

## CHAPTER 3

# DAIMYŌ HOUSEHOLDS AND DOMAINS: THE DEVELOPMENT OF JAPANESE- STYLE ORGANIZATIONS

### The Ranking of Daimyo Domains

The bakufu and the domains were the characteristic political units of warriors during the Tokugawa period. This book views both the bakufu and the domains as the same type of organization. The actual relationship between the bakufu and the domains was complicated, as the following discussion endeavors to illustrate.

The shogun and all of the daimyo were linked together in a reciprocal lord-vassal relationship. The shogun either bestowed new territories on daimyo, or he confirmed the lands they already held. In return, daimyo swore allegiance to the shogun, pledging military service and providing other duties, such as building fortifications and religious institutions and maintaining waterways.

The relationship between a daimyo's power and his duties was complicated and was different depending on the individual. There were two basic divisions of daimyo in the Tokugawa period. The first depended on the size of a daimyo's territory, and the second on his relationship to the Tokugawa shogunate. In the case of the former, in the Tokugawa period the designation of daimyo was restricted to warriors who held territory valued at least 10,000 *koku* 石. There were approximately 270 daimyo. While the rank of daimyo began at 10,000 *koku*, the largest *kokudaka* 石高 (annual yield of farmland measured in *koku*) of a daimyo was ten

million *koku*. The amount of *kokudaka* served as a major point of distinction among daimyo.

The amount of *kokudaka* was not the only point of difference among daimyo since other bases for differentiation existed. Daimyo were differentiated according to whether or not they owned castles that were fortified keeps surrounded by moats and solid stone walls, or whether they possessed only the customary mansion, dubbed an “encampments” (*jin'ya* 陣屋), dwellings that had some military utility. Daimyo in the former group were called “castle-holders” (*shiro mochi* 城持, *jōshū* 城主), and they numbered around 120. Their *kokudaka* was usually more than 50,000 *koku*.

Ranking above the castle-holding daimyo were “province holding” (*kunimochi* 国持) or “provincial” daimyo, who held entire provinces as their domains. The word *kuni* designated provinces in the earliest period of Japanese history, systematized as the standard unit of territorial administration after the introduction of Chinese laws and institutions in the eighth century, known as the *ritsuryō* 律令 system. As Map 1 illustrates, the ancient provinces were approximate in size to the modern prefectures, and numbered about sixty. Provincial daimyo included those whose domains encompassed one and sometimes two or three provinces. There were about twenty daimyo in this category in the Tokugawa period.

The daimyo with the largest *kokudaka* was the Maeda 前田 family of Kaga domain, which governed the three provinces of Kaga, Etchu, and Noto, for a total *kokudaka* of 1,020,000 *koku*. The Mōri of Chōshū domain, who are discussed in Chapter 1, held Nagato and Suō provinces, equaling 369,000 *koku*. The Hachisuka 蜂須賀 of Awa domain, who are used as a case study in this book, held Awa and Awaji provinces, for a *kokudaka* of 257,000 *koku*. Other important provincial daimyo included the Shimazu 島津 of Satsuma who held Satsuma, Ōsumi, and Hyūga (720,000 *koku*), the Hosokawa 細川 of Higo province (540,000 *koku*), the Kuroda 黒田 who held Chikuzen province (520,000 *koku*), and the Yamanouchi 山内 who held Tosa (240,000 *koku*).

The second point of demarcation among daimyo was the divisions of *kamon* 家門, *fudai* 譜代, and *tozama* 外様. *Kamon* daimyo were related to the family of the Tokugawa shogun and were daimyo whose ancestors were the

brothers of reigning shogun. Among these were the three sons of Tokugawa Ieyasu (Yoshinao, Yorinobu, and Yorifusa) whom he made daimyo. Each held the Tokugawa name, and were known collectively as the “three houses” (*gosanke* 御三家) of Owari, Kii, and Mito domains, respectively.

The word *fudai* means hereditary retainer. *Fudai* were followers of the Tokugawa family before the epochal Battle of Sekigahara 関ヶ原 in 1600 which allowed the Tokugawa to establish their supremacy and create a bakufu. *Fudai* were subsequently made daimyo.

The word *tozama* means “outsider,” and refers to the daimyo who became followers of the Tokugawa after Ieyasu became shogun and the bakufu was established. Their number included both the aforementioned provincial daimyo as well as daimyo of middle and lesser power.

Daimyo were differentiated along these lines, but the most important from a political perspective were the group of provincial daimyo of the *tozama* group. Although they became vassals of the Tokugawa shoguns after the bakufu was established, some, including the Maeda, Shimazu, and Mōri, were once on par with the Tokugawa in the preceding era when Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣秀吉 had seized power. These daimyo had fought against the Tokugawa family’s effort to gain hegemony. Others in this group, the Hosokawa, Hachisuka, Kuroda, and Yamanouchi, befriended Ieyasu at the Battle of Sekigahara and greatly contributed to the consolidation of Tokugawa power. They were rewarded for their help by being raised to the ranks of provincial daimyo.

*Tozama* daimyo pledged loyalty as vassals of the Tokugawa shogun, but they had some reserve in doing so. These daimyo received greater honors than other daimyo at various ceremonial occasions, such as the celebration of the New Year at Edo Castle, and they preserved relative political autonomy in enforcing their own law within their domains.

Controlling an entire province (*kuni*) had greater implications than simply having a large domain since there was a long-standing tradition of provincial daimyo (*kunimochi daimyo*) autonomy. As Chapter 1 explains, the rationale of this authority developed from the practices of provincial constables during the Kamakura period who subsumed the political functions of provincial governors and other administrators who had been the

top regional authorities under the *nitsuryō* system. The parameters of a provincial daimyo's rule included the right to decide civil and criminal matters, the power to control roads, waterways and markets, the right to survey and register land within the domain, and the power to levy special, temporary taxes.

Thus, in addition to controlling a province, provincial daimyo enjoyed the prerogative of a range of established rights. These rights were not simply due to the great size of the daimyo's domain but were due to the accepted belief that provincial daimyo were distinct types of rulers having the authority to rule over an entire province. As a consequence, provincial daimyo received special treatment from the Tokugawa bakufu different from ordinary daimyo. In the case of the rights of provincial daimyo to adjudicate in civil and criminal cases, law suits and court cases did not simply begin at the level of the domain to be subsequently transferred to the bakufu's jurisdiction: the daimyo handled the entire legal process.

Moreover, usually when a gold or silver mine was discovered in the territory of an ordinary daimyo, the bakufu would take it over. Yet, in the case of provincial daimyo, custom recognized the authority of the domain with the proviso that the bakufu would receive a set amount of precious metal in tribute. Daimyo also occasionally faced the prospect of having to move to another domain at the whim of the bakufu, but the territories of provincial daimyo were set by the first half of the seventeenth century. From that period until the twilight of the Tokugawa shogunate, they were never made to move, just as if their domains constituted tiny, independent countries.

A final indication of the distinctiveness of provincial daimyo is evident during the fall of the Tokugawa shogunate and the Meiji Restoration when several provincial daimyo, including the Shimazu, Mori, and Yamano-uchi, played key political roles as so-called leading domains (*yūban* 雄藩).

At the end of the Warring States period, it was essential for the survival of local warrior rulers of all types, great and small, throughout Japan to concentrate their power and form hierarchical organizations.

However, as we have seen so far, many different problems surrounded what form these hierarchical organizations were to take and what types of political means could be used to create them. In that respect, the organization that Oda Nobunaga devised clearly marked a profound historical achievement that ushered in a new era.

Yet Nobunaga's political institution was extremely unstable. Nobunaga's organization was powerful as a whole and could defend its dominant position against outside enemies, but the organization was characterized by his despotic leadership, which had the effect of robbing the local warrior rulers who were its members of the meaning of their existence.

In that light, Mitsuhide's rebellion can be interpreted as an act of self-preservation, rather than as plot to gain power. His rebellion should be viewed as a type of political resistance that took a stand regarding the choice of systems that should be implemented to structure warrior society. The political organization that Nobunaga created was, by all definitions, revolutionary and had profound effects on Japanese society. Yet Mitsuhide's rebellion dealt a severe blow to it and prevented such a structure from continuing to exist thereafter.

The Tokugawa-period domain (*han*) ultimately resolved the contradiction that characterized the ground-breaking form of political mechanism created by Nobunaga: namely, the antagonism of that system toward the local warrior rulers' desire for independence. In fact, the Japanese-style of organization that is the focus of this book grew out of the confrontation and resolution of this contradiction. The following chapter explores the structural characteristics of the Tokugawa-period domain and examines why it became the model for the Japanese-style of organization.

### **The Daimyo Household as a Vertical Organization**

The Tokugawa-period domain constituted the characteristic form of governmental organization in early modern Japan. The domain bound together the various local warrior rulers who were described earlier in this book and who had appeared during the unrest of the Warring States

period in the late medieval era. The domain was a military organization forged from close lord-vassal ties among the retainers of a daimyonal household. The daimyo's household constituted the structural foundation for the domain's military organization.<sup>1</sup>

The daimyo household posited the daimyo as leader, and it was composed of anywhere from several hundred to a thousand warriors as members. The daimyonal household became the largest form of social organization for warriors in the Tokugawa period. Although patterned after the organization of households of local warrior rulers (*zaichi ryōshū*) that had existed in medieval society, the daimyo household not only reproduced this earlier mode, it enlarged it, forming a fictive household.

The warriors who were in service to the daimyo became retainers in the daimyo's large household and were members of the daimyonal household for their entire lives. Directly under the daimyo were the chief retainers, the "domainal elders" (*karō* 家老), who had the highest rank and handled all the military matters and general affairs. These organizational principles of the household, along with the accompanying concepts and terminology, spread throughout warrior society. The daimyonal household, consisting of the daimyo and his retainers, originated as a military organization, but became the structural model for warrior groups in the Tokugawa period.

During the more than two hundred years of continuous peace of the Tokugawa period — the longest span of peace that Japanese people have experienced either before or since then — domains had to revise the military features of their organizational structure. Since the samurai themselves as well as the organizations they created had a military function, they too needed to change their rationale to suit the administrative needs of an era of peace. During this period, the administrative mechanism of the daimyonal household gradually developed so as to be able to govern the territory of the domain in peacetime. To comprehend the salient features of the domainal administration, we will examine the structural characteristics of the early modern daimyo household, particularly its function as a military unit, since a military structure served as its organizational basis.

### The Military System and Infeudation in the Daimyo Household

When samurai first appeared, they were referred to as “mounted bowmen,” and as this name implies, the most representative form of samurai was the mounted archer. In the military system of daimyo households (fig. 4), most mounted warriors were termed *hirashi* 平士 meaning “regular samurai.” The *hirashi* were organized into groups of between twenty to thirty men, with each group under the command of a high-level retainer called the “head of the group” (*kumigashira* 組頭). These mounted warriors held the highest rank and status among all the daimyo’s retainers.

All of the warrior retainers from the ranks of *hirashi* to the domainal elders (*karō*) held their own sub-domains, which they controlled independently as minor lords. They used these domains to raise and maintain horses, supply weapons, and otherwise build up military strength and to sustain their own followers. They drew upon these military reserves of arms and men to carry out their duties for the daimyo they served.

Foot soldiers ranked beneath the *hirashi* and were the lowest level of warrior. The core group of foot soldiers was the *ashigaru* 足輕 who were armed with firearms (other groups of *ashigaru* were deployed as bowmen). Soldiers deployed as spearmen in battle, called *kachi* 徒士, enjoyed slightly better status than *ashigaru* because they were from the ranks of the *hirashi*.

Leading the infantry of *ashigaru* and *kachi* were warriors of high status called the *monogashira* 物頭 — with titles such as “commander of the gunners” and the “leader of the pike-men”. *Monogashira* were appointed from talented members of the *hirashi*. Ranking beneath the *ashigaru* were the *chūgen* 中間 and *komono* 小者 who did not engage in battle but carried equipment, acted as messengers, and performed a variety of other duties.

Thus, the hierarchy of military ranks in the daimyo’s household usually took the following order for upper level, mounted samurai: *daimyo* — *ichimon* / *karō* — *kumigashira* — *monogashira* — *hirashi*. In the case of low-level samurai serving as infantrymen, the order of rank went: *kachi* — *ashigaru* — *chūgen* — *komono*.

The daimyo was the highest military leader of this military organization, but the entire army was not under his direct command. The army



was divided into between five and ten separate military units called *sonae* 備, which were used for both offensive and defensive actions against the enemy. Warriors related to the daimyo (*ichimon* 一門) and those from the rank of *karō* held appointments to the *sonae* as commanders, called *hatagashira* 旗頭 — a term derived from the fact that banners (*bata* 旗) were the symbols of the *sonae*.

The *sonae* were usually organized with the daimyo's relatives (*ichimon*) and the *karō* in command, relying on their own followers to man the inner core of the military unit of each *sonae*. The remaining outer core of the *sonae* consisted of contingents of the daimyo's own retainers. The main force of the *sonae* consisted of groups of mounted warriors composed of *hirashi* led by *kumigashira*. These troops were deployed alongside units of *kachi* equipped with spears, along with archers and *ashigaru* using firearms to cover the perimeter. *Monogashira* commanded all of these infantry units in the typical *sonae*.

