rose. However, a conspicuous fall in population in Nishijo-mura began immediately prior to 1779. Table 3-1 shows the population change in both villages between that date and the trough in 1790.

From these facts, about 70% of the striking decrease in population can be explained by the natural rhythm in both villages—mortality surpassing fertility—and fluctuations in labor migration. The remainder can be accounted for by both inward and outward migrations in order to marry or find work.

During the later period, although the data is incomplete, the population of Niremata-mura continued to grow across the twenty years from around 1810, and after a blank of twenty years for which no data is available, remained at almost exactly the same level. In the case of Nekoji-shinden, the population began to drop from 1829, and returned to that level only in 1856, the twilight of the Tokugawa government.

Taking the above observations together, we can say that the trend of the resident population for the four villages in this region had almost reached its upper limit in the 1720s. Thereafter it dipped into a small trough during the 1750s, peaked during the 1770s, hit a fairly major trough in the 1780s–90s, a flat peak in the 1820s, and finally experienced a fairly major trough in the late 1830s, after which the population expanded from the end of the Tokugawa era and on to the cusp of the Meiji Restoration (1868).

When the trends of the registered population are examined next, as shown in Figure 3-3, the general trend shows no major deviation from the resident population. In the case of Ario-shinden in particular, even when the absolute rates are taken for both the residential and registered populations, they are almost identical.

This can only be because out-migrant workers from the village are very few and far between, numbering almost exactly the same as the in-migrant population. Initially, the registered population exceeded the resident population, albeit only slightly, but then the positions were reversed. Attention must be paid to the fact that a considerable difference arises between the registered population and the resident population during the Kansei era (1789–1801). Namely, when the resident population was 206 in 1702, the registered population was 187, but in 1790, when the registered population was 194, the resident population was 229. In 1702, there were 4 out-migrants and 23 in-migrants, and in 1790, there were 43 out-migrants and 8 in-migrants.

The population trends in both Nishijo-mura and Niremata-mura tend to be almost parallel for both resident and registered populations, but there is a major difference in the absolute rates, showing a large number of out-migrants. The years in which the variance was greatest were 1827 for Nishijo-mura, when a resident population of 322 contrasted with a registered population of 429, and 1822 for Niremata-mura, when the resident population was 354 compared to a registered population of 447. The numbers migrating

in and out during these two years are 2 in-migrants and 109 out-migrants in the case of Nishijo-mura and 18 in-migrants versus 111 out-migrants for Niremata-mura.

In the case of Nekoji-shinden, the difference between both populations from 1820 onwards narrows rapidly, so that by the end of the Tokugawa era they are almost identical. This is because out-migrants have been erased from the sources in question, but, because in both Nishijo-mura and Niremata-mura during the same period, the high level of out-migration continues unabated, it is better to reserve judgment as to whether the number of out-migrants actually fell in reality, or merely on paper.⁸

If the several cases cited above are taken together, it can be understood that the difference between both the resident population and the registered population in these four villages was somewhat small to begin with, then gradually grew larger, so that during the Kansei era (1789–1801), it had reached considerable proportions in the three villages for which sources still exist. Also, the difference reached its maximum in three other villages during the Bunsei era (1818–1830). Since this difference was largely the result of migration from each of the villages, various observations concerning migration can be made, as follows.

3. Quantitative Observations on Population Migration

Whether according to common usage or to the dictionary definition, out-migration (*dekasegi*) means to be away from home for purposes of employment only temporarily, with the premise of one day returning to one's place of birth. There is evidence to support the assertion that migrant work in Japan was characterized by "*dekasegi*-style migration," with movement from the farming villages to the big cities, until the period of high economic growth after the Second World War. In addition to the characteristics that can be called typical of "Japanese-style migration," what is often emphasized as labor migration during

8 According to Akimoto Hiroya, the increases and decreases in the number of people on *dekasegi* in Nekoji-shinden "can well be expected to have been shaped by the increase in the labor demand due to the production of Mino striped cloth that developed centrally in the West Mino *wajū* belt from around the Meiwa and Tenmei eras (1764–1789), and its subsequent decline. The peasants of Nekoji-shinden came to enjoy opportunities for employment close to home. Nevertheless, on the other hand, from the Bunsei era (1818–1830) onwards, the center of striped cloth production shifted to Owari (Ichinomiya and Okoshi), labor demand in the locality fell, the number of people on *dekasegi* from the village also fell, and this is explained as the period in which, "there was, overall, economic stagnation." However, as can also be understood from the Nishijo cases, out-migration meant working away from home not only in local farming villages and towns, but rather mainly in far-off cities, so that fluctuations in the volume of labor migration probably cannot be explained only in terms of the decline of striped cloth production in this area. Also, when the labor migration out of Nishijo is examined, because there is a shift in the volume to what is today the nearby city of Hajima (at the time, the belt centered on Takegahana), which was, contrary to expectation, the center of Mino striped cloth production from the Bunsei era onwards, it is thought that the Nekoji-shinden case needs to be explained according to separate factors.

the Tokugawa period requires consideration of another systemic factor.

