

HOGARES CON JEFATURA FEMENINA EN LOS COMIENZOS
DEL KIOTO MODERNO, EN JAPÓN

Female Headed Households in Early Modern Kyoto, Japan

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Abstract

This study examines female-headed households in the late Tokugawa era in Kyoto, Japan, 1843-1868. The study uses a data set of 37,000 person-year observations from individual faith surveys (also known as population registers) compiled by 30 neighborhoods in Kyoto, supplemented by qualitative documents to compare those households listing a female head with those listing a male head or a child aged 1-10 as the head of household. The number of households listing women or children as head, despite the presence of adult males, already suggests that headship was not about patriarchal authority. This study of female-headed households therefore examines the significance of listing women as head of household and what female-headed households reveal about gender, headship and family in mid-nineteenth century Kyoto during the final years of the Tokugawa regime.

Key words

Female headed households, headship, marriage, inheritance, children, property.

Resumen

El presente trabajo examina los hogares con jefatura femenina en la era Tokugawa tardía (1843-1868) en Kioto, Japón. Se usó un conjunto de datos de 37.000 observaciones año-persona de encuestas individuales (también llamadas registros de población) compiladas por 30 barrios en Kioto y complementadas por documentos cualitativos para comparar los hogares con jefatura femenina con aquellos que tenían a un niño entre uno y diez años como jefe de hogar. La cantidad de hogares que registraron mujeres o niños cabeza de hogar, a pesar de la presencia de hombres adultos, sugiere que la jefatura no estaba relacionada con la autoridad patriarcal. Por lo tanto, el estudio de hogares con jefatura femenina examina el significado de los registros de mujeres como cabeza de hogar y lo que este tipo de hogares refleja sobre el género, la jefatura y la familia en el Kioto de mediados del siglo XIX, durante los últimos años del régimen Tokugawa.

Palabras clave

hogares con jefatura femenina, jefatura, matrimonio, herencia, hijos, propiedad.

Introduction

The main question for this study is how to understand female headed households in the city of Kyoto during the final 26 years of the Tokugawa regime, or 1843-68. The study of female headed households also contributes to the understanding of headship as well as the position of women in early modern Japanese patriarchy.

In the research literature the head of household is assumed to be a position of patriarchal authority and the head should be an adult male, indeed the senior adult male, if at all possible. John Hajnal's 1982 article, for example, claims the first rule of household formation in Northwest Europe is a married man should be in charge of his own household.¹ According to this explanation, the male heir in the European stem family should inherit headship and control of the household at the time of marriage, even though the heir couple may continue to reside with a retired parent or parental couple.² Engelen and Wolf argue that the co-residence of the heir couple with a parent or parental couple for some years before succeeding to headship, as described by Osamu Saito for Japan, signified that the heir couple submitted to parental authority and was not in charge of their household, a critical difference between the Japanese and European stem family systems.³ Emmanuel Todd, following this same understanding of authority, finds both egalitarian and authoritarian nuclear families in Europe, but assumes that the stem family followed authoritarian principles in its relations between parent and child.⁴

Following this assumption of headship as patriarchal authority, female headed households should be mainly female households comprised of single women or widows and their children and containing no adult males. In other words, women were the head of last resort because there was no other choice. In these discussions, the Northwestern European nuclear family is often taken to be the least patriarchal and Asian families, including Japanese fami-

1. J. Hajnal, "Two kinds of preindustrial household formation system" *Population Development Review*, vol. 8, no. 3, 1982, 452.

2. See further discussion in T. Engelen and A. P. Wolf (eds), *Marriage and the family in Eurasia: Perspectives on the Hajnal hypothesis*, Amsterdam, 2005, 16-18.

3. T. Engelen and A. P. Wolf, *Marriage and the family in Eurasia*, 24-25. O. Saito, "Two kinds of stem-family system? Traditional Japan and Europe compared," *Continuity and Change*, vol. 13, 1998, 169.

4. E. Todd, *L'invention de l'Europe*, 1996, 39, 57-60.

lies, are assumed together with Eastern European families to be more patriarchal.⁵ The first task for this study, therefore, is identifying female headed households. The quantitative data set of individual faith surveys called *shumon ninbetsu aratame cho*,⁶ clearly identify the head of household, so there is no doubt that these were female headed households. The next section introduces and discusses the faith surveys and the identification of the head of household. The section is followed by a quantitative analysis of households listing female heads in comparison with those listing male heads and those that list children as head of household.

At first glance households listing female heads in the Kyoto data appear to fit the expectations of patriarchal authority. Female headed households tended to be households of single mothers and solitary or other non-family households. The typical question, therefore, is how such households could survive and how women could support themselves and their families. In Kyoto, female heads of household also tended to be older women, although they could be of any age, and they were more likely to own their residences than male heads of household.