For instance, in Awa domain (Tokushima prefecture) in the military system of the 270,000 *keku* Hachisuka household, there were five *karō*, each leading a *sonae*. Each *sonae* had two units of cavalry led by *kumigashira* and four units of infantry led by *monogashira*. One unit led by a *monogashira* consisted either of twenty-one *ashigaru* with firearms, or thirty-two *ashigaru* with bows, or else twenty *ashigaru* carrying banners.<sup>2</sup>

The *sonae* that entered the front line of attack against the enemy was usually called the “advance *sonae*” (*sakizōnae* 先備), the “spear-head” (*senpō* 先鋒), or the “advance-wing” (*sakite* 先手). The “middle *sonae*” (*nakazōnae* 中備) came next, followed by the *hatamotozōnae* 旗本備, consisting largely of the army led by the daimyo. Banners, or *bata*, were the symbols of the entire army supporting the daimyo. Consequently, the *sonae* that formed the core of these various banner divisions was called the “foundation of all banners,” or *hatamotozōnae*, and it was the division under the direct command of the daimyo. The *hatamotozōnae* was usually the largest, but its structure did not usually depart from other *sonae*. It was only much larger in terms of sheer numbers of men. The *hatamotozōnae* formed the core of the army, and it was usual for perimeter *sonae* (*waki zōnae* 脇備) to be deployed at the edge of the army to protect the *hatamotozōnae*. Finally,

the *gozume* 後詰 or *shingarizonae* 殿備 was the division deployed at the rear of the entire army to confront enemy attacks from behind.

With the organization of the daimyo's army in mind, we will now briefly examine conditions of battle during this period. An entire daimyo army did not proceed in an attack formation together. Instead, the advance *sonae* (*sakizonae*) took on that important task. The role of the gunners within the advance *sonae* and of the *monogashira* who led them, who were called the "advance-wing" *monogashira* (*sakite no monogashira*), was extremely important for they might decide the outcome of the entire battle. The *sakite no monogashira* tested the enemy's battle formations and the lines of advance. This *sonae* determined the best ways to try to draw the enemy into the closest range and then gave the order to fire the guns. The opening volley signaled the start of battle.

The *monogashira*, especially the *sakite*, played extremely important roles in the fighting and received the center of attention and the most glory on the field of battle. *Monogashira* were appointed from among the most able members of the *hirashi* and were considered elites in the ranks of the daimyo's army. Even more important was the fact that they were not just simply the military elite, but, as I shall explain later, they also acted as leaders among their peers in the administrative system.

When the battle commenced, the *sakizonae* led by its *hatagashira* took primary direction of the attack. This was also true for the enemy side: the *sakizonae* on both sides of the battlefield fought the most desperately. After the gunners continued to fire volleys for a while, the fierce battle unfolded with divisions of spearmen from among the *hirashi* making their advance and with mounted divisions of *hirashi* charging forward. A *hatagashira* from the rank of *karō* led the *sakizonae*'s attack, and the daimyo entrusted him with complete authority to direct the battle.

As the *sakizonae* gradually extended the lines of battle, the remaining *sonae* were held in reserve and were strictly forbidden to engage the enemy without waiting for commands from the *hatagashira* of the *sakizonae*. If by any chance someone did attack, his action challenged the authority and honor of the *sakizonae* and would either be severely punished or had the possibility of sparking a fight among the allied troops. As this situa-

tion illustrates, the duties and authority entrusted to the *sakizōnae* and its leader, the *batagashira*, were great, and they had strong sense of their own honor.

As long as the *sakizōnae* continued to attack effectively, the other units only watched their progress. Messages and orders handed down from the daimyo were sent by heralds (*tsukaiban*) to the *batagashira* of the *sakizōnae*, transmitting directions on strategy and information about the development of the enemy army's attack. However, the leadership of the attack at the front line was completely left to the discretion of the *batagashira*.

If the *sakizōnae* suffered heavy losses or its ranks became disorganized, then the *nakazōnae* and the *waki sonae* advanced to provide assistance and reinforcements. Or, they might be directed to circle the enemy's flank or rear, and attack. Such attacks would be made on the orders of the *batagashira* of the *sakizōnae*, or else by orders made through a relayed message from the *batamotozōnae* as a way to develop the field of battle to an advantage.

The *batamotozōnae* under the direct command of the daimyo acted in more of a defensive capacity than an offensive one, functioning as the core of the army and protecting the daimyo who was the army's top general. The daimyo was the central point of focus for this *batamotozōnae*, and he planned the course of attack for the entire army handing down orders for all of the army's operations. The daimyo's general staff attended him close at hand to give their opinions about the plan of attack.

The heralds mentioned earlier had the duty of relaying messages to guide the flow of orders between the command center for the battle, the front-line troops, and the *sakizōnae*. The heralds had the additional task of evaluating the overall conditions of the battle and communicating this information to the army. On horseback charging through a battlefield crisscrossed by flying arrows and peppered with gunfire, the heralds had to use all of their efforts to gather information about the battle. The job required men who were clear thinking and courageous. Therefore, those appointed to the heralds were talented individuals from the ranks of the *hirashi*, who like the *monogashira* of the *sakite*, held a post of great honor and were recognized as elite.

In summary, the *batamotozōnae* led by the daimyo functioned as the

central headquarters for command in the battle instead of participating directly in the combat itself. One fact that deserves special attention is that, from the standpoint of military ability, the strongest soldiers and units in the entire daimyo army were allocated to the *sakizōnae* and did not surround the daimyo.

Japanese scholars have greatly misinterpreted this point. If we consider the distribution of military might within a daimyo household, it will not be found concentrated around the daimyo but allocated to the various groups organized as *sonae*. On the one hand, the retainers under the daimyo's direct control that were deployed in the *batamotozōnae* were by far the greatest in numbers. On the other hand, from the standpoint of the military power of the individual retainers, these direct retainers were charged with the primary task of defending the daimyo, and they did not have sufficient training that would allow them to participate directly in attacking the enemy.

The highest skilled warriors were the powerful retainers who on their own volition thought that they could be victorious in brutal combat with the enemy, and so gained the most fame by their attachment to the *sakizōnae* on the front line. These men were the true warriors respected throughout society as accomplished samurai who could hold their own.

The most vital element of a daimyo's military might was the power of its foot soldiers armed with guns. These groups of gunners were also deployed in the crucial area of the *sakizōnae*. As I mentioned earlier, these gunners bore the burden of leading the entire attack, being under the command of the *monogashira* of the *sakite*. In short, the most important military part of the daimyonal household was the *sakizōnae* led by the *sakite karō*. The *batamotozōnae* centered around the daimyo had the greatest number of retainers, but its military structure was entirely defensive and secondary to the *sakite*.

The preceding section examined the daimyonal household as a military group, its military organization, and its battle formations. This overview of the daimyo army consisting of units of *sonae* reveals that the overall military structure relied heavily on decisions made at the front line of combat. Furthermore, the daimyo army was characterized by the au-

tonomy of its individual parts, which were entrusted with guiding the actions of the entire organization in battle independently. The organizations of samurai along with modern Japanese-style of organizations are strongly associated with groupism, centralized power, and the lord-vassal system in which underlings carry out the orders of their superiors. However, when the organizing principles of the daimyo household are taken into perspective, the basic structure of the daimyo household completely contradicts these two characterizations. This point will be further clarified by an analysis of the civil administrative structure of the daimyo household.

### **The Administrative Organization of the Domain**

Second to the military organization, the most important type of relationships in the political system of the daimyo household was bureaucratic relationships among the administrative officials who were delegated to govern over the domain. The entire structure of vassals of the daimyo household was originally organized as an army, but at the same time, it also functioned as an administrative mechanism in the domain. This organization carried out political duties, such as the creation of laws, judicial decisions, and policing, and held responsibilities pertaining to public welfare. As mentioned earlier, the "domain" (*han*) is the name used in reference to the public, administrative functions of the daimyo household. The daimyo who held the top post in the domain was called "leader of the domain" (*hanshu* 藩主).

The domain's administrative offices were created to carry out the business of governance and were organized according to a hierarchy of distinct roles, dividing or combining certain duties. The daimyo's retainers received appointments as officials in departments in this organization. The early modern political system gave rise to a highly refined system of civil administration, but one different from modern systems of administration in which appointments and dismissals take place without restrictions.

The early modern system of civil administration that developed within the daimyo household was created as an offshoot of the military organi-

**Table 1. Comparison of Status and Administrative Office  
in the Daimyo Household of Awa Domain**

| Status                |     | Post                          |   |
|-----------------------|-----|-------------------------------|---|
| <i>Karō</i> 家老        | 5   | <i>Shioki</i> 仕置              | 1 |
|                       |     | Edo <i>Shioki</i> 江戸仕置        | 1 |
| <i>Cbūrō</i> 中老       | 37  | <i>Toshiyori</i> 年寄           | 9 |
|                       |     | Sumoto <i>Shioki</i> 須本仕置     | 1 |
|                       |     | <i>Machi Bugyō</i> 町奉行        | 1 |
|                       |     | Saikyo <i>Bugyō</i> 裁許奉行      | 1 |
|                       |     | <i>Shūmon Bugyō</i> 宗門奉行      | 1 |
| <i>Monogashira</i> 物頭 | 18  | <i>Motojime</i> 元締            | 1 |
|                       |     | <i>Metsuke</i> 目付             | 1 |
|                       |     | <i>Fushin Bugyō</i> 普請奉行      | 1 |
|                       |     | <i>Kōri Bugyō</i> 郡奉行         | 1 |
| <i>Hirashi</i> 平士     | 433 | <i>Kura Bugyō</i> 蔵奉行         | 7 |
|                       |     | <i>Tsukaiban</i> 使番           | 7 |
|                       |     | <i>Sakuji Bugyō</i> 作事奉行      | 6 |
|                       |     | <i>Metsuke</i> 目付             | 6 |
|                       |     | <i>Gundai</i> 郡代              | 4 |
|                       |     | <i>Ginsatsuba Bugyō</i> 銀礼場奉行 | 2 |
|                       |     | <i>Ozenban</i> 御膳番            | 6 |
|                       |     | Sumoto <i>Metsuke</i> 須本目付    | 1 |
|                       |     | <i>Ataka Metsuke</i> 安宅目付     | 3 |
|                       |     | <i>Umayu Metsuke</i> 厩目付      | 1 |
|                       |     | <i>Aikata</i> 藍方              | 1 |
|                       |     | <i>Kusurikata</i> 薬方          | 2 |
|                       |     | <i>Kamikata</i> 紙方            | 1 |
|                       |     | <i>Ishigaki Bugyō</i> 石垣奉行    | 1 |
|                       |     | Edo <i>Rusui</i> 江戸留守居        | 1 |
|                       |     | Osaka <i>Rusui</i> 大阪留守居      | 1 |
|                       |     | Kyoto <i>Rusui</i> 京都留守居      | 1 |
|                       |     | <i>Gakumonsho Bugyō</i> 学問所奉行 | 1 |

Note: Numerals indicate the number of persons

zation of the lord and his vassals described earlier. The military organization was adapted in its entirety for the task of the administration of the domain, even though originally it was not fundamentally designed for this task. Consequently, this fact strongly determined the characteristics of the organization of official posts and the administrative system that developed.

The ranks and status relationships of the retainers within the daimyo household followed the hierarchy of the army. Military ranks determined a vassal's household rank, and ranks within the daimyo household became hereditary. For that reason, military rank could not be changed easily; and status became a lasting method of classification that determined the conduct and appearance of the organization of the daimyo household. The daimyo household as a domain carried out duties of general administration during an era of peace, and it had a strong influence on subsequent social organization in Japan.

### The Civil Administration of Awa Domain

We will now examine the characteristics of early modern civil administration, which derived from methods of military organization, and the distinct features of the status system, in the example of Hachisuka family of Awa domain (modern Tokushima prefecture), which ruled the area of Awajishima.<sup>3</sup> (See Table 1.) The domainal wealth (*kokudaka*) of the Hachisuka family of Awa domain was 257,000 *koku* — an amount that tells us that they were one of the most powerful daimyo at that time.

In Awa domain, the status of domainal elder (*karō*) was the highest title among the retainers. The five families of Inada, Kashima, Yamada, Hasegawa, and Ikeda held this title hereditarily. One person was selected in turn from among these families for the highest position in the domainal government, called *shioki* 仕置. The Inada held a special role among these five families because they were charged with the duty of military defense and entrusted for successive generations with governing Awaji province in the daimyo's absence as the keepers of Awaji Castle. (The Inada were not the chief officials of the Awaji territory these positions were held by the *chūrō*, as I will explain later). The elders owed their authority within

the daimyo household to their high status in the military, and they held dominant positions within the civil bureaucracy and over political affairs of the daimyo household in peacetime.

The *chūrō* 中老 were second in status to the elders, numbering approximately thirty-six to thirty-seven people from the same families as the *karō*, and held their title hereditarily. People holding the *chūrō* rank were appointed to several offices, such as the post of *Toshiyori* and *Sumoto shioki*. The *Toshiyori* had the important duty of making inquiries and providing advice on matters of government for the daimyo. The *Sumoto shioki*, the chief administrator in Awaji province, managed the affairs of the province. *Chūrō* were also judicial magistrates and magistrates in charge of religious affairs. The judicial magistrates (*saikyo bugyō*) served as superintendents over lawsuits by samurai, commoners, and others. The magistrates in charge of religious affairs (*shūmon bugyō*) oversaw religious issues, such as the suppression of Christianity.

The *monogashira* ranked in status beneath important retainers like the *karō* and *chūrō*. The position of *monogashira* was one of great honor on the battlefield and a status allowed only to the talented and those of conspicuous service among the *hirashi*. Thus, the *monogashira* were considered to be the elite of the daimyo's retainers and deservedly so. The *monogashira* filled a number of administrative posts in peacetime including city magistrate (*machi bugyō*), the chief administrator in the castle town of Tokushima, and the post of "magistrate in charge of construction work" (*fushin bugyō*), who supervised the construction of castle defenses and the building of dikes. *Monogashira* were also appointed to the office of inspector, *metsuke*, to lead criminal investigations, and to the post of rural magistrate (*kōri bugyō*), the top officials with jurisdiction over the farming villages in the domain. All of these posts were created as part of the growth in civil administrative activity that took place after the stabilization of the domainal government. And all of these positions encompassed key posts to which the *monogashira* were appointed. Thus, the importance of the *monogashira* is evident from their prominence in the bureaucracy.