In order to stem the population drain from their domains, the domain lords introduced legal limits on extraterritorial migration. Just how effectively such limits could be enforced is open to question, but there can be no doubt that enforcement proved to be remarkably difficult, otherwise the expansion of urban population that continued in both Edo and Osaka with astonishing ferocity during the first half of the Edo period and the expansion of castle towns nationally could never have taken place. The urban population at the time could not sustain itself because of negative reproductive capacity, therefore, a considerable number of people needed to be absorbed from rural communities just to maintain a fixed level of population. This leads to the only possible conclusion that there was even greater mass migration during periods of population growth, and that migration was not contained within the individual domains.⁹

Although we are here speaking of the latter half of the Tokugawa period, even in the cases of farming villages under direct Tokugawa control, like those cited in this chapter, the destination of labor migration is completely indiscriminate, irrespective of whether the region was under Tokugawa or other control. Consequently, legal restrictions on migration were clearly hopeless, even supposing they existed, although as we might expect, open migration, that is, “moving” permanently, was not permitted unrestricted.

Thus, when peasants migrated, they freely used the term *dekasegi*. This way, they could avoid being subject to the lord’s restrictions. Consequently, we should accept that among these peasants, there were many people who moved to the cities permanently, that is, in actuality, “moved,” on the pretext of labor migration. Equally, however, it is impossible to distinguish these people from all those recorded as *dekasegi* and, furthermore, there can be no doubt that there were also cases in which people who entered employment intending for it to be temporary changed their minds once they arrived in the city, and ended up spending their whole lives there.

When this is taken into account, any practical distinction between the motives of people who “left for labor migration” and people who “moved” ceases to be discernible on the basis of the sources. However, the term “moved” appears in the sources only here and there, after long periods of “labor migration” or “living as tenants.” Consequently,

9 Although there has been little historical demographic research pertaining to Tokugawa-period cities to date, in the case of Takayama, Hida province, which is coming to light through a survey tracing the movements of approximately forty thousand men and women recorded in the continuous run of SACs, fluctuations due to natural causes between the first year of the surviving sources (1811 in the case of Ichinomachi street, 1773 in the case of Ninomachi street) and their final year (1871 in both cases), indicate 13,934 births and 14,424 deaths, a net loss of 490, against fluctuations due to social factors of 19,928 immigrants and 17,200 emigrants, a net gain of 2,728 people. In other words, the two streets of Takayama absorbed as a net gain the population of farming villages outside of Takayama. See Sasaki 1977, pp. 135–152. Furthermore, Takahashi Miyuki has revealed that in the town of Kōriyama, Mutsu province, the number of people entering was greater than those leaving. Takahashi 2005, p. 159, Table 5-1.

in dealing with migration in this chapter, I will limit discussion to cases of either “labor migration” or “living as tenants, and eliminate those identified as having “moved,” assuming it to mean that there was no possibility of these individuals returning to the villages of their birth.¹⁰

One other factor is the establishment of a framework based on age, given the nature of working away from home (hereinafter, this will include living and working as a tenant). The age of the working population that is used at present is normally 15 to 64, but this is predicated upon realities born of the contemporary world that do not necessarily fit the model for Tokugawa Japan. For example, modern society has extended the period of schooling as a result of the establishment of compulsory education, implying a rise in the age at which people start working, and also the graying of society following retirement due to the prolongation of the average life-span. This age for commencement of work is too late for the Tokugawa period, as is the age of retirement. What ages are then appropriate? Although there is no sure and certain proof, age 11 would seem a suitable age for entry into employment, and 50 *sai* for retirement. In other words, I have here taken the population of productive age to be men and women between the ages of 11 and 50. If pushed for the basis of my argument, there is the case of Nishijo-mura, where the age at which people began to leave home for labor migration is concentrated in the 11 *sai* to 16 *sai* bracket, and where not a single person aged 50 or over left to find work anew, as shown in Table 3-2.¹¹

Table 3-2 Distribution of Age at Departure for *Dekasegi*

Age at departure	Population		Cumulative composition (%)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
5	1		0.8	
6	1	1	1.6	0.6
7	1	3	2.3	2.4
8	5	3	6.3	4.3
9	9	6	13.3	7.9
10	6	9	18.0	13.4
11	16	8	30.5	18.3
12	11	17	39.1	28.7
13	10	20	46.9	40.9
14	11	23	55.5	54.9
15	8	16	61.7	64.6
16	10	22	69.5	78.0
17	9	9	76.6	83.5
18	6	7	81.3	87.8
19	4	7	84.4	92.1
20	1	5	85.2	95.1
21–25	7	8	90.6	100.0
26–30	7		96.1	

10 When the Nishijo SACs are consulted with regard to rented housing, there are five cases to be found: one in Kyoto, four in Nagoya, for males in every case. Further, there are three cases of permanent removal: A family of five moved to Takada-machi, Tagi-gun (Tokugawa land also entrusted to Ōgaki domain) in 1786, a single male moved to Nakagō-shinden, Anpachi-gun (Tokugawa land), where his daughter had married into a family, in 1792, and a family of four moved to Nagoya, Owari province, in 1814. From these figures, it is clear that renting out a house and permanent removal is quite rare, and with the method used in this book, that the effect upon the quantitative measurements of labor movements is extremely small. However, there are different trends in out-migration service, in which cases a definite, firm procedure was used.

11 Table 8-4, Chapter 8 in this book shows the age distribution at the start of the *dekasegi* by both class of birth and *dekasegi* destination.