This last point plus the young children, ages 1-10, listed as heads of household suggest, however, that the head of household may not have been a position of patriarchal authority and women may have had the potential for more agency and authority than usually assumed for an Asian patriarchal society. A closer look at female headed households also reveals that some women were listed as head despite the presence of adult males in the household. The section following the quantitative analysis therefore uses case studies to examine a selection of these households to understand what the identification as head of household signified to local society. A final section addresses property ownership as revealed in transmission documents before the conclusion.

While there has been a lot of research in women's history on determining the agency, activities and contributions of women, discovering their potential for authority within the household can be difficult. In England, for example, women of all classes managed the household budget as they were in charge of the cooking and cleaning, but they were also subject to the authority of their husbands as subordinate partners, although aristocratic women could own and control their own property, giving them a bit more autonomy.⁷ Indeed, ownership and control of property appears to have been the key to autonomy and the potential for some authority. In Europe whether and how much property a woman controlled independently depended on a combination of dowry, inheritance and marriage contracts. However, even having direct control over her own property does not change the fact that the wife, even the aristocratic wife, was subordinate to the authority of her husband who had the real authority in the household. This subordinate relation is reflected in the tendency for census enumerators to assume that the senior male in a household is the head of household.

5. J. Hajnal, "Two kinds..." *loc.cit.*, 464-6.

6. In the research literature on the historical demography of Tokugawa, or early modern, Japan these surveys are called population registers. Individual faith surveys reflects more closely the translation and character of the Kyoto documents, as will be discussed in the next section.

7. S. Steinbach, *Women in England, 1760-1914*, New York, 2004, 12-13, 44-45, 80-81.

The European literature noted above suggests property ownership and some form of control was one source of greater autonomy and potential authority for women within the household. In Japan when a woman inherited property, her husband was often listed as head of household, but she retained full property rights over that property and he could not alienate it.⁸ In addition, the research literature shows women could gain rights toward the property of their marital families, likely as guardians to their children.⁹ This study argues that these property rights of ownership and control were shared with other family members and the community.

In Kyoto, while there are signs that married women had property rights toward their natal family property even after marrying into the groom's family, this is more obvious when the groom married into the bride's family. Even when the couple lived in a nuclear household, as the majority did, the property or business license could be an extension of the assets belonging to the family of the groom or the bride. I argue that a married woman had more authority, whether or not she was listed as head of household, when the groom married into the bride's family and she or her child was more likely to be listed as head of household in this type of marriage because the household depended upon assets from her family rather than his.

This study argues that women were not listed as head of household as a last resort, but when and because they were actually functioning as head of household. Further, although female headship was not the preferred choice, women had become, or were still, generally acceptable as heads of household at this point in the history of Kyoto. Moreover, occupational opportunities in the textile industry made it possible for women to live alone or to support a household. Equally important, although some industries had institutional barriers preventing women from officially functioning as head of household and business, others did not. Finally, although still more of a question mark, this study argues that the ability of women to take over management from their male kin together with the employment of professional managers who could represent the household for public duties also allowed families and family businesses to list children as head of household to clearly establish the lines of inheritance and avoid future conflict while their mothers, aunts or other guardians did the actual work. In short, women were listed primarily because they were doing the work, but in some cases women likely functioned as head of household without being listed as such.

As a result, I argue that the head of household was not a position of patriarchal authority. While it could include responsibility and authority, it identified who had ownership or control of the property or business license. A woman or a child was listed as head even when there were adult males in the household to clarify that the property or business license belonged to her or her children rather than to the men in the household.

8. H. Katakura, "Edo Machikata ni okeru Sōzoku", [Inheritance among Edo townspeople], pp. 177-218 in R. Hayashi *et al.*, *Ronshū Kinsei Josei Shi*, [Collection of essays on the history of early modern women], Tokyo, 1986, 193.

9. H. Katakura, "Edo Machikata..." *loc.cit.*

Female Headed Households and the Primary Data

For data this study uses the individual faith surveys called *Shūmon Ninbetsu Aratame Chō* of thirty neighborhoods in Kyoto compiled variously 1842-1869¹⁰. A neighborhood was an administrative unit comprised of all households on both sides of a city street from one corner to the next. Each neighborhood had its own administration which kept order, settled minor disputes and compiled the various surveys required by the state.¹¹ The faith surveys were compiled annually in the ninth month of each lunar year with listings of newcomers added in the second month of the following year. The surveys list only commoners living in each neighborhood, so nobles, clergy and members of the warrior class are generally not included in these listings. Each survey lists all residents currently residing in the neighborhood at the time of the survey and does not provide information regarding domicile residents who are absent. In addition, even though the data samples for some neighborhoods include consecutive listings of several years, seven of the neighborhood samples only provide the data for one listing and several neighborhoods have listings that are not consecutive providing another nine listings that are virtually single listings. The total sample includes 225 listings from thirty neighborhoods during a twenty-seven year period that are partially longitudinal.