High-ranking warriors such as *karō* and *chūrō* held their titles hereditar-

ily, and it is evident that they were ill-suited to the contemporary conditions that required practical business sense and the ability to handle finances and administration during peacetime. Consequently, large numbers of the *monogashira* were chosen on the basis of their talent from among the groups of *hirashi*, and there was a recognizable trend to assign men of ability to the ranks of the *monogashira* and to corresponding administrative posts. The actual direction of the domainal government was placed in their hands, and they were the so-called elite among the daimyo's retainers.

This situation raises a point that is absolutely crucial for comprehending the various types of organizations and bureaucracies in Japan. In most of these organizations and bureaucracies, actual power is concentrated at the level equivalent to the *monogashira*. The people at this level guide the actual decision making for the entire organization. In fact, the men in the middle of the insurrections that were part of the Meiji Restoration and who guided the overthrow of the government were samurai of the *monogashira* level from Chōshū and Satsuma domains. They were the ones who took the initiative in making the overall decisions for their domains.

The *hirashi* were in the midway point in the hierarchy of daimyo retainers. They were the central source for supplying men for the administrative bureaucracy of the domain. *Hirashi* won appointments to posts such as rural magistrate (*kōri bugyō*) appointed from among the *monogashira* or the *hirashi*; the magistrate in charge of finances (*ōkura bugyō*), who supervised the conservation of tribute rice, barley, and other items; the *sakuji bugyō*, who supervised matters related to buildings such as the lord's palace inside the castle; the *ginsatsuba bugyō*, who was the top official in charge of printing paper money in the domain; and the Edo *rusuiyaku*, who gathered information and managed diplomacy at the daimyo's official residence in Edo. By custom, men of the *hirashi* rank were the ones who were appointed to nearly all of the important positions in the civil bureaucracy such as the these. Talented members of the *hirashi* along with others who had demonstrated extraordinary achievements beyond their

assigned posts were appointed to the rank of *monogashira*, albeit that this title was for their lifetime alone. This practice opened the way for upward mobility in rank and office.

The previous description provides an approximation of the relationship between title level and appointed office in the cases of the upper ranks of samurai in the Hachisuka household. A similar state of affairs characterized the relationship between status and office for lower level samurai. Yet, cases in which a lower level samurai was appointed to an office intended for a high-ranking samurai were extremely rare and exceptional.

As we have seen, samurai in the early modern period, on the one hand, were incorporated into the status order of ranks in their domain which was rooted in the system devised for the military. Yet, on the other hand, in their roles as civil administrators, samurai were simultaneously included in the hierarchy of the chain of command of the civil bureaucracy. These two systems were tied together and difficult to separate.<sup>4</sup> Since this binary relationship gave form to the vertical organization of command between lords and retainers, those at the top level enjoyed power and authority on the basis of both systems. Accordingly, the coercive power brought against people at the bottom of the hierarchy was necessarily strong. In the following section, we will examine the characteristics of the organization of the domain with regard to the implications of these conditions.

### Samurai Stipends in Units of *Koku* and *Hyō*

According to the way warrior social relations were structured during the Tokugawa period, the shogun granted domains to daimyo in return for their loyalty. Daimyo either granted landholdings to their vassals, or he gave them a stipend drawn from their domain's coffers. Granting a vassal land followed in the custom of medieval warriors and confirmed vassals as petty feudal lords. Consequently, receiving land was much more prestigious for a vassal than taking a stipend. The size of either the

landholding or the stipend was expressed in units of *koku* 石 or *hyō* 俵. The distinction between these two units of measure as well as the amount granted determined the social standing of a warrior.

*Koku* was a unit of measure used for rice, oil, and soy sauce. Warriors agreed that one *koku* equaled 180 liters of unpolished rice (1 *koku* 石 = 10 *to* 斗 = 100 *shō* 升, with 1 *shō* = 1.8 liters). A Tokugawa-period daimyo had at least 10,000 *koku* in scale of domain. This scale in *koku* was called *kokudaka*. A daimyo's *kokudaka* of 10,000 *koku* meant that his territories produced approximately 1,800 kiloliters of rice.

In practice, a daimyo's territory produced more than just rice. Wheat, cotton, vegetables, and fish and other seafood could also be harvested, but the values of these goods were all converted into rice to be included in the domain's *kokudaka*. The value in rice of these goods had to be computed because rice was the primary means by which inhabitants of the domain paid tax to the daimyo. The monetary value of rice depended on the fluctuations of the market, but for most of the Tokugawa period one *koku* brought one gold *ryō* 両 coin. In modern currency, one gold *ryō* is the equivalent of between \$400 and \$600.

The following model describes how a daimyo collected his *kokudaka* and taxes amounting to at least 10,000 *koku*. The value of a daimyo's domain may be 10,000 *koku*, but the daimyo did not receive 1,800 kiloliters in rice. In the first place, the daimyo had to give more than half of the territory that he held to his high-ranking retainers. A parcel of territory held by a vassal was called a *chigyō* 知行. Thus, if there were twenty high-ranking retainers, the daimyo would have to present them each with a *chigyō*, whose collective value might total 4,000 *koku*. *Chigyō* might be in the amounts of 1,000 *koku*, 800 *koku*, 500 *koku*, down to 100 *koku*.

The remaining 6,000 *koku*, termed "provisioning lands" (*kurairēchi* 蔵入地), was under the direct control of the daimyo. The *kurairēchi* referred to the territory from which taxes in rice were collected for the daimyo's storehouse. Since 6,000 *koku* constituted the total production value of the territory, it determined the daimyo's tax income which was a function of the rate of taxation.

During the persistent warfare of the Warring States period to the

beginning of the early modern era, the tax rate was unmercifully high, often exceeding 60 percent. However, the rate of taxation fell during the period of lasting peace in the Tokugawa period, reaching 35 to 40 percent in the eighteenth century. The Tokugawa bakufu fixed the tax rate in its territories at 35 percent and calculated its budget and other financial plans accordingly.

The amount of tax a daimyo collected on a 6,000 *roku* territory would be 2,400 *roku* if the tax rate was 40 percent. However, the daimyo had to make further deductions from this amount. In addition to the high-ranking retainers who already had received *chigyō*, the daimyo had to pay stipends from his coffers to his middle- and low-ranking vassals. If these stipends amounted to 1,000 *roku*, that left the daimyo with only 1,400 *roku* for himself.

From the amount left over, he also had to pay for the administrative costs of his domain. Flood control and irrigation, maintenance of roads, famine relief, and many other expenses had to be paid for. If these expenses totaled 600 *roku*, then the daimyo was left with 800 *roku* in income. This amount went toward cost of living expenses for the daimyo and his family, tribute goods for the shogun, and gifts exchanged with other daimyo, to name a few of his expenses.

Turning now to the daimyo's retainers, in the case of a samurai who received a *chigyō* worth 500 *roku*, at a taxation rate of 40 percent, his income from taxes collected would be 200 *roku*. However, this retainer also maintained at least ten of his own followers. If he had to allocate 100 *roku* to pay them, his income would be reduced to 100 *roku*. With this amount, the retainer had to provide for his family's living expenses, customary tribute gifts for his daimyo, and other expenses.

In the case of retainers who received a stipend in rice from the daimyo's storehouse, the amount was measured in sacks of rice and paid in increments such as 50 or 100 *hyō*. The reason for this designation was due to the fact that after the rice had been collected as tax from the inhabitants of the domain and placed in the daimyo's storehouses, it was put into straw sacks (called *tawara*, but measured in units called *hyō*). One sack usually contained either 0.35 *roku* (3 to 5 *hyō*) or 0.4 *roku* (4 *to*). Using

0.4 *koku* as the standard sack size for a domain, a retainer with a stipend of 200 *hyō* had the equivalent of 80 *koku* of rice. Unlike the retainer who held his own *chigyō*, the income of a retainer paid by stipend was not a function of the rate of taxation. His actual income amounted to 200 *hyō* (80 *koku*). Of course, he had to pay for his own followers, however few, and this reduced his income accordingly.

Observant readers might conclude from the preceding discussion of *hyō* and *koku* that the set capacity of a sack of rice was a function of the taxation rate, but the similarity here is purely coincidental. Nevertheless, while the correlation in this example is coincidental, in actual practice, bureaucrats working for the finance magistrate in the Tokugawa bakufu did try to make these amounts conform with one another in order to facilitate computations. By making these amounts conform to one another, the rates of *koku* and *hyō* could be understood according to a common denominator and amounts in these units could be converted back and forth.

The case of a retainer holding a *chigyō* valued at 270 *koku* can serve as an example of this principle. At a tax rate of 35 percent, the retainer's income would be 94.5 *koku*. In the case of a retainer who earned a stipend drawn from the domain's storehouses of 270 *hyō*, if the domain set the capacity of a sack of rice at 0.35 *koku*, the retainer's income would be valued at 94.5 *koku*. In other words, a retainer holding a *chigyō* of 270 *koku* and another retainer who had a stipend of 270 *hyō* would have the same income.

By fixing the rate of taxation and the capacity of a sack of rice in relationship to one another, a *chigyō* worth a set amount of *koku* was the equivalent income of a stipend paid in a number of sacks of rice. This made for a circuitous but elegant method of conversion that allowed income derived from *chigyō* measured in *kokudaka* and income from a stipends paid in sacks of rice to be compared according to the same measure. Thus, if a retainer with a 120 *koku chigyō* received an additional stipend of 40 *hyō*, his total income could be computed as the equivalent of a 160 *koku chigyō*. Likewise, it would be easy to convert the same amount to the equivalent of a 160 *hyō* stipend.

This practice of financial shorthand began in the early eighteenth century, first with the bakufu and then later in various domains. This procedure which expedited financial calculations was created to resolve the weighty political issue of the discrepancy in status between high-ranking retainers holding *chigyō* and lower retainers paid in stipends. This problem was solved by converting the issue of status differences into a numerical problem.

High status was no longer an insurmountable barrier separating *chigyō* holding retainers from lesser vassals who received stipends. Providing that a retainer gradually gained a higher stipend, it became possible for him to rise to the level of a high retainer. Thus, the transition from low-level retainer to middle rank, and on to high level was simply a matter of difference in level calculated according to a standard measure. Chapter 4 presents a calculation of the salaries for Tokugawa retainers of different statuses. In the method of promotion described there, low-ranking retainers could gradually improve their status and gain higher appointments through the so-called system of supplemental salary (*tashidaka* 足高). The reconciliation of the amount of *koku* and that of *hyō* was undertaken with that system in mind.

### **Prior Historical Discussions of the Domain**

Certain structural features of the domain are matters for debate, particularly the political power and identity of the groups of retainers incorporated in the domain, the degree of independence of retainers within the lord-vassal relationship, and how power was organized within the structure of the early modern domain. Historians have thought about the organization of power and the political order of the early modern domain in terms of the perceived “impossibility” of personal gain and the loss of autonomy over landholdings.

### **“The Impossibility of Personal Gain”**

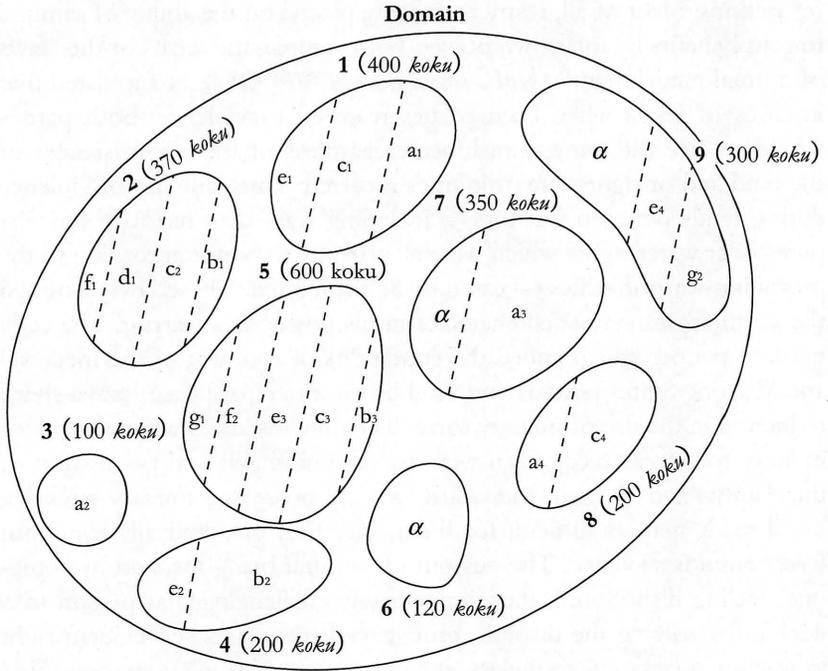
Medieval samurai who were local lords (*zaichi ryōshū*) exercised complete control of their own territory without restrictions on their independence. In contrast, samurai in early modern domains suffered from many more

restrictions. Most of all, restrictions were placed on the ability of samurai to gain benefits by their own power. For example, the terms of the “laws of mutual punishment” (*kenka ryōseibai no hō* 喧嘩両成敗法) stipulated that in cases of feuds when both parties resorted to violence, both parties would receive the same punishment regardless of the circumstances of the feud and of rights due or injuries incurred. Thus, any use of violence during feuds between warriors — including wars over territory and disputes over water rights which were all affronts to honor according to the prevailing warrior ethics — came to be prohibited. These laws confined the samurai’s fundamental character in his power as a warrior. The early modern period, which ended the conditions of civil war of the medieval and Warring States periods and established an era of peace, saw a sharp reduction in the use of military force. The only instances when the use of military force was recognized were by the command and permission of the daimyo and shogun. Individual samurai possessed military strength, but it made matters difficult for them since they paradoxically could not freely employ violence. The custom of samurai being insulted by someone, feeling dishonored, then immediately challenging that person to a duel and resolving the dispute through violence was a self-evident right in warrior society. Nevertheless, the imposition of regulations prevented this fundamental right of samurai. Samurai of the early modern period suffered under the dilemma between customs of honor and laws that prohibited the use of military force.<sup>5</sup>

## How Retainers Became Landholders in Name Only

### Step 1: Shared Fiefs

Warrior land control in the early modern era was fundamentally different from the pattern of local rule prevalent in the medieval period. With the introduction of the *kokudaka* system (which measured yields and assessed land tax at the rate of one *roku*, approximately 180 liters of rice), the size of fiefs (*chigyō*) held by warriors became standardized in amounts such as 100 *roku* and 250 *roku*. Once measured, the original fiefs that each warrior had long maintained — the lands that these warriors had



## Notes:

- 1, 2, 3, 4, ... : village
  - ( ) : *kokudaka* of each village
  - a, b, c, d, ... : portion of estate held by retainer A, B, C, D, ...
- E.g.* In the case of a retainer A possessing 600 *kokudaka*, his estate (*chigyō*) was composed of  $a_1$  (150 *kokudaka*),  $a_2$  (100 *kokudaka*),  $a_3$  (280 *kokudaka*) and  $a_4$  (70 *kokudaka*).
- $\alpha$  : *Kurairachi* (provisioning lands under the direct control of the daimyo.)