From the above reasons, the statistical analysis for labor migration carried out here is done with regard to all men and women between the ages of 11 and 50. As shown in Table 3-2, there are also people who left home for labor migration aged 10 or under, reaching 18% for young boys. This fact means that it is also necessary to treat people aged 10 or under as part of the “working population.”¹² Furthermore, there are several people who continued to work away from home over the age of 50.¹³

However, these older migrant workers probably include those who have for all intents and purposes “moved” permanently. In addition, the practice of being cared for throughout one’s life in the house of one’s employment, regardless of one’s duties, could be seen throughout Japan until quite recently. When these circumstances are considered, there should be no objection to taking the age of the productive population as 11 *sai* to 50 *sai*, and to take out-migration workers from within that age range.

Figure 3-4 shows the trends of the out-migration population for the four villages by ultimate destination (city, town, or village). In other words, it is a statistical series of how many people left each of the villages respectively for labor migration each year. I have directly connected the points on the statistical graph to fill in the blanks for any missing sources of five years or less.

The periods between 1702 and 1734 in the case of Ario-shinden, and between 1709 and 1725 in the case of Nekoji-shinden have been omitted because of missing entries in the sources. The places classified as cities are the three metropolitan cities (Edo, Kyoto, Osaka) and major castle towns (Nagoya, Kuwana, Ōgaki, Hikone, and Tsu), plus the port of Sakai.¹⁴ Towns are taken to include small castle towns and post towns in the vicinity, port towns, market towns, etc., specifically, Gifu, Kanō, Sunomata, Takasu, Imao, Takada, Sekigahara, Takegahana, etc., but it is true that clear delineation from major cities is extremely difficult. Farming villages are taken to be those with the word *mura* or *shinden* in the name, but because this also probably included the regional seat of government, there cannot be said to be any clear-cut distinction between villages and towns either. However, dividing the destinations into three categories this way should be seen as both necessary and of some significance for viewing overall trends.

The trend in labor migration as a whole is simply identified by the disparity between the resident and domicile populations, as observed in the preceding section, and probably does not need to be repeated here. However, in order to clarify this further, we ought to

12 For the total sources for Nishijo-mura spanning ninety-seven years, the number of people on *dekasegi* aged 10 or under (the age whilst on *dekasegi*) is as follows: 46 men, 38 women, total: 84 person-years. Against the total number of people on *dekasegi* between the productive ages of 11 and 50 (3,309 men, 3,706 women, 7,015 person-years in total), this is equivalent to 1.4%, 1.0%, and 1.2% respectively.

13 Similarly, the number of people aged 51 or over on *dekasegi* is 622 men, 612 women, 1,234 person-years in total, which is equivalent to 18.8%, 16.5%, and 17.6% of the number of people on *dekasegi* from the productive population.

14 For labor migration from Nishijo, Table 8-10 in Chapter 8 of this book shows the names of the towns and villages to which people from the village moved.