**Figure 5. Example of a Shared Domain (*bunsan aikyū chigyō*)**

once developed and ruled as their “original” territories — lost their distinct characteristics.

Daimyo could arbitrarily order changes in the location of fiefs measured according to *kokudaka*, and this strongly affected the relationship between warriors and their fiefs. Fiefs belonging to warriors gradually

became geographically less concentrated over a given area and were divided among several villages. Each village would be held in part by several retainers collectively. This type of territory is called the “shared fief” (*bunsan aikyū chigyō* 分散相給知行), whereby a territorial holding was apportioned among several samurai, as when control of a village was shared by several different people.

Judging from the case of the Uesugi house of Yonezawa domain, out of the 101 villages in Nagai district in this domain, 11 villages were held by only one retainer, 52 villages were held by groups of 2 to 10 retainers, 23 villages were held by groups of 10 to 20, and 9 villages were held by groups that included more than 20 retainers, respectively.<sup>6</sup> Early modern domains were complicated pastiches of divided landholdings.

## Step 2: Loss of Judiciary, Administrative, and Tax Rights

As for the administrative rights allowed retainers for their own fiefs, the domainal government dispatched officials called district magistrates (*kōri bugyō* 郡奉行) who had judicial and administrative authority, and they assumed all administrative rights over the entire domain. Retainers were thus excluded from these matters. In addition, the domain strictly regulated the use of farmers for corvée labor within fiefs by taking steps to standardize the number of days of labor required each year. As the domainal government extended its unified control over the entire domain, retainers were deprived of their own complete control of their fiefs. The right of retainers to control their own fiefs was restricted to the collection of taxes in tribute rice. A uniform rate of taxation was established by the domain, not by the wishes of the retainers. In some instances, domainal officials and officers collected the taxes, which meant that the retainers only received a set allotment of tribute rice. Such cases were far from rare.<sup>7</sup>

From this standpoint, retainers came to hold fiefs in name alone and were no different from retainers who received a salary in rice from the storehouse of the domainal army. The territorial integrity of their fiefs was eviscerated, denying them complete and private control over local territories that had been characteristic of the pattern of local lords in the

medieval period. These fiefs disappeared when the power of the domain absorbed them into its unified political order. The fief was the cornerstone of the livelihood of the local lord of the medieval period, and the fief depended on the independence of the local lord. Under the dominion of the early modern domain, the dissolution of territorial fiefs meant the deprivation of the independence of all the retainers who had once been local lords themselves. Forcing all the retainers to live together in castle towns was the logical extension of this trend.

### **Daimyo Ownership of Weapons and Guns**

Outside of the systematization of fiefs, there was a similar effort by daimyo to gain control over military power by collecting powerful weapons, especially guns. In the Tōdō daimyo house in Ise domain, two-thirds of all guns in the domain were held by the daimyo, and these conditions were similar in other domains.<sup>8</sup> Needless to say, guns were the most powerful armaments in early modern Japan. The fact that the daimyo collected these powerful weapons lent considerable weight to his political power in warrior society. In the case of military strength, warrior retainers lost the ability to wage war independently as they were compelled into complete submission to their daimyo.

Samurai of the early modern period, who were separated from their lands and forced to live in castle towns, made their livelihoods by drawing a salary, having been denied political authority as private power brokers over their own territories; they were incorporated into the hierarchy of command as members of the administrative organs of the domain. This larger process culminated in a system that prevented retainers from overthrowing their overlords as in the medieval period. Under the dominion of the daimyo, retainers lost their independence, becoming household officials in the process. The political system of the domain became consolidated on this basis.

Such is the dominant historical image of the political order of warrior society and of the development of early modern Japan according to most historians. However, is this the correct understanding of what happened?

## The Practice of *Oshikome*

My earlier work *Shukun "oshikome" no kōzō: Kinsei daimyō to kashindan* (The Mechanism of "Oshikome" Against a Lord: Early Modern Daimyo and Retainers; Heibonsha, 1988) undertook a fundamental criticism of the dominant historical conception of the daimyo household and domain just examined. An *oshikome*, or house arrest, was an action taken against the daimyo when, first, there was excessive cruelty evident or mismanagement on his part in domainal administration, and, second, the daimyo himself did not heed any warnings from his retainers.

In *oshikome*, the daimyo was imprisoned by the retainers under the direction of the domainal elders and the highest ranking vassals. After a given period of time was allowed for the daimyo to express his regrets, the daimyo might be forced to retire if he demonstrated recalcitrance, and then moves would be taken to replace the daimyo, usually by establishing his lawful son as the new lord of the domain. We will explore the forms of *oshikome* and the ramifications of these actions in the context of several examples.

### The Case of the Arima House of Kurume Domain in 1729

The Arima 有馬 house of Kurume 久留米 domain (modern Fukuoka prefecture) was among the larger domains, holding 210,000 *koku* of territory. However, like other domains in this period, the domain of Kurume had reached a point of crisis with its finances in deep arrears. Important political issues needed to be resolved to deal with fiscal problems. In 1706, the sixth daimyo, Arima Norifusa 有馬則維, advocated the restructuring of the domainal administration by completely reorganizing the bureaucratic structure of the domain as a way to correct fiscal problems.

He was heavy-handed in forcing these political moves. Specifically, he employed officials of low rank but with financial acumen, who were slowly rising in the administration, such as Honjō Kazue 本庄主計 and Kume Shinzō 久米新藏. He also furthered administrative reform by taking steps such as the simultaneous dismissal of forty-eight officials who

had been appointed due to their high rank, as dictated by custom. Furthermore, he stopped the time-honored practice of consulting domainal elders about financial issues, and he continued in promulgating successive policies for political reform on the basis of his direct orders as daimyo.

In conflict with the retainers of this domain, Arima Norifusa abolished the system of local fiefs, which preserved all of the villages within the domain as vassals' fiefs following established custom. Norifusa placed all of these fiefs under his direct control and paid his retainers a salary in rice drawn from the domain's storehouses, making a fundamental change in the payment system for retainers.

He levied new taxes against the inhabitants of the domain by raising the amount of annual tribute rice and by demanding corvée labor. Besides rice, he revised the tax rates for other goods, including barley, vegetables, cotton, and lacquer. Prior rates of taxation, including tribute rice, which stood at 10 percent, were raised to 33 percent. Norifusa argued for the increase in taxes in order to secure the financial resources needed to develop new fields and improve irrigation in all of the villages within the domain.

The series of reforms that Arima Norifusa attempted to carry out in this way revived the finances of the domain and increased its fiscal reserves, and at the same time they played a critical role in directly promoting production within the domain. Yet, these reforms brought the power relationship between the daimyo and his retainers into bold relief since they were accomplished by force.

There were many voices of opposition among the retainers and the people of the domain to all of Norifusa's coercive policies. In the eighth month of 1728, occasioned by the increase in the tax rate for farmers, a peasant rebellion broke out in Kurume domain involving approximately 5,800 people. Kurume domain lapsed into a state of uncontrollable upheaval.

At that time, Inatsugu Masasane 稲次正誠, the elder retainer (*karō*) in the domain and with an emolument of 3,000 *koku*, sought to bring an end to this precarious dilemma by attempting to gain control. He ar-

rested Honjō Kazue and Kume Shinzō, who had provoked the dilemma, and he put an end to the new policies. Norifusa, who was responsible for this series of failed schemes, was forced into retirement, and his son was appointed as the new lord of the domain, saving Kurume domain from disaster.<sup>9</sup>

### The Case of the Mizuno House of Okazaki Domain in 1751

The Mizuno 水野 house of Okazaki 岡崎 domain in modern Aichi prefecture held 60,000 *koku* and was a significant daimyo house founded by Mizuno Tadamoto, who was a cousin of Tokugawa Ieyasu's mother. In 1737, Mizuno Tadatoki 水野忠辰 held the post of seventh daimyo in the domain. Steeped in learning from an early age, Tadatoki wanted to establish an ideal government based on Confucian principles.

To that end, Tadatoki abolished the system of hereditary ranks for his retainers, appointing many talented people of low rank in the thought that he should act quickly to enact drastic reforms. Besides reforming personal affairs and opposing high-ranking retainers from important lineages, Tadatoki sought to centralize authority to facilitate political reform. He selected middle-ranking retainers, including Suzuki Matahachi 鈴木又八, Sakai Saishichi 堺才七, and Akaboshi Naoemon 赤星直右衛門, as his close associates.

Measures such as these naturally provoked tension between Tadatoki and high-ranking retainers related to him by blood, but Tadatoki ignored the very existence of these problems. In 1746, the domainal elder Haigō Genzaemon 拝郷源左衛門 was ordered to quit his post and enter forced retirement. Since Haigō did not follow these orders from his lord, he was brought in for interrogation, allegedly responding with extreme contempt. Then, two members of the *toshijori*, who ranked just beneath the domainal elder were also ordered out of office, and forced into retirement because they supposedly disobeyed Tadatoki's commands.

In response to Tadatoki's authoritarian measures as daimyo, the domainal elders and high-ranking retainers together moved in opposition. On the first day of the New Year in 1749 at Okazaki Castle on the occasion of the celebration of the New Year, the retainers refused to attend the

celebration as a symbol of their united opposition against Tadatoki. The next day, all of the ordinary retainers of high rank (those retainers of the *hirashi* level and higher) took a similar stance and refused to attend. As a result, no one besides Tadatoki's closest aides and the lowest level retainers appeared. From the perspective of the lord, this act of defiance against Tadatoki on the part of the retainers portrayed him as a tyrant and constituted open treason. The daimyo Tadatoki and his retainers entered a fierce standoff, reaching a point of tension in which military action seemed imminent.

The domainal elders and retainers busied themselves in their own mansions and awaited the arrival of the daimyo's guards dispatched by Tadatoki. Preparing for their deaths, they strengthened the defenses of their mansions. Meanwhile, the daimyo Tadatoki was on the verge of a difficult decision about whether he should use the military forces he directly controlled to crush the opposition, commit suicide after having nearly all of his retainers defy him, or accept the retainers' demands and yield to them. Tadatoki agonized over his decision for a long time before making up his mind; he saw the dismissal of all of his closest advisors as the solution to the feud. Tadatoki accepted his political defeat in the wake of the power of the domainal elders and high-ranking retainers and became a changed man, turning to the various entertainments of Yoshiwara 吉原 the Edo pleasure quarters. In his effort to express total disinterest with politics, he squandered the finances of his domain.

In the tenth month of 1751, Tadatoki announced at his mansion in Edo that he would make a pilgrimage to his father's grave. When he was leaving his residence and summoning his retainers to head toward the pleasure quarters, the domainal elders and *toshijori* appeared. They seated themselves in a row facing Tadatoki and addressed him: "Your conduct is not befitting, and you ought to be more prudent." After making this announcement the officers and deputies under the direct command of the domainal elders moved toward Tadatoki and restrained him, taking both his long and short swords and then imprisoning him. In that era, such an action was generally referred to as "forced confinement" (*oshikome*). In the aftermath, Tadatoki retired as lord, claiming ill health. A family

relative of the Mizuno, Mizuno Tadatō, became Tadatoki's adopted son. And, with Tadatō succeeding to the post of daimyo, the domain's problems were finally resolved.

### The Case of the Andō House of Kanō Domain in 1755

At the midpoint of the early modern period, around the year 1750, Andō Nobutada 安藤信尹, the daimyo of Kanō 加納 domain (65,000 *kōku*, in Mino province, modern Gifu prefecture), had given himself to a life of extreme luxury, losing himself in debauchery and drinking. Because Nobutada turned his back on the affairs of his domain, his officials lost discipline and domainal administration grew stagnant. The policies of the rural magistrates (*kōri bugyō*) placed in charge of agricultural policy for the domain were especially problematic, since these men were only concerned with how to raise the yearly taxes. As a result, a series of peasant protests and rebellions erupted in the domain. The precariousness of the situation is exemplified by the fact that the rural magistrates were too frightened to oversee the peasants, and they consequently fled the domain.

The domainal elders and high-ranking retainers came to realize that they could no longer neglect this situation. After meeting together, they decided to press for the removal of the daimyo by *oshikome*, and they confined the Nobutada to his quarters in his mansion. Fortunately, in this case, one of these retainers, named Miharada Seizaemon 三原田清左衛門, kept records in minute detail of the attitudes of the different ranking retainers in the domain concerning this incident. These records allow us to understand the meaning of *oshikome*. What these records also tell us is that the different ranking retainers expressed a range of opinions about the removal of their daimyo from office and that they debated these points among themselves.