Fig. 3-4 Destination of *Dekasegi*

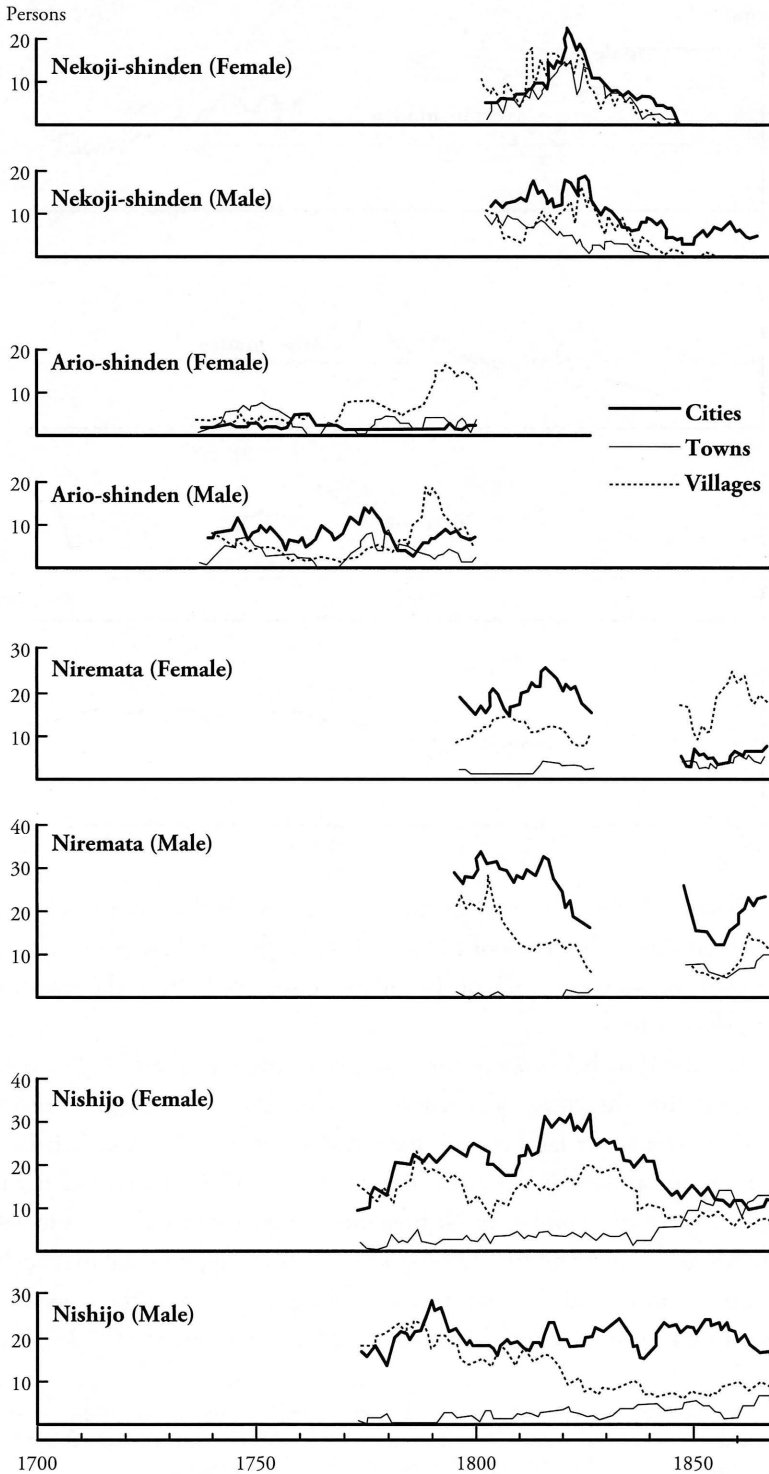
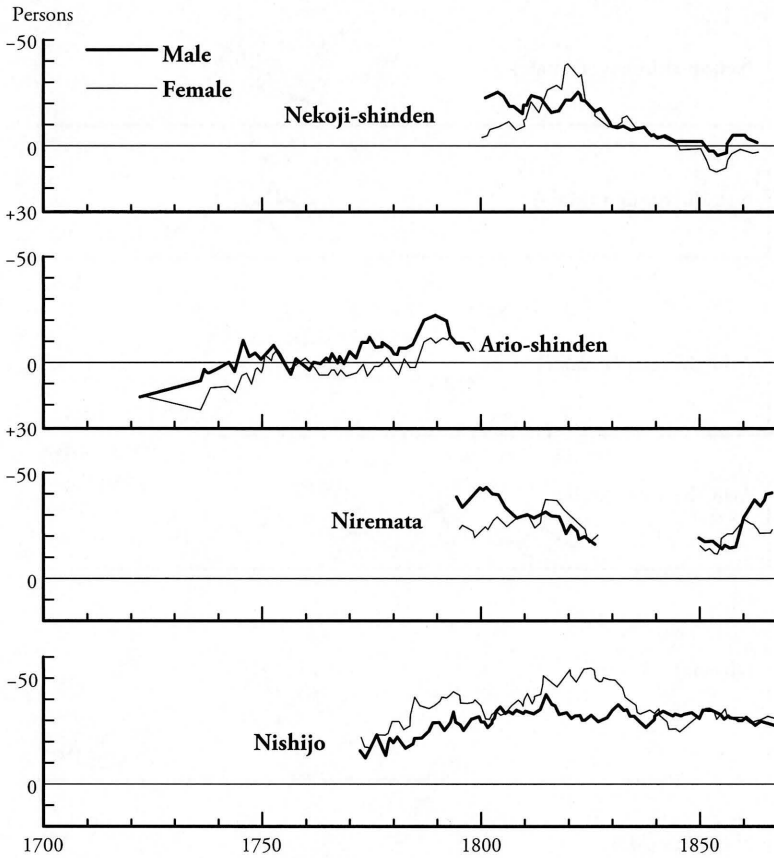


Fig. 3-5 Balance of In- and Out-migration



consider the balance between the influx and the outflow of the labor force as shown in Figure 3-5, which shows the trend of the pure (im) migration figures by subtracting the number of people moving into each of the villages respectively from the number moving away to work elsewhere.

Where the line dips below zero, for example in the early half of the Ario-shinden graph, this shows that the village was absorbing labor from the outside.¹⁵ In the case of this village, there is a slight lag between men and women, but the switch in the labor force from influx to outflow was clearly completed by 1770 in the case of the men, and by 1787 in the case of the women. In Nishijo-mura as well, expansion of the net outflow continued to 1816 for men and to 1827 for women. If we hypothesize that such changes occurred linearly, and extend the line back into the period before there are sources, the line reaches zero for both men and women around the Genbun era (1736–1741), so it is

¹⁵ The ages of the people on *dekasegi* are not listed in the sources for the initial period for Ario-shinden, but, because this is clear from 1722, the years prior to this have been omitted, and a direct line has been drawn between this year and 1736, from when the ages have been entered.

possible that Nishijo switched from being a village absorbing labor to one suffering a net outflow at about this time.

Since both Nishijo-mura and Ario-shinden were founded on new agricultural land early in the Tokugawa period, during the initial period in each, a large workforce would have been required for clearing and settlement. The reason that the labor force balances for both villages increase across the era, as shown in Figure 3-5, can be sought here.