Let us first examine the attitudes of the domainal elders and highest ranking retainers toward the *oshikome*. They came to the conclusion that in spite of the fact that the daimyo played an invaluable role in the domain, his continued neglect of the affairs of the domain imperiled the its existence, and therefore *oshikome* was the only option. On the one

hand, since they observed that Nobutada, who was confined to his mansion, demonstrated that he regretted his misdeeds, some thought that he should resume the office of daimyo. On the other hand, if Nobutada were to resume his office, other daimyo would learn about his situation, and he would certainly exact revenge against the domainal elders and chief retainers who had initiated the *oshikome*. More frightening was the possibility that if fighting broke out in the domain at that time, the turmoil could lead to the downfall of the Andō family. For those reasons, they argued that the ideal solution was that Nobutada should remain in retirement and that his son be designated as his successor to the office of daimyo.

The retainers closest to Nobutada granted that the removal of the daimyo of the domain through *oshikome* was a difficult move to endorse, but they agreed that the situation left no alternative. However, because Nobutada demonstrated significant remorse, they concluded that he ought to be restored to the position of daimyo. The retainers who took this position threatened that if this demand was not met, they wanted to be placed under house arrest like Nobutada. If the domainal elders did not accede to that demand, then they pledged to take action and rescue Nobutada themselves or die in the attempt.

Finally, in the opinion of the ordinary retainers of the domain, there was no one in warrior society who had a more prestigious position than the daimyo. Forcing Nobutada to step down from office was considered as hardly an option; moreover, he had quickly showed sufficient remorse for his actions. Therefore, Nobutada should not be scorned as a villain, and as retainers they could not permit him to be simply cast aside. Consequently, the ordinary retainers asked that while Nobutada was under house arrest he should be allowed to swear an oath to the effect that he would improve his behavior. They beseeched the domainal elders to allow him to return to office. But, if by any chance Nobutada ignored his pledge after returning to office and initiated reprisals against the domainal elders, then they would have no choice but to force Nobutada into retirement.

These three views present an overview of the opinions of the retainers

in the Andō house of Kanō domain regarding the incident of the forced retirement of their daimyo. One fact that is particularly astonishing in these accounts is that, at face value, no one among the general retainers, the daimyo's close aides, and even the domainal elders criticized the act of removing the daimyo by *oshikome* as an evil, misguided deed. The point of debate that the various factions struggled over was the problem of whether the daimyo, who was viewed as neither evil nor as a corrupt person, should be allowed to resume office or not.

Miharada expressed his personal loyalty to the daimyo and wrote that he felt that the actions of the domainal elders were entirely appropriate. He further argued that Nobutada could resume the office of daimyo after he swore an oath to his retainers that he would improve his conduct. Then, if Nobutada later engaged in improper conduct or if he attempted to take revenge against the domainal elders, all the retainers should unite behind the domainal elders to force the removal of Nobutada from office.

Readers interested in the complex details of this case can refer to my earlier book, but this case allows us to recognize that when the daimyo was judged to be incompetent, the act of *oshikome* on the part of the retainers was not considered a malevolent plot to change the daimyo. Instead, it was widely viewed as the correct course of action for the situation.

### **The Case of the Matsudaira House of Kaminoyama Domain in 1780**

Kaminoyama 上ノ山 domain (30,000 *roku*) in Dewa province (modern Yamagata prefecture) belonged to the Matsudaira 松平 family. In 1761, Matsudaira Nobutsura 松平信亨 assumed the post of domainal lord. Nobutsura was intelligent but narrow-minded and fond of extravagance. He was also considered arrogant. Comparable to the situation in other domains, Kaminoyama suffered from chronic financial difficulties, and this problem demanded urgent reform.

Nobutsura had his close advisors enact new laws that countermanded established customs in order to raise the rate of yearly taxation. In addition, by compelling land surveys of the territories within the domain, he

gained control of the actual area of cultivation which the peasants had gradually increased over several decades. He aimed to increase the tax yield by bringing these lands under taxation. His attempt to conduct domainal land surveys that had not been enforced in a long time met stubborn resistance on the part of the inhabitants. The household retainers were also divided in the opinions they submitted to Nobutsura concerning whether or not to raise taxes forcibly. In the end, the new laws were deferred and the daimyo's advisors resigned.

The circumstances of this case resemble the previous examples of Arima Norifusa of Kurume domain and Mizuno Tadatoki of Okazaki domain. The problems all of these domains faced were structurally similar, and the turn of events followed comparable patterns. As in the case of Mizuno Tadatoki, Nobutsura showed disinterest in governing, and he devoted himself to enjoying the finer life. Nobutsura furthered his pursuit of pleasure by selling off the texts of Confucian learning and military strategy that had belonged to his ancestors, and he even refused to pay his retainers their rice stipends.

The intellectual core of the domain's administration encompassing the domainal elders and the *yōnin* 用人 conferred together. (Second in rank to the domainal elders in the administration, the *yōnin* assisted the elders and held authority over the administration of government.) After consulting with other daimyo in the Matsudaira family related to Nobutsura, they decided to enact an *oshikome*, placing Nobutsura under house arrest in the eleventh month of 1780.

Nakamura Shin'amon 中村新右衛門 was one of the retainers who proposed the forced retirement of his lord. Nakamura ranked among the *monogashira*, holding the post of inspector (*metsuke*) in the police force. He was once Nobutsura's most trusted official, and through the daimyo's favor he was appointed to the post of inspector. Although a favorite of Nobutsura's, he was not the sort of person who pursued pleasure like his lord; instead, in his capacity as officer, he wrote a series of petitions to his daimyo, criticizing his behavior and worrying over the future of the Matsudaira house. But Nobutsura was not at all receptive to Nakamura's sincere efforts at remonstrance, which led Nakamura to decide that

*oshibikome* was the only alternative. Nakamura committed himself to this tact after consulting with the domainal elders and *yōnin*.

Nakamura met with his lord Nobutsura after the latter had been confined under house arrest. He apologized that *oshibikome* had been the only recourse. Nobutsura questioned Nakamura, reminding Nakamura that he owed his success to his favor and rebuking him for his infidelity in participating in the plot. Later, Nobutsura occasionally summoned Nakamura to question him about the circumstances surrounding his current predicament, all the while claiming to be deeply regretful, expressing that he would mend his past behavior. Nobutsura then asked Nakamura to make arrangements for him to return to the post of daimyo. Nakamura was vexed about the issue of his daimyo returning to his office, but he had difficulty bearing the thought that Nobutsura's wish should be withheld. The many conversations he had with Nobutsura convinced Nakamura that he should endeavor to have his lord returned to office.

Nakamura consulted with the domainal elders and *yōnin* who had participated in the *oshibikome* plan. He lobbied those who expressed disapproval of Nobutsura's return to office. He also explained the situation to the daimyo related to the Matsudaira house and sought their cooperation in peacefully returning Nobutsura to office. In this way, Nakamura received approval from all of the people involved in this case. Approximately one year after the *oshibikome* had been enacted, in the eleventh month of 1781, Nobutsura was released from house arrest and was allowed to resume his post as daimyo.

Nobutsura succeeded in returning to the post of daimyo, and for a short while he concentrated on governance, ignoring "pleasant distractions." He even appeared to place great effort in rectifying the administration of his domain in accordance with the advice of his retainers. Yet, around the seventh month of 1782, Nobutsura appeared to take on an "arrogant" manner, thereby alienating himself from his retainers. Nobutsura gradually began to appoint men to offices in the domain who agreed with his views, and he awaited the opportunity to roll back earlier reforms.

By these actions, Nobutsura broke ranks with the domainal officials

who had enacted his earlier removal from office, and he sought to purge all of them from office. Daimyo related to Nobutsura became embroiled in the efforts to oppose his retaliatory purge. The family quarrel of the Matsudaira of Kaminoyama domain continued for decades.

### **Characteristics of *Oshikome***

The cases of *oshikome* described above were typical of warrior society during the early modern period and ought to be viewed as a widespread custom. The following section makes a few generalizations about the problem of removing a daimyo from office through *oshikome*.

#### Steps in Enacting *Oshikome*

##### *1. Joint Agreement by the Domainal Elders and Chief Retainers*

The domainal elders and chief retainers among the vassals take the main initiative in pursuing the removal of the daimyo, and the act is undertaken with their mutual agreement. As illustrated in the first part of this chapter, the political order of the daimyo household was based on a military status structure, which gave enormous political power to the elder retainers and high-level vassals in the organization.

From this perspective, the forced retirement of a daimyo was considered a type of administrative response of the domainal elders as part of the responsibility of their office. Part of the official authority of the domainal elders was to remonstrate with their daimyo, to criticize his improper conduct. Forcing the daimyo to leave office was thought of as a further extension of the act of remonstrance to be used in extreme cases when a daimyo ignored his subordinates' petitions about his behavior. Forcing the daimyo to retire can be called an act of remonstrance backed up with physical force. For that reason, forcing a daimyo to retire was perceived to be an act under the authority of the domainal elders.

##### *2. Forcing the Daimyo to Retire*

Although carrying through the process of forcing a daimyo to retire was a serious issue, it also utilized drama comparable to a kabuki play. When the daimyo appeared in the main room of the house, the domainal elders

and chief retainers sat in rows directly in front of him, stating the set expression: "Your behavior is not appropriate, and you ought to behave with prudence." With that act, they pronounced the daimyo's forced retirement. Then, the domainal elders gave direction to the officers (*metsuke* and *monogashira*) to remove the daimyo's long and short swords, and restrain him. He was either confined to his quarters or a room was prepared to hold him.

The theatrical character of the act of *oshikome* conveyed several important messages related to the meaning of the daimyo's forced retirement. The act took place in the main room of the daimyo's residence with the elder retainers sitting in lines directly in front of the daimyo. This lent meaning to the act of proclaiming the removal of the daimyo by telling people in and outside the domain that the removal of the daimyo was not simply a plot or an act of political assassination in the self-interest of the elder retainers, but rather an open, legitimate, and public political decision of the domain.

Equally as theatrical was the domainal elders' act of proclaiming the *oshikome* seated in a row in front of the daimyo. This gesture expressed that their actions constituted a form of remonstrance. In other words, the act of *oshikome* was equivalent to a remonstrance, not an insurrection. This performance further portrayed *oshikome* as an act that was the duty of the domainal elders, a remonstrance supported by the use of physical force suitable for cases in which remonstrances themselves had become useless.

### 3. *Return to Office*

In the earliest cases in which a daimyo was forced to resign due to *oshikome*, the daimyo was made to retire from office immediately. However, the practice gradually changed into a form of punishment directed toward reforming the daimyo with the possibility that the daimyo would be released from his imprisonment and be allowed to return to his post. The retraction of *oshikome* was called *saishukein*, "the return of the lord to his public office as daimyo." This occurred when a daimyo forced out of office reformed his actions and went with the condition that the daimyo makes a pledge, for example, by writing a written oath to the retainers.

With his return to office, the daimyo might take revenge on the retainers who had planned the *oshikome*, as in the case of the Matsudaira house of Kaminoyama domain. But the daimyo usually was allowed to return to office, which suggests that there were only a few instances of the daimyo exacting revenge. This indicates that the idea was widely held, perhaps even among daimyo themselves, that the forced retirement of a daimyo was a necessary punishment for misconduct, and that such an act was within the bounds of routine practices, as opposed to being an act of rebellion stemming from the malevolent intentions of the individual domainal elders.

However, looking at the circumstances of individual cases, there was always the danger of a daimyo seeking revenge after he returned to office, and the domainal elders as a group were ultimately concerned with trying to prevent that. Miharada Seizaemon expressed this view in the case of the Andō family of Kanō domain, cited above.

#### 4. *Retirement and Family Succession*

In *oshikome*, the daimyo was confined to a room such as his mansion, and he was interrogated on the degree of his remorse, with the possibility that he might be returned to office. If it was decided that the daimyo had difficulty atoning for his conduct, steps were taken to make him retire from office. In this case, one of the daimyo's legitimate sons would be appointed the new daimyo and leader of the domain. When this occurred, the former daimyo who had been forced into retirement was released from his imprisonment. Just as in the case when a daimyo was returned to office, steps were taken to prevent the former daimyo from seeking revenge. The retainers all knew that they had to be on guard.

#### **The Significance of *Oshikome***

The act of removing a daimyo from office was the way for retainers, chiefly the domainal elders and highest level vassals, to prevent a daimyo from becoming a poor leader or a tyrant. A certain time was allowed for the opportunity for the daimyo to return to office, but if he were judged to be recalcitrant, he was forced to retire and a new daimyo chosen from among the former daimyo's legitimate sons.

The act of *oshikome* exhibited many different variations in form; however, it occupied a prominent position in early modern society. The breadth of its use and its endurance indicate it ought to be considered a custom. Given that it was considered a proper action, the word custom is even more appropriate. In the opinions of the household vassals of the Andō house of Kanō domain concerning the domainal elders forcibly removing from office their profligate daimyo, no one, from the ordinary vassal to the close advisors of the daimyo, criticized the domainal elders' action as an act of rebellion.

The only point of dispute among the vassals was whether or not it was appropriate to force the daimyo into retirement when he was not viewed as an immoral tyrant. In short, *oshikome* was viewed as an official action of the high office of domainal elders. And, *oshikome* was widely perceived among people in early modern society, including daimyo, as a proper course of conduct that was part of the official powers of administrators.

## **The Structure of Domain Government: A New Historical Perspective**

### ***Mochibun*: Having a Stake in the System**

The custom of *oshikome* provides an opportunity to reinvestigate the dominant historical image of the political order of the Tokugawa period. The establishment of the vertically organized early modern domain brought control to the period of civil unrest of the medieval era; and the power of the daimyo strengthened greatly as a result of this process. Yet, the custom of *oshikome* served as a restraint for these tendencies. Therefore, there needs to be a fundamental reinvestigation of the concepts that are viewed as indicative of an absolutist political order and are the standard historical image of warrior society in the early modern period: particularly the absolute obedience of vassals to their daimyo's commands; the samurai's loss of the opportunity to freely make their own independent decisions in the early modern period; the total inability of people of lower status to resist those of higher status; and the idea that people with

little authority simply served as the proxies for people of higher authority.