Niremata-mura is a village that was established much earlier and was founded under markedly different conditions from the other villages.¹⁶ There are runs of missing years in the Niremata-mura sources for the period under consideration here, so that a clear trend cannot be established. Nevertheless, in the sources that do remain, which cover the early period, quite an “export surplus” continued similar to Nishijo-mura. The trend observed for men shows a considerable dip in the line with the passage of time, and this continues into the early part of the latter period, but partway through the latter period the trend makes a recovery, showing a clear contrast with the remaining two villages. In the case of Nekoji-shinden, the line continues to fall following its peak, and by the end of the Tokugawa period had dropped to zero. As stated earlier, however, it is not clear whether this was in fact the case, or merely a product of the method of record-keeping.

Keeping these overall conditions in mind, let us return to Figure 3-4. First of all, in the case of Ario-shinden, for which it is possible to observe the trends of the village’s initial period, we can see that, excluding the last twenty years, the number of men leaving for labor migration exceeded that of women. Although men working away from home overwhelmingly chose the city, there was a temporary sharp increase in labor migration to rural villages, peaking in 1790, and, from

Table 3-3 Population of Niremata-mura

Years	1684	1796	1868
Population	214	273	372
Male	125	141	182
Female	89	132	190
Servants	59	14	15
Male	32	9	8
Female	27	5	7
<i>Dekasegi</i>		92	91
Male		59	52
Female		33	39
Households	39	66	78

16 Table 3-3 shows a comparison between the main indices for the final year of the SACs used in this monograph from the early Tokugawa period that survive for Niremata (1684) and the first (1796) and the last (1868) years for the late Tokugawa period. However, the sources for 1684 clearly omit entries for infants, so the actual population probably included an additional forty or so people, twenty male and twenty female. Also, there are absolutely no entries pertaining to labor migration in the sources, and there is no way of knowing whether or not these records include people who have left for the outside. From the large number of servants, it is thought that the number of people born in the village who became servants to landlords in other villages is comparatively large. In either case, as can be seen typically in the rates in four items in the table, it is clear that there were large fluctuations that ought to be called qualitative between the sources for 1684 and those for 1796, while the difference between 1796 and 1871 is a quantitative expansion. It cannot be determined from this table from what year precisely the village became a “net loss village” due to the large outflow of the labor force on *dekasegi*. This is probably the same period as in the case for Ario-shinden, or somewhat earlier.

around 1770, when the numbers of women leaving began to rise, female labor migration to farm villages overwhelmingly surpassed labor migration to other destinations. Next, in Nishijo-mura, whose series it is possible to view over a long, continuous period of time, the numbers of men leaving the village to work in the city were constant when looked at over a long period of time, and were highest in nearly every period. By contrast, labor migration to other villages was clearly declining from the end of the Tenmei era (1781–1789). Workers migrating to the towns were few in number regardless of the era, but rose considerably towards the end of the Tokugawa period, notably attaining a level comparable to that of the labor migration to other villages.

Among the women, the highest rates in most years were for migration to cities, but this pattern underwent major fluctuations compared with that for the men, and showed a convex trend that clearly peaked between 1816 and 1827. Labor migration to the villages follows this trend, but in the late 1780s and the early 1820s through the early 1830s, a peak followed by a downward trend can be observed, reaching its lowest point in the final twenty years. In addition, labor migration to the towns was sluggish until 1839, but afterwards began to rise, exceeding labor migration to other villages, and by the last days of the Tokugawa government came to occupy the lion's share of labor migration, even eclipsing labor migration to the cities.

In the early period for Niremata-mura, a situation remarkably similar to that in Nishijo-mura during the same era can be perceived, but, in the latter half of the period as a whole, the outstanding feature is that many women migrated to other villages.

Nekoji-shinden exhibits a falling trend as a whole, although, in the course of this decline, it was always the men who migrated to the cities for labor in large numbers. Migration to the cities, towns, and villages among the women tended to be astonishingly uniform both in trends and in absolute numbers. Here the outstanding feature is a convex graph that peaks around 1820. Akimoto Hiroya has published observations and results on labor migration to nearby villages by people born in Nekoji-shinden.¹⁷

Drawing all of the above threads together, we can conclude that the destination for the out-migration workforce, excluding special cases, was mainly the city, although the towns, which always occupied a minor position, rose in importance in the closing stage of the Tokugawa period. It can be also understood that, with one exception, the trend for the men to migrate to other villages fell constantly from the beginning of the nineteenth century.

17 See Akimoto 1973b, Section 4 on “*hōkō*.”

4. Migration Rates and Population Fluctuation

In the preceding section, we observed the number of people from each village who left for labor migration. The percentage that these numbers occupy *vis-à-vis* the population of the village at each point in time is compared to the resident population in Figure 3-1. To make this clear, let us look at changes in the labor migration rate.

The labor migration rate, put simply, is calculated by dividing the number of out-migration workers by the resident population. There are, however, several problems related to this. First of all, there is the problem of how to handle people who migrate for labor migration within the same village. If there are houses in the village that employed workers, it is only natural to expect that some people born within the same village should have been included among those workers. In this chapter, however, since our focus is on grasping geographical labor migration, I have decided to exclude out-migration workers from within the same village. The effects on the labor migration rate caused by this phenomenon are not particularly great, and can even be called negligible.¹⁸

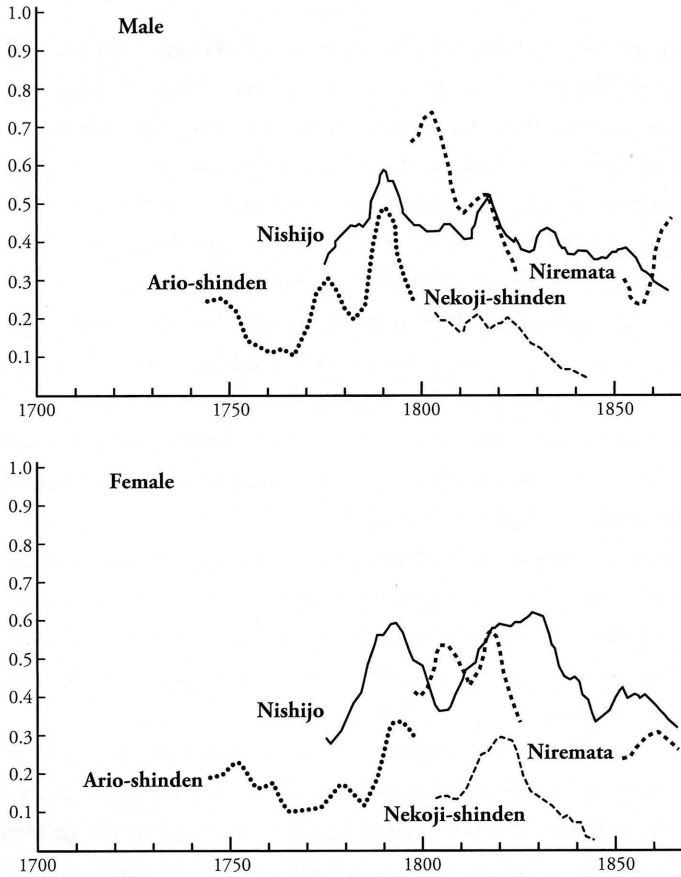
Secondly, there is the question of what to use as the denominator. Do we take the whole population, or just the working population—and, if so, do we include workers who have immigrated to the village from outside? In this chapter, I have chosen to adopt the strictest definition, by considering only the working population exclusive of immigrant workers from other villages.

The labor migration rate thus determined can be called the net labor migration rate. Rates determined by including labor migration within the village in the numerator and the number of labor migration workers from outside the village in the denominator can be called the gross labor migration rate (although I will not here be dealing with this rate). The net labor migration rate is the variable that enables us to understand the rise and fall of labor migration unaffected by the existence or otherwise of employment within the village, as well as fluctuations in the scale of the population within each village.

Figure 3-6 shows the net labor migration rate in the four villages by sex. For missing periods of five years or less, I have linked the points for which data was available with a straight line, representing the five-year moving average. This is because the annual fluctuation is tremendous, hindering a clear overview of the whole.

When the two graphs are compared, broadly speaking there is no difference in the general trend and level of the net labor migration rate for men and women. In fact, they bear close resemblance to one another. In the case of Ario-shinden, for example, there is a peak in 1750, and in the late 1750s there is a trough, so that the periods are slightly

18 In the case of Nishijo, when the number of people on *dekasegi* within the village and the number on *dekasegi* outside are compared, *dekasegi* within the village is extremely low compared with *dekasegi* outside, apart from the fact that a certain number of *dekasegi* can be seen among males within the village prior to 1800. In truth, starting from 1798, the use of people as servants within the village declined rapidly. See Chapter 8 of this book.

Fig. 3-6 Net *Dekasegi* Rates

out of sync, but they share a common path, with a peak in the late 1770s, a trough in the early 1780s, and the highest peak in the early 1790s. In the case of Nishijo-mura as well, after the reversal from a peak in the 1790s and the fall to a trough during the Bunka era (1804–1818), the trend rose during the Bunsei era (1818–1830), and then tended to fall thereafter.

What is most interesting is that these trends are not only shared by the men and women for any given village, but that the similarities are remarkably high between different villages as well. For example, the 1790s peak appears identical in both Nishijo-mura and Ario-shinden. The 1820s peak is not as clear when compared with the 1790s, but as expected, it is still possible to detect trends common to all villages. The declining trend in the post-1820s era is also shared among all the villages. In light of these facts, a common tendency can be identified in the net labor migration rate for all four villages.

It can also be seen from Figure 3-6 that the fluctuations in the net labor migration rate are quite severe. Regardless of whether they rise or fall, the trend in question stops after

Table 3-4 Population and *Dekasegi* in Nishijo-mura and Ario-shinden between 1785 and 1794

1. Nishijo-mura

Years	Population <i>de facto</i>	Births	Deaths	Left for <i>dekasegi</i>	Returned from <i>dekasegi</i>	Absent for <i>dekasegi</i>	Disappeared during <i>dekasegi</i>	Population in productive age
1785	360	7	16	16	1	74	3	180
1786	333	20	10	2	1	89	3	160
1787	340	1	10	6	0	85	4	157
1788	326	12	14	9	3	86	8	151
1789	314	6	11	7	4	85	3	143
1790	299	9	7	9	2	83	1	137
1791	297	14	4	3	1	89	1	139
1792	302	9	10	2	2	88	1	138
1793	303	14	6	5	2	85	0	141
1794	308	9	2	8	2	85	1	145

2. Ario-shinden

1785	237	8	4	2	0	22	1	123
1786	242	3	3	4	1	23	0	128
1787	223	5	4	13	1	26	0	126
1788	210	6	13	6	2	38	2	117
1789	196	6	6	4	1	41	0	109
1790	194	5	3	4	1	43	0	107
1791	193	7	2	5	2	46	2	104
1792	195	6	0	3	3	46	1	104
1793	199	2	2	4	3	44	1	106
1794	199	7	8	1	3	43	0	104

ten or so years, or in some cases in under ten years, never remaining stable for very long. The exception is in the case of women in Nishijo-mura, where the net labor migration rate stabilized at a high level for more than ten years from the late 1810s to the early 1830s. It is also possible to read the years of the Tenpo era (1830–1844) as being comparatively stable for male labor migration in the same village, albeit with a slightly declining trend. However, we should probably emphasize the extremity of fluctuation that is evident here overall more than these exceptions.