In particular, the loss of the independence of warriors as retainers in the early modern period is viewed as a fundamental reason for the problem of the gradual destruction of provincial landholdings. However, evidence indicates that the dispersal and redistribution of landholdings were undertaken to suit the needs of the retainers as a group, not with the goal of dismantling the independent authority of retainers.<sup>10</sup> In other words, while landholdings might have the same value measured in rice production (*kokudaka* 石高), there were subtle differences depending on the village and location. The size of the harvest fluctuated every year. Natural disasters and famine were always a danger. The dispersal of landholdings and their redistribution helped to reduce individual risks as well as homogenize and stabilize the actual allocation of earnings derived from rice production, and these clearly were the most important goals of this policy.

Militarily, the daimyo monopolized control over powerful military weapons, especially guns, but this situation did not mean that these guns became the daimyo's exclusive possessions. Instead, there was a system whereby guns were entrusted to musketeers (*teppō ashigaru*), twenty to thirty of whom were under the command of a *monogashira*. Therefore, guns and musketeers were under the control and direction of *monogashira*. In the case where a daimyo was forced from office by an *oshikome*, the *monogashira* and *metsuke*, under the command of the domainal elders and high-level vassals, physically restrained the daimyo. Establishing control over the domain as well as carrying out the *oshikome* took place under the command of the musket units controlled by the *monogashira*, which proves the extent of their military power. The guns, which might be expected to belong to the daimyo, were used as the physical means to force the daimyo out of office, and this was an additional feature of domains in the early modern period.

Turning to the system of civil administration in the domain, the main issue in civil administration concerned the preference of status in granting positions, especially in the corresponding relationship between a range

of statuses linked to military rank and administrative office. On the one hand, this accounted for the conservatism and inflexibility of the administration. On the other hand, the establishment of these clear standards prevented the arbitrary allocation of offices and served as a defense against authoritarian government and the centralization of authority if a daimyo appointed officers according to his own whims.

The formation of a rule by status interfered with the centralization of any one person's power while simultaneously promoting group consensus and input from the individual members of the organization concerning decisions over various matters. The highest ranking retainers in the class of domainal elders did not hold the greatest power to make decisions by themselves; instead, the *monogashira* and *hirashi* participated in various ways in the decision-making process within the domain. Ignoring the opinions of these men made an effective decision impossible.

### **Decision Making and *Ringi***

Reaching a decision by circulating letters is a distinct method of decision making in Japanese-style organizations. In domains during the Tokugawa period, the daimyo had great authority and power. Officially, the daimyo alone held the sole right to make decisions. Domainal elders and lower ranking retainers could only petition for a change or a reformulation of their daimyo's commands through the process of filing a remonstrance. However, this public method of reaching a decision embodied in the so-called single lord / autocratic model was in actuality extremely rare and restricted to the period prior to establishment of the domainal system at the beginning of the early modern period. After the consolidation of domainal government, administration through the domainal elders became the dominant form of governance. Decisions were made by consultation with the *karō*, *chūrō*, *yōnin*, and others, all of whom managed administration by apportioning different duties. Extremely important decisions were undertaken by asking for the daimyo's ruling or by a conference in which the daimyo took an active role. But daily administration was delegated to the domainal elders and lead vassals, and governing took place under their responsibility. In most instances, the actual role of

the daimyo in government was exceedingly small. From a practical standpoint, the method of decision making by consensus was the basis of policy formation in the domain.

In the case of consensual decision making, the composition of the collective decision-making body deserves attention, because it was not limited to the domainal elders and upper level retainers but had its roots in the level of lower ranking administrators. An examination of the proclamation of laws and policies within the domain reveals that the opinions of these lower level officials substantially guided decision making. Especially complex and specialized administrative problems depended on the opinions and decisions of these officials who dealt with these matters. Therefore, the structure of decision making deserves special attention.

One way in which officials participated in the decision-making process was in the “question-response” pattern. According to this model, in the case of, for instance, a financial problem in which business knowledge was needed, the domainal elders questioned the officials in charge of finances and resolved the problem based on the response they received.

In the case of the Sanada 真田 family of Shinano Matsushiro 松代 domain (100,000 *koku*), the office of *okatsute-motojimeyaku* 御勝手元締役 was in charge of all financial matters. In addition to estimating the amount of income, they calculated the budget, called an “estimate”, for all items of expenditure. Their duty was to maintain a careful watch over extraordinary expenditures. Whenever officers reported financial matters to the domainal elders — as in the case of rebuilding projects and financial relief in response to natural disasters and famines, or in the case of construction projects to restore river plains after water damage — the domainal elders always consulted the *okatsute-motojimeyaku* concerning the validity of these appeals, making their decisions based on the responses they received.

These types of inquiries were called *ontazunemono* in the Sanada family. Besides the *okatsute-motojimeyaku*, officers from the ranks of inspector, district magistrate (*kōri bugyō*), officials in charge of finances, and others carried out these inquiries regularly.

The other pattern of policy making, which utilized officials who were

actually involved in the matters in question, is called *ringi* 稟議 — referring to a process of decision making that relies on circulating documents related to that issue. In the case of tax exemption, the officials involved could not decide upon matters for themselves. Instead, they referred the problem upward through the chain of command from the deputy (*daikan*) to the district magistrate and then to the domainal elders in charge, and the flow of information followed this framework. The lower level officials involved clearly expressed their judgments concerning the problems and asked for their policies to be approved. Here, decision making occurred at the level of the deputies, and these decisions were merely ratified later.

In cases where a farming village petitioned the deputy in charge for an exemption from taxes due to losses occurring from severe water damage, the deputy could not reach any decisions by himself, because yearly taxes were a serious issue. He had to refer the decision to the district magistrate who was his superior. The district magistrate would then send the decision up the ranks to the domainal elders in charge.

However, the deputy did more than just convey his intentions to his superiors; he also furnished detailed plans he had devised to lower the taxes and to inquire about the feasibility of his decision. The district magistrate who received this petition could either forward it without change, or he could formulate his own plan adding corrections that he had devised, which he then would submit to the domainal elders. After this petition had been accepted, the domainal elders could either accept it, or if they had doubts about the contents, they could add their own revisions, and request a second draft, urging the district magistrate to reconsider his proposal. Policies were decided upon and reached their final form in this way.

In summary, in the *ringi* form of decision making, written decisions were drafted by lower level officials in charge; then, following the normal course of events, these draft decisions were ratified by higher level officials. This method was characteristic of bakufu administration. According to the system of proclamations issued by city magistrates (*machibugyō*) in Edo, proclamations were circulated by the *machibugyō* under the auspices of the senior council (*rōjū*), who recognized the import of these

tracts and their dissemination. There are many other examples of the *ringi* form of decision making occurring with official sanction.<sup>11</sup>

The *ringi* method of decision making, in which lower ranking bureaucrats were entrusted with government inquiries and policies, developed prominence in domains in the early modern period, providing a concrete mechanism for low-ranking members of a bureaucracy to participate in the decision-making process. The domain was an advanced form of hierarchically structured organization. Yet, instead of the domainal political organization following a hierarchical model by having the daimyo and the elite members use force to carry out their wishes, the political system was characterized by the inclination toward collective decision making, incorporating the opinions of all of the members of the organization from the lowest up to those in progressively higher positions.

### The Share System

The political decision-making apparatus in a domain involved such high-ranking people as the *karō* and *chūrō*, middle-ranking individuals from the ranks of the *bugyō*, and low-ranking officials in the devising of policies and rulings. Typically, for the *ringi* model of decision making, in most instances when laws and policies were established, low-ranking officials made inquiries and submitted their findings. In addition to drafting legislation, they submitted their opinions regarding the pros and cons of these issues to higher officials, and these reports traveled higher and higher up the chain of command to gain the approval of the highest level of officials. Even in cases involving the most urgent matters that began with the highest members of the system, namely the daimyo and the domainal elders, inquiries were made to the appropriate lower ranking officials, and problems were resolved by following the opinions of these men.

This *ringi* model of inquiry and response involved a large number of people in the domain, including the lowest level officials in the decision-making process; consequently, it was typified by a consultative mode of reaching consensus. The daimyo or any sole official did not monopolize the power to make decisions. Rather, that power was distributed in a

decentralized fashion among a wide range of officials extending to the lowest members of the bureaucracy and retainers. This structure is the prototype for the modern Japanese mode of decision making in which decisions take time to be reached because consensus has to be fashioned among a great number of people and levels of an organization.

The organization of the domain in the early modern period reached fruition as a most complex political unit. It replaced the decentralized model of warrior rule in the medieval period, the system of local rulers, by concentrating authority in the domainal government. The domain created a system whereby all of the territory of the domain was administered and controlled together. However, the trend toward the unification of domainal control did not mean that the personal authority of the daimyo himself was absolute.

There was a system of ranks in the early modern domain extrapolated from a military system of organization. As mentioned earlier, typically the form included the daimyo, the *ichimon* and *rōjū*, *chūrō* or *bangashira*, the *monogashira*, followed by the *hirashi*. The men in these ranks were ordinary samurai, characterized by their use of horses in combat. Below them were the foot soldiers of the lower ranks, *kachi* and *ashigaru*. Their level of status was low, but they numbered five to ten times more than the members of the upper ranks.

To examine the pattern of decision making in the domainal administration, we can employ a hypothetical model, calculating the “share” of

**Table 2. The Structure of “Shares” of Decision-Making Power in a Domain**

| Level                      | Daimyo | <i>Ichimon/<br/>Karō</i> | <i>Chūrō<br/>(Kumigashira)</i> | <i>Monogashira</i> | <i>Hirashi</i> | Lower ranks |
|----------------------------|--------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|-------------|
| No. of people              | 1      | 5                        | 10                             | 20                 | 100            | 500         |
| “Share” of an individual   | 50     | 6                        | 3                              | 2                  | 1              | 0.1         |
| Total “share” of each rank | 50     | 30                       | 30                             | 40                 | 100            | 50          |

an individual's power in the decision-making process, based on their rank in the hierarchy. Table 2 expresses a hypothetical model of a domainal political organization. The numbers refer provisionally to the number of members from each rank and their "share," but in actual circumstances these would certainly vary. This model is intended to illustrate the types of groupings found in the political organization of an early modern domain. Therefore, the values in the table need to be tested in the study of actual cases of different domains. Round numbers were used in the attempt to clearly explain the characteristics of the domainal political organization.<sup>12</sup>

Although the size of the share belonging to the members of the organization and its distribution in real domains needs to be determined through actual analysis of political relations employed in particular and individual circumstances, these numbers approximate the *kokudaka*, or the stipend in rice, paid to retainers. The daimyo held his *kokudaka* directly as part of the territory he controlled. The amount of *kokudaka* stipend belonging to each retainer was none other than the hereditary stipends belonging to each samurai household, which were passed down in the samurai's family unchanged from generation to generation.

When a retainer succeeded to the headship of a household and was still young, the stipend might be temporarily reduced, if the youth could not fulfill his military duties to his daimyo. However, when that same person became an adult, the amount of the stipend was gradually increased to its original level. When the stipend was restored to its original level, it was very difficult to increase the amount of stipend notwithstanding any personal achievements. As a hereditary stipend, the *kokudaka* represented a person's actual "share" in the political system and can be said to constitute the basis for a political system based on these same shares.

We shall now investigate the characteristics of this political order composed of different "shares" by analyzing a model that employs simple numbers. The model depicted in Table 2 calculates the total number of shares in the domain at 300. This number represents the entire amount

of decision-making power in the group. The individual share belonging to each of the members represents a portion of that total. In this case, the share belonging to the daimyo is 50, indicating that the authority of the daimyo was quite large relative to the individual members on a one-to-one basis. However, the reverse of this situation becomes evident when the shares controlled by different groups as a whole is considered.

Hence, the relation between the daimyo and the *ichimon* / *karō* was 50–30. The shares held by the daimyo relative to the *hirashi* indicate a 50–100 split. Since the total number of shares from all of the different groups together is 300, representing the total power for decision making within the domain, this indicates that the views of the group that held the greatest share — the majority share out of 300 possible shares — determined the course of policy for the domain. Thus, while the opinion of the daimyo had considerable weight in the larger decision-making process within the domain, it was insufficient by itself, indicating decisions had to occur based on the percentages and totals derived from the decision-making power inherent in other people's shares. Although the daimyo's power was by far the greatest, at the same time he was constrained. This model eloquently expresses this contradiction and reveals the structure of domainal political power in the early modern period.

The distribution of authority and member involvement in decisions is also apparent in Western bureaucracies in the modern period. However, Western administrative systems allocate most of the inclusive official and supervisory authority to the highest level, and then only in reduced form to other levels in the hierarchy. All of the officers of various levels who are under control of the top level carry out their work following a division of labor appropriate to the jurisdiction of their allotted responsibilities.

In contrast to this Western model, in the domainal organization in early modern Japan, authority and the appropriate decision-making power belonged to the officers themselves. Since the administrative bureaucracy derived from a system of ranks, a distinct mode of power existed. The right to be involved in decisions and hold power in the bureaucracy for

all of its members did not derive from the largesse of the power of the daimyo as leader; instead the members themselves held a distinct “share” from the beginning.

The mode of decision making in the West in the modern era follows a top-down model, with the most obvious example being the dictatorship. In contrast, decision making in the Japanese style organization requires a long period of time. Decision making is also different in Japan because in most cases it follows a bottom-up model. Clearly, the concept of power as it developed in each society has deep historical roots in both Japan and the West.

### **The Organization of the Domain and the Family-Head Model**

Comparing this model with other models found in Japanese society provides clarification of the characteristics of the domain in early modern Japan.<sup>13</sup> The brief contrast of the modes of organization in Japan with those in the West reveals that both developed under different cultural and conceptual models. They are differentiated in particular by distinctions in the upper level and in the central part of its model. In contrast to the power to command and order that are the prerogatives of the top leaders in Western societies, the types of leaders in Japanese society are distinguished by the collective nature of the Japanese model, where decision making and policy formation are based on the circulation of documents, a process called *ringi*.