Here, let us take two of the periods and examine in detail the nature of the changes occurring in them. One is the ten years from the late 1780s, as shown in Table 3-4, and the other is the late 1830s, as shown in Table 3-5. The former is the era of the so-called Tenmei Famine, and the latter corresponds to the years of the Tenpo Crisis. However, it is unknown whether the region was assaulted by both famines, and if it was, what the extent of the impact was.

Furthermore, I have no definite answer to the question of whether both of these events were crisis situations brought about by sharp reductions in agricultural production

which were due to bad harvests. However, it is a well-known fact that these periods were times of major crises in late Tokugawa-period Japan and, in particular, that urban life was greatly affected. It is therefore important to look at what happened to out-migration from the farming villages in such times. However, although it is possible to study both the villages of Nishijo-mura and Ario-shinden during the Tenmei era (1781–1789), for the Tenpo era (1830–1844), observations can be made only for Nishijo-mura.

Among the items in Tables 3-4 and 3-5, people who migrated for labor purposes in the year in question are counted under the heading “Left for *dekasegi*,” the numbers under the heading “Returned from *dekasegi*” are people who came back that year from out-migration work, the numbers under the heading “Absent for *dekasegi*” indicate people who were already working outside of their village when the year began, and the numbers under “Disappeared during *dekasegi*” are people who either died at their place of labor migration or ceased to be entered in the records for reasons which are unclear. What Table 3-4 makes clear is first of all that the fall in population during the first half of this period occurred as a result of an accumulation of both natural and social factors.

In the case of Nishijo-mura, on the one hand, the number of births for the first five years was 46, and the number of deaths was 61, causing a net reduction of 15 people. When the 40 people working away from home are also subtracted and the 9 returnees added, making a net reduction of 31, the overall reduction is 46. In the latter five years, on the other hand, a striking contrast is visible, with a natural increase of 26 and a social reduction of 17, yielding a net increase of 9 people. A similar fact can be seen with Ario-shinden too, where in the first five years there is a natural reduction of 2 and a social reduction of 24, making a total loss of 26 people, whereas in the latter five years there is a natural increase of 12 and a social reduction of 5, amounting to a net gain of 7 people. The balanced figures do not agree with the fluctuations in the population because of movement due to reasons other than labor migration, such as marriage and adoption, etc., and increases and decreases in the number of in-migrants coming to the village for work.

The situation seen above, in which the rural village population was maintained by natural increase compensating for social decrease, as shown by the rates for both villages in the latter five years, was the normal situation for farming villages in the region during this period. Consequently, when the natural increase and decrease yielded a negative rate for whatever reason, the population was immediately reduced. The opposite situation prevailed in the cities, where the social increase was needed to compensate for natural decrease.

Out-migration disappearance in the table nearly always meant a death. In the case of Nishijo-mura, the number who disappeared in the first five years reached 21, equivalent to 5% of the 419 people in total who were working away from home during this period. As a percentage of the adult men and women who died during these five years, this rate is high (the average mortality for the same period in Nishijo-mura itself is 36 ‰). In

Table 3-5 Population and *Dekasegi* of Nishijo-mura (1837–1840)

Years	Population <i>de facto</i>	Births	Deaths	Left for <i>dekasegi</i>	Returned from <i>dekasegi</i>	Absent for <i>dekasegi</i>	Disappeared during <i>dekasegi</i>	Population in productive age
1837	309	10	28	2	4	89	8	164
1838	294	8	14	5	2	81	7	163
1839	279	12	3	2	1	77	0	162
1840	283	11	9	7	2	78	1	163

the case of Ario-shinden, on the other hand, the number of people who “disappeared” is merely 3, and even if the mortality is calculated, this amounts to no more than 20%. This may be due to the fact that the most popular destination of labor migration for people from Nishijo-mura was the city, as can be seen in Figure 3-3.

By contrast, the destination favored by labor migration workers from Ario-shinden was clearly other farming villages. As expected, the effects of the Tenmei Famine can be said to have been manifested more starkly here than in the cities. The same can also be said of Table 3-5, which shows Nishijo-mura during the 1830s. The natural reduction in these four years accounts for 13 people, while social decline accounts for 7, making a total reduction of 20 people. The combined effect of both factors reduced the population of the village considerably.