Leaders in Japanese society are authorities by the necessity of their duties and their office rather than by virtue of being authoritarians. The Japanese system is further characterized by the great importance placed on prescribed duties and delegating responsibilities among lower level officials forming decisions. These characterizations are evident in the representative models of Japanese society as proposed by Nakane Chie's notion of a vertical society,<sup>14</sup> the family-head (*iemoto*) model of F. L. K. Hsu (Hamaguchi Eshun),<sup>15</sup> and the “central-vacuum” (*chūkūkōzō*) model of Kawai Hayao.<sup>16</sup> In particular, a comparison with Hsu's model of the family head provides a way to clarify the social structure of the domain.

### The Family-Head Model of F. L. K. Hsu

The social theories proposed by Hsu posit an existing mode of group structure as the prototype for the organization of all of Japanese society. Hsu locates this prototype in the family-head (*iemoto*) system, which he argues is the fundamental pattern of social organization in Japan. The family-head systems found in the arts of flower arrangement, tea ceremony, and traditional Japanese dance (*buyō* 舞踊) constitute examples of his ideal model. Most family-head systems in the performing arts follow a system of name-taking (*natori* 名取り), in which *natori* are mid level instructors who teach as the representatives of the family head. This system allows for a mode of nominal independence, characterized by a high degree of practical autonomy. The family head is not a patriarchal absolutist.

Instead, the family head serves as the representative of the entire organization: a symbol chosen as the head of his artistic school on the basis more for his expertise to govern than his personal authority. Viewed from the outside, the family-head system appears like a large, centralized bureaucracy; but, viewed on the inside, it is a series of intertwined hierarchies composed of intermediate structures having their own autonomy. The family-head system embodying these foundational social principles can be found in a variety of organizations in Japan including large corporations, factories, government bureaucracies, political parties, labor unions, schools including universities, religious groups, and the prewar military.

Most modern bureaucracies are management systems, structured as hierarchies based on particular jobs, with the power over those duties and supervisory power delegated in a graduated fashion to different levels of positions. Since the chain of command flows from the top down, the top level exercises direct control over the lower levels of administration. In this situation, lower ranking members of this system bear responsibility for executing the duties that their leaders have assigned them.

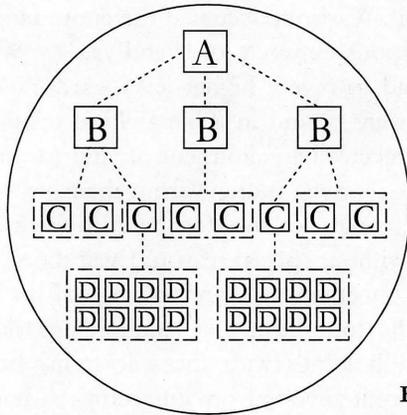
In contrast, in the family-head system, the leader controls the group by virtue of being the person with the highest level of skill in the organization. The lower level members of this group are also entrusted with

a degree of authority based upon their level in the ranks. The people in the middle of this organization have to acknowledge the authority entrusted to the members of higher ranks, but they also have to yield a degree of their own authority to the people beneath them. The person in the highest post, the family head, is charged with serving as the symbol of the group while simultaneously having the highest authority. The lowest level members of the organization have the responsibility to carry out their duties not for the family head but for their immediate superiors, who have their own authority.

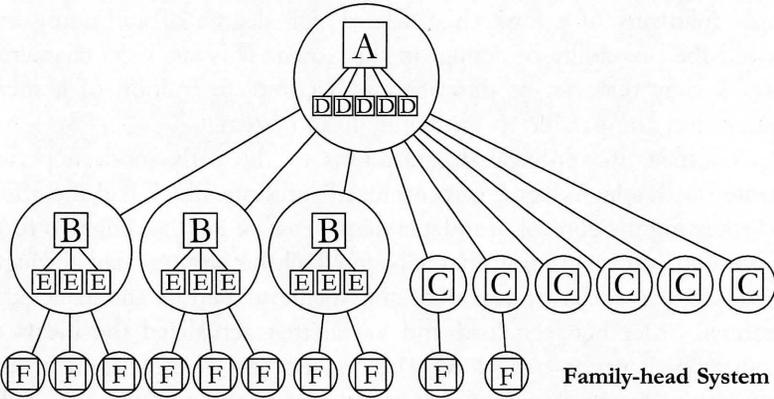
In the family-head system, there is a relationship between two separate spheres, namely authority and administrative duties. Authority is delegated in smaller amounts to progressively lower members, forming a pyramid-like shape. A single position never overrules the entire organization. The highest authority at the top blankets the entire system, and for that reason the system resembles a modern bureaucracy on the outside. However, the family-head system is quite different from the hierarchy of different levels of rank found in a modern bureaucracy. The family-head system is structured from interrelated hierarchies, according to Hsu's argument. The family-head system under discussion here appears to be the fundamental unit of organization for Japanese society recognized in a variety of actual examples. For that reason, it is a valid generalization about society.

Needless to say, the organization of the Tokugawa-period domain had different fundamental principles than the family-head system. Removing the so-called family head, the typical structure of the family-head system becomes an extended family, constructed from the relations between households, branch houses, and the main house, which is referred to as a hierarchical grouping of households.<sup>17</sup> The domain is a form of hierarchical organization composed of warriors. Therefore, although the principles of family-head organizations deserve greater attention for analysis, because the family-head system is characterized by interlocking hierarchies, the domain should be considered a different order of social organization founded on separate principles.

While this argument may seem counter-intuitive, it should be noted



Early Modern Domain



Family-head System

Figure 6. A Comparison of the Conceptual Organization of the Early Modern Domain and the Family-Head System

that the organization of the domain was founded throughout medieval society, and it came to be established through the restoration of a mechanism that could control a series of different lord-vassal relationships. The bottom level of the feudal society of medieval Japan was ruled by an upper level consisting of the Kamakura or Muromachi shogun followed progressively by the *shugo daimyo* 守護大名, *zaichi ryōshū* 在地領主, *dogō* 土

豪, and *Shōryōshū* 小領主. Warriors occupied the entire range of a pyramid of interconnected relations between lords and vassals. Warriors at every one of these levels had to revere higher level warriors as their masters and lords since they were bound in a hierarchical relationship of command with them and received an allotment of land (or had their original holdings confirmed or received money) from them.

However, any lord could not interfere with, nor enter, the territory belonging to a vassal without special reason. Even the shogun could not intervene in matters concerning the landholdings of his direct retainers. Thus, even though the lord bestowed landholdings on vassals, these were independent landholdings with the sole rights belonging to the vassal, who did not permit anyone from interfering with it, or entering it. From this standpoint, warrior landholders of all ranks were more than simply followers of a lord: they held a high degree of autonomy and enjoyed the possibility of acting on their own. This situation characterizes a society that can be described as a complete fruition of a social organization comparable to the family-head system.

In contrast, the political organizations of the early modern period operated with a high degree of centralized authority which had the effect of eliminating the control of independent, separate landholdings, to form a more unified organization that subsumed all the samurai. This brought an end to the social upheaval of the medieval period and enacted a hierarchal order between lord and vassal that actualized the ideals of absolute obedience to one's lord. The organization of these domains did not conform to the model of a so-called central vacuum, nor was it the case that the leader was idealized, as some might argue.

### **Differences Between the Family-Head System and the Domain**

How does the organizational structure of the family-head system differ from that of the domain? The most important element that deserves recognition is the order of high and low ranks that determine the place of officers in the domain's organization. This order did not follow the interdependent hierarchies of the family-head system. Instead, there was a functional system of ranks that organized all warriors. The domain was

surely the largest hierarchical organization of warriors. It may not seem like much now, but the basis of the daimyo's domainal organization was that all of its members were his direct vassals. From the lowliest *ashigaru* and vassal, all of the retainers were fundamentally in the same military organization. The organizational principles that gave a hierarchical order to the warriors in the domain were based on those of a military command. The social links of these warriors were rooted in the military system, which gave impetus to the construction of a large, imagined household of warriors.

As Figure 6 on the hierarchical structure of the domain illustrates, on the one hand, the highest ranking commanders had the most military power and held the largest landholdings. On the other hand, the average retainers, most of whom were in the *hirashi* class, were given separate landholdings appropriate to their military abilities. Mid-level retainers of the *monogashira* class were variously posted to lead groups of *ashigaru*, who were musketeers in the infantry. Samurai of *hirashi* status were under the command of high-ranking warriors, the *kumigashira* or domainal elders.

However, it should be noted that these relationships were for the purposes of command in a single military organization, created as a way to divide responsibilities. *Hirashi* were not retainers of the upper level samurai since both were from the same army. While it might seem only natural that the *hirashi* were considered to be in the same military grouping as upper level samurai, the lowest *ashigaru* and even warriors of the meanest status were members of the same army in principle. Low-ranking warriors were occasionally assigned to higher ranking warriors as constables and guards. But even in these instances, they were assigned to these men and did not become their retainers. Since this form of military organization was tightly managed, it could be converted into a civil bureaucracy during an era of peace. Then, once the system of landholdings for retainers came to be consolidated, the domain could develop a more unified mode of control over its territories. This process gave rise to the distinct form of organization, namely the early modern domain.

In contrast to the mode of organization in the family-head system, the domain was adapted from a military organization. The family-head sys-

tem lacks a clear division of specialized roles and is instead based on the domination of separate households in the same way that a medieval samurai might lead his own troupes into battle. That is to say, this medieval samurai might deploy his troupes according to several different hierarchical units. However, the commander is sure to send his military orders to the troupes by relying on a simple line of command. All the warriors provide a similar sort of military service that is the same for the lowest warriors to the highest; and this fact underlies the composition of the entire system.

A system of “shares” is evident in the collective organization of the early modern domain, but this mode of order does not conform to the family-head system. While the relationships between teachers and students give rise to various cliques that might have these characteristics, they do not arise in the more unified hierarchy needed for the family-head system. There are many instances in the early modern domain when high-ranking retainers below the level of domainal elder were normally entrusted with the domainal government. These examples are difficult to explain on the basis of a model that accentuates the power of the daimyo as being purely symbolic. When the latent power of the daimyo is also considered, such a model is totally inappropriate.

Even though the daimyo delegates the daily workings of the domain, his latent power is enormous over important matters such as administrative reforms or significant problems pertaining to the well being of the domain, whenever he passes judgment in some decision or a policy. The chamberlains of the daimyo, who served as his delegates and expressed his opinions, also enjoyed tremendous authority. At the death of the daimyo, there were many instances when there would be a change in the political dynamic, and the former daimyo’s chamberlains would be forced from office. This provides a further indication of the enormous power of the daimyo that was entrusted to his close aides.

*Shukun “oshikome” no kōzō: Kinsei daimyō to kashindan* (The Mechanism of “Oshikome” Against a Lord: Early Modern Daimyo and Retainers) (Heibonsha, 1988) fundamentally criticized the dominant theories pertaining to the daimyo as an absolutist. The book clarified the restrictions

placed on daimyo power and described the group decision-making mechanisms of the domainal organization. However, the most important argument of the work that bears noting is my explanation of the custom of removing a daimyo through *oshibikome*. I defined daimyo power in terms of its symbolic and nominal values; and this point perhaps invites misinterpretation.

While this might sound counter-intuitive, the existence of the custom of *oshibikome* enacted against a daimyo reveals the great extent of the actual authority belonging to the daimyo. *Oshikome* first developed with the assumption that the daimyo's rule was not only absolutist, but that it was also arbitrary and corrupt. If the authority of the daimyo was purely nominal and symbolic then it goes without saying that *oshibikome* would not have had the chance to develop in the first place. One could argue both that the domainal order is based on the actual and very significant authority of the daimyo and at the same time was also based on the denial of that authority. I pointed out the coexistence of these two contradictory forces, and this is the argument of the theory of "shares" in the present work.

### **Individual Autonomy and Independence**

The model of a "shared" order in Japanese-style organizations expresses the nature of authority in these organization and is also instructive about the place of individual members. In the context of this system, members are seen as unequal if viewed in absolute terms: clearly, there were many differences in rank and inequalities pertaining to an individual's rights and ability to initiate proposals, in proportion to that person's place in the status system within the organization. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the members of this organization sacrificed their individual autonomy. The members of these organizations had many differences, but they each held their own discreet power based on their "share." Even the weaker members were able to preserve their autonomy thanks to the power derived from their "shares."

The differences in power and rank in the domainal order were similar to the differences existing in the political order of the medieval and

Warring States periods. In the medieval period, there were differences among landholding warriors in the amount of territory they controlled, their military strength, and power. These factors affected a warlord's power and ability to engage in warfare and establish rule in their territories. Some individuals within these unequal power relations, such as minor warlords, had a degree of autonomy in their prerogatives of rule, which included the power to wage war and make treaties. While these were petty warlords, they could take a personal and active response to a variety of situations.

The political order of the early modern period exhibits similarities on these points. That is to say, while individuals in Japanese-style organizations faced differences such as those based on rank, they also possessed the possibility to participate personally and actively in their organization's decision-making process because their "share" provided them with the power to take such initiatives.

In the same way, in the medieval political order, the major warlords could not subdue the minor warlords. These petty warriors banded together to preserve their independent existence and sought the best advantages for themselves. Their situation is comparable to the people at the bottom of the early modern political order who adopted similar attitudes toward rulers. The only difference for those in the early modern period was that their actions were not military ones played out on the field of battle but instead took place in the decision-making process of the domainal organization.

The individual autonomy of every member in both the early modern political order and in modern Japanese-style organizations is preserved not through principles of ideal equality but rather through the principle of "shares," which is an expression of a member's economic level (his salary), his status, and his official rank, all of which have a bearing on the amount of influence that person has in the organization's decision-making process. From this perspective, a so-called shared organization is not an abstraction, but something that seems a natural part of social realities. No matter the type of society or organization, the shared order as it has been defined here would seem to be in evidence. But, that is not the

case. For a shared order to arise, the society or organization must develop a high degree of consolidation.

If an organization lacks unity, then there simply will not be a group that can draw together individuals who have different powers; the members of such a group will only pursue their self-interests looking toward their personal fame and fortunes, and conditions will not exist to provide for a shared sense of group identity for this organization, nor for the organization to act as a group, nor will anyone work toward the organization's collective good as a whole. Such a situation is none other than the one described earlier of the political milieu of fragmented authority that characterized the medieval period, in which diplomacy and warfare were carried out by independent agents who had complete autonomy. The so-called shared order inherent in Japanese-style organizations serves to bring together diverse forces, establishing them as a unified organization. The organization preserves its character as a group and is established when it reaches the point that it is able to take actions.

The political unity apparent in early modern society in the West did not concentrate authority and power in the hands of its various members. Instead, these pluralistic forms of authority were abrogated by an absolutist and superior public authority, such as a sovereign. These circumstances did not allow for establishment of the shared order described here.

The concept of sovereignty grew out of the move toward political unification in early modern Europe and referred to the highest level of authority in the nation.<sup>18</sup> The fundamental characteristics of sovereignty include absolutism, perpetuity, and indivisibility. Absolutism and the indivisibility of sovereignty deny any independent political power of middle-level groups and regional political entities that are reminiscent of feudalism. The growth of sovereignty dismantles a pluralistic and decentralized form of political order. Sovereignty is characterized as public authority being a superior form of power. The sovereign is authorized with all of the power of the nation.

It is an absolutist authority that fundamentally denies the existence of any independent authority opposed to it. Accompanying this concept of

authority is the related notion of the dehumanization of subordinates in provoking the people under such a system to seek more formal equality, and leading to the validation of principles that everyone is the same regardless of power, social status, and title.<sup>19</sup> These notions of equality arise as a result the formation of an absolutist form of public authority, such as sovereignty, which itself grew out of the necessity for an absolute form of power to unify society and various forms of organizations.

What then are the concrete differences between principles of equality and those of shared authority, and in what different forms do they appear?<sup>20</sup> The most straightforward expression of the principles of equality appears in voting rights movements concerning decisions related to matters of organizations and society. In most elections, voting occurs in private, and every person has one equal vote to cast. The decision is made by majority. The members of the minority are bound by the result decided by the majority.

In contrast, the decision-making process evident in Japanese society also employs majority decisions from private balloting, but in most instances, decisions are reached through discussion. Deciding by discussion avoids the problems of a plurality of decisions arising from voting over deadlocked issues. Discussion actualizes the power of the members to express their opinion — their share — which gives them authority and control in a concrete way in the group. In group decision making, decisions are made through struggles between the “shared” power of the individual members.

The final decision that is made is characterized by a power battle and the conflict of members of different levels and ranks, meaning that each has to make appropriate concessions. In most circumstances, adjustments occur for the better of all involved. The difference between winners and losers is more unclear than in the case of voting and majority rule. A chief element of Japanese-style organizations is that most of the members that participate can expect appropriate give and take. Most decisions reached through discussions are by necessity cooperative decisions made by all the members.

This book argues that decisions reached through discussion and the

involvement of all the members of an organization in policy making are both related to the shared order described here. The shared order departs from the principles of egalitarianism, but these ideals still appear in the decision-making process. Egalitarian principles and the notions of a shared order are rooted in the differences of political union in society. The idea that the realization of egalitarianism is the only way for individual autonomy to exist is a one-sided argument. Such an approach restricts the individual to only one type of independence, and it presupposes the existence of a massive, sovereign authority with the individual existing in opposition to this authority. The meaning of individual independence in a Japanese model of organization follows the principles of the shared order.

### **The Political Function of the “Way of the Warrior”**

Bushido is none other than the inspiration for action and the sources of values for the early modern political order and for organizations in modern Japan. In early modern Japan, bushido was generally understood as loyalty to the lord and self-sacrifice to the point of death, a morality of selfless service. However, this is only one understanding of bushido.

Originally, bushido was a mode of conduct practiced by individual warriors — a type of morality with the aim of perfecting individual character.<sup>21</sup> After the formation of a vertical society based on a social status system in the early modern period, warriors came to be incorporated into a lord-vassal relationship as followers of a lord. In response to this situation, bushido emphasized the virtues of loyalty and sacrifice fitting to an order founded on the lord-vassal relationship. Nevertheless, the basis of bushido was still the aim of the warrior to attain self-perfection. Works, such as Miyamoto Musashi's *Book of Five Rings*, were written by experts in the martial arts about bushido are from beginning to end explanations of the individual warrior's mental attitude and the daily life of an independent warrior.

Bushido of the Tokugawa period is well known from the work *Hagakure*,<sup>22</sup> which the modern author Mishima Yukio loved so much. This work was written as a series of oral instructions about samurai

knowledge for the Nabeshima 鍋島 house of Saga 佐賀 domain and is said to be the creation of a retired samurai of the same domain, Yamamoto Tsunetomo 山本常朝, expressly for younger samurai of the domain. *Hagakure* is well known as one of the most idealized representations of bushido.

The phrase “the way of samurai is found in death” expresses the work’s hyperbole. The opening passage of this work states the following: “Never bear any resentment to the lord, no matter if you receive an assignment that is next to impossible, or even if by ill fortune you are ordered into exile or to commit suicide. Think only of your duty to the lord. Make the domain your foremost concern for all eternity . . . this is the entry-point to the true meaning of being a samurai for this household [the Nabeshima house of Saga domain].”

The themes of death and sacrifice found in writings about bushido such as *Hagakure* make reference to these types of expressions. The many critics of *Hagakure*, as well as those in the opposite camp who devote themselves to discovering the aesthetics of bushido, both share a recognition of the underlying philosophy of this text. However, is this the correct understanding of this work?

*Hagakure* does not demand the samurai’s slavelike obedience to his lord simply in the name of loyalty. That is to say, after the same text explicates obedience to the orders of the lord, it states: “One should always appeal anything that does not resonate with one’s own feelings” — in other words, if there is ever a command that somehow does not conform to one’s beliefs, then one ought to petition the lord repeatedly to change his views. The text also states, “The highest form of loyalty is to strengthen the domain by correcting the lord’s behavior,” as, for instance, by criticizing a command from a daimyo even though he issued it, and by seeking to admonish and correct the daimyo’s mistaken views. The highest form of loyalty might properly be called using effort to solidly fortify the domain.

*Hagakure* demands that the samurai perfect himself as an independent individual. The samurai has to be a strong individual with a sense of himself, someone who actively pursues the important notion that “deter-

mination is called doing everything by yourself for the domain.” According to *Hagakure*, the idea of blind obedience to the commands of a lord would be the worst example of behavior. “One serves the orders of a lord and the love of a friend depending on the circumstances.” In other words, a person acts or transgresses in accordance to what they themselves believe. Ultimately, if one’s feelings toward the lord and the domain are strong, then any choice becomes self-evident.

The text also states that if someone besmirches a samurai’s honor, even if that person is his lord, then the samurai ought to demand redressment for the insult. It explains that a hereditary samurai of the Nabeshima is someone who ought to live by the saying “strive ahead bravely.” If a samurai decides that his efforts are not being sufficiently praised or rewarded, then he should demand his due. But, if that same samurai receives unfair treatment, and he is “without dignity,” or simply lacks common sense, then he cannot hope to find a useful place for himself in the future.

Such is *Hagakure*’s perspective on loyalty. In contrast to what is commonly understood, the text does not argue that the lord should be obeyed absolutely. The most important concern for a samurai is himself as a person; and, the text preaches a mental attitude that supports the pursuit of individual responsibility as based on a samurai’s own autonomous decisions. Thus, *Hagakure* has been interpreted incorrectly concerning the issue of death and loyalty.

The single phrase, “the way of samurai is found in death,” actually means just the opposite, as the text itself explains later. Since samurai adhere to that type of attitude to begin with, the text states in the beginning: “One should find freedom in the ways of arms and pursue one’s duty without fault one’s entire life.” Samurai reach a point where they can transcend life and death: they cut their attachment to life and become attuned to death. When they have attained this point of freedom, samurai will have nothing to fear and they will be able to pursue their duties without making any mistakes. Bushido does not valorize a meaningless death. The real meaning of bushido is for a samurai to live his life in as safe and meaningful a manner as possible.

### The Philosophy of the “Strong Point of the Domain”

Tokugawa-period military philosophy embraced the concept of “the strong point of the domain” (*oie no tsuyomi*), which referred to the strength of the daimyo’s household and to its endurance as an organization. Since a domain was vertically organized, we might imagine an organization in which everyone worked together to fulfill the orders and commands of the lord and high-ranking samurai, without uttering a complaint or a selfish thought. But this idea is mistaken. This sort of image of an organization in which everyone has a spiritual sense of absolute loyalty might be the truth on the surface, but in reality the domain was never far from disintegrating completely.

The so-called strong point of these organizations was that they depended on employing people who put their personal trust in their own faith and were full of their own sense of autonomy: people who could not be swayed by the conditions of their surroundings and would not simply obey the commands of their superiors and lord without criticism and questions. Handling these people was extremely difficult and potentially dangerous. They were the sort of men who struggled hard to the bitter end against overwhelming odds without relinquishing their responsibilities to someone else — although they might relinquish their offices when the organization faced difficulty or was on the brink of ruin. At a daily level of existence in the organization, they held in check the dangers of a laissez-faire attitude but might also conspire together in corruption.

Such a situation exemplifies the bushido philosophy of *Hagakure*. Loyalty and devotion to the lord does not mean to follow someone blindly and remain obedient. It is crucial to understand the compatibility of these ideas with the samurai’s own sense of autonomy. People who are filled with their own self-importance and act for themselves will occasionally be opposed to the commands of their lord. However, precisely because these strong, self-serving samurai will not easily submit to being controlled, paradoxically, they will exert themselves faithfully for their organization, namely the daimyo’s household.

This is the true expression of the word “fight” (*bu*), and it can be considered to be the intellectual core of the notion of independence in

bushido, the “way of the warrior.” This manner of thinking is found in texts other than *Hagakure. Tōshōgū goikun* 東照宮御遺訓,<sup>23</sup> which records the aphorisms of Tokugawa Ieyasu 徳川家康, and *Meikun ippanshō* 明訓一斑抄,<sup>24</sup> written in the late Tokugawa period by Tokugawa Nariaki 徳川斉昭 of Mito 水戸 domain, express similar sentiments. These ideas characterized Tokugawa-period bushido thinking.

The intellectual basis that supported the autonomy of the samurai as an individual is clearly discussed in *Meikun kakun* 明君家訓<sup>25</sup> by Muro Kyūsō 室鳩巢, who served as the tutor for the eighth shogun, Tokugawa Yoshimune 徳川吉宗. The text purports to be the instructions of a lord (Yoshimune) to his retainers, describing the ideal form of lord-vassal relationship. The text asserts that the most important principle is for both the lord and the vassal to “advance the good and rectify the bad.” At the outset, the text notes the necessity of different opinions and of a vassal’s remonstrating with his lord. It states, in the voice of the ruler, “Do not stray from the path of service to the lord; day and night be watchful for any feeling of opposition. I want you to report directly to me about my own deeds and the governance of this country without hesitating, if there is any matter that is not as it should be, no matter how small, or if you have any opinions.”

The text sought to instill in retainers honor as samurai, crafting an ideal image of the warrior:

Honor is not accomplished through words nor by showing off one’s cleverness. It is accomplished by taming one’s heart and nothing else is needed. Being well mannered and polite. Avoiding flattery of one’s betters and disdain for those below one’s station. Upholding promises made. Paying attention to people’s tribulations. . . . Knowing shame; and even when you face execution, do not do anything you think should not be done. Do not retreat from death. Work for justice and the truth. That sort of spirit is as strong as iron. Realize the sentiments of the effervescence of all things and of gentle compassion. A samurai with honor is someone who has sympathy toward others.

The same text that emphasized the importance of samurai honor had

the following comments for instances when the decisions of individual retainers opposed their lord's orders: written in the voice of the ruler, "As a rule, my true belief is that I do not for a moment feel that everyone ought to exhaust their loyalty to me, bending the ideals that they possess. If there is any opposition to one of my commands, and everyone is true in their beliefs, I would consider that to be truly valuable." In this example, the text pays respect to the principles embraced by individual samurai and gives a place for disobedience on these grounds. The idea of the relationship of the individual to the organization expressed in Tokugawa-period bushido philosophy has saliency for modern society.

*Meikun kakun* was published in 1715 and received favorable praise in warrior society. Shogun Tokugawa Yoshimune recommended the work to his close associates, and the text was rapidly disseminated. All of the retainers at Edo Castle kept it close at hand.<sup>26</sup>

The philosophy of bushido in the early modern period is characterized by its emphasis on the existence of the samurai as individuals. As indicated by the expressions that even the lowly and weak, "ought to bear the responsibility for their lord's household," and "even when you are about to lose your life, do not do anything you think should not be done," there was a strong undercurrent of personal self-interest in bushido.

In the social order of the early modern period, the individual was not swallowed by the entirety of the organization. People preserved their autonomy through the principle of "shares," described earlier. Bushido provided the intellectual backbone for the existence of the samurai as an individual.

The early modern political order and Japanese-style organizations each have a distinct way of encompassing the independence of individual members within a respective organization, regardless of the existence of a vertically organized chain of command. These types of organizations are strong because all of the members possess a strong sense of themselves, and of their ability to act, rooted in their own consciousness of their autonomy. The strengths and ability of these organizations are especially apparent when they encounter threatening circumstances.