Furthermore, people who disappeared while working away from home number 15 in the first two years, equivalent to 9% of the total 170 people who were away from home for labor migration during these two years. This proves to be a major factor in the large reduction in the number of those listed as absent for labor migration, but, as can be understood from Figure 3-4, in this period, the concentration of people in the city as a labor migration destination was greater even than during the 1780s. Further evidence with regard to this critical situation for the urban population during the Tenpo Crisis years, are the observations using the SACs made by Sasaki Yōichirō in the case of Takayama, Hida province.¹⁹

19 Sasaki 1969, pp. 95–117. According to this article, during the Tenpo Crisis, between the three years of 1837, 1838, and 1839, there was a sum total of 12.1% reduction in the combined populations of Takayama Ichinomachi and Ninomachi, and the mortality rates for each of these three years were high at 87.4, 45.7, and 41.1‰ respectively. At the same time, the population drain to other towns was also high, and, in addition to the 904 deaths in Ichinomachi, a population drain of 812 people can be seen. In other words, the population reduction in Takayama during the Tenpo Crisis is assumed to be due to disease, but the reduction arose as a result of the twin problems of the high mortality rate and the large volume population drain piling up on top of each other.

5. Push or Pull

The above is an overview of labor migration from the farming villages of Mino province. As a result, at least within the bounds dealt with in this chapter, it has been confirmed that certain common features were shared by each village regarding the fluctuations in numbers migrating for work and the changes in their destinations. Depending on the village, there were differences in the absolute level of labor migration, but, given the different conditions in which each village was founded and their varying topographical conditions, this result is only to be expected. Of greater importance is the fact that the various indices relating to labor migration are broadly synchronous across all of the villages.

These are no more than rough statistics for the movement of the population alone, and at least some sequential economic data relating to wages and income is desirable, but the fact that we find such similarities in the labor migration trends between villages whose populations are believed to have been changing independently suggests the possible interpretation that this movement of the labor force known as *dekasegi* was not due to a “push” factor from within the villages. It implies that “push” factors alone were not responsible, but that there was also a “pull” factor from the cities and towns that became the main labor migration destinations.

The problem of whether labor migration from the villages to the cities—even supposing it takes the peculiar Japanese form of labor migration—was caused by a “push” from the villages or a “pull” from the cities is an extremely important key to understanding the economic conditions of the society. Advocating the “push” factor implies reinforcing the traditional understanding of the Tokugawa period which viewed migration as forced by population pressure and poverty in the villages, whereas conversely, advocating the “pull” factors leads to thinking that migration was undertaken as a link in peasant economic activity based upon economic laws operating in society; that is, upon differences in income and employment opportunities. I do not believe that the latter idea has been proven conclusively purely by the facts elucidated in this chapter, but, at the very least, they can be considered as grounds for supporting such a notion.

In order to solve this problem conclusively, along with the need to introduce various economic benchmarks other than the population index, observations are required across both a far wider territory and time span. Quantitative observations on population movement during the Tokugawa period are currently few and far between, but if analysis is carried out using good quality SACs, similar observations to those attempted in this

chapter are eminently possible for all regions.²⁰

Leaving such important issues aside for the present—though of course, they are linked to this—much more observation and analysis is required regarding the phenomenon of labor migration as well. For example, in this chapter the classification of labor migration destinations was limited to the three broad categories of city, town, and village, but the problem still remains of the relationship with particular cities (out-migration was concentrated upon the three metropolises of Nagoya, Osaka, and Kyoto in the case of this region), or forms of industrial development—for example, handicraft manufacture in the towns and villages—and, moreover, the trends that may also have existed in movement among the villages themselves.²¹

Furthermore, the difference in the various indices which is due to differences in the stratum or social status at birth of the out-migrant workers—an issue which could not be treated in this chapter but is partially examined in an analysis of Nishijo-mura in Chapter 8—is one of the most important problems for understanding village society. There is much else that could be examined: for example, the relationship between the indices pertaining to this kind of movement and other demographic indices, such as fertility, age at marriage and the proportion married, or additionally, problems pertaining to the family such as inheritance and branch and extinct families. Limitless territory for research remains still to be explored.

20 Here, I shall cite three results worthy of special attention. One is the marked reactions of the peasant population to the development of various industries in Bizen domain from the end of the eighteenth century onwards, as cited in Hanley 1973, in which the theory of labor migration flourishing is proven by an analysis of the SACs in three villages. Second, W. Mark Fruin, in “Labor Migration in Nineteenth Century Japan: A Study Based on Echizen Han” (Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1973), Chapters 5 and 6, and also in “Farm Family Migration,” *Keio Economic Studies* 20: 2 (1973), pp. 37–46 (a condensed version of the thesis), examines seven hundred families extracted from the SACs for fifty villages in Echizen domain and, on the basis of this, advocates a “push” theory, which views overpopulation and poverty as the motives for migration, evidenced by the fact that the *mizunomi* class were the main source of labor migration. Hanley’s research shows contrasting support for a “pull” theory but, because the status of economic development was different in both Echizen and Bizen in the latter half of the premodern era, the theories are not necessarily contradictory. Rather, as research into each different region progresses, it is most likely that a mixture of circumstances will become evident in which sometimes the “push” was hard at work, and in other, the “pull.” Thirdly, in Matsuura 1973 it is pointed out that, although labor migration is not recorded in the SACs for Hanakuma-mura, Settsu province, by examining migration patterns which were due to such factors as marriage and adoption, it can be shown that this migration was generally from the village to the city, following Ravenstein’s law.

21 See this book, Chapter 8, for details pertaining to Nishijo.