The unit of analysis is observations. Many individuals and households are observed only once due to the fragmented nature of the data. Other individuals and households are observed multiple times, but each observation is unique because individual characteristics change with age during the life course and households also change due to demographic events such as births, deaths, and mobility. Any quantitative analysis reveals the probability, rather than the proportion, that a household or an individual would match the defined criteria.

These listings provide 9,045 household year observations for analysis of which 811, or nine per cent, have a female listed as head of household. In addition, there are 274 household observations, or three per cent, listing a child ages 1-10 as head of household. However, information regarding the age or name (and therefore gender) of the head of household is hidden and inaccessible for 41 household observations, so the quantitative data available for this analysis is 9004 household observations of which 807 are female headed households. From

10. Various scholars including the author using documents of this sort have typically called them population registers, but this study will use the correct translation of the document title. The difference for the Kyoto surveys is important because the surveys only provide information on people present at the time of the survey. There is no registration of other people who may have been there before or of events explaining why individuals are gone or new individuals have entered; merely notes to assist neighborhood officials in compiling the current survey. Other surveys providing similar individual and household information from some neighborhoods have been included in the pooled data files to maximize the data coverage. These include population surveys called *Ninbestu Aratame Cho* compiled in the fourth month, and occupation surveys called *Tose Shirabe Cho* compiled in the third or sixth month depending on the neighborhood and the year.

11. Kyoto City Library for Historical Documents (ed), 1999, *Kyōto chō shikimoku shūsei*, [Collection of Kyoto city neighborhood laws], Kyoto City Library for Historical Documents (Japanese title 京都町式目集成).

the entire data sample the age or gender of 132 individual observations cannot be determined out of the total 37,004 individual observations listed in the surveys leaving 17,157 female observations, and 19,720 male observations for a total 36,877 observations for analysis (see tables 1-2).

Age group	F	M	totals	sex ratio
01-05	1516	1656	3172	109
06-10	1485	1661	3146	112
11-15	1471	3083	4554	210
16-20	1815	2748	4563	151
21-25	1744	1771	3515	102
26-30	1511	1616	3127	107
31-35	1332	1389	2721	104
36-40	1311	1366	2677	104
41-45	1172	1125	2297	96
46-50	966	1001	1967	104
51-55	841	781	1622	93
56-60	697	630	1327	90
61-65	555	431	986	78
66-70	371	284	655	77
71-75	189	128	317	68
76-80	121	34	155	28
81+	60	16	76	27
totals	17157	19720	36877	115

Table 1 Individual observations of known age and sex

Age group	F	M	totals	Age probability of female heads	Age probability of male heads	Probability that a head is female
01-05	2	56	58	0.001	0.034	0.034
06-10	7	209	216	0.005	0.126	0.032
11-15	14	226	240	0.010	0.073	0.058
16-20	26	327	353	0.014	0.119	0.074
21-25	27	443	470	0.015	0.250	0.057
26-30	19	829	848	0.013	0.513	0.022
31-35	32	1075	1107	0.024	0.774	0.029
36-40	51	1195	1246	0.039	0.875	0.041
41-45	108	1038	1146	0.092	0.923	0.094
46-50	110	914	1024	0.114	0.913	0.107
51-55	107	719	826	0.127	0.921	0.130
56-60	90	528	618	0.129	0.838	0.146
61-65	94	321	415	0.169	0.745	0.227
66-70	70	199	269	0.189	0.701	0.260
71-75	28	88	116	0.148	0.688	0.241
76-80	17	23	40	0.140	0.676	0.425
81+	5	7	12	0.083	0.438	0.417
totals	807	8197	9004	0.047	0.416	0.090

Table 2 Household heads of known age and sex

The surveys list each resident in a household identified by the name of the house and the head of household with the other members listed in their relation to the head of household (see figure 1). The house name was more like a business name than the name of any particular building or property and multiple households often use the same house name or *yago*, even within a single neighborhood. For example, Chikiriya is a house name that survives today as a business and the Koromodana Kita Neighborhood surveys list five Chikiriya households in 1843. The listings also provide the age, birth province, religious sect and the temple of registration by name and address, plus other incidental information such as name

changes or if an individual entered into religious orders for each individual. For example, the 1862 listing for Kami Ninomiya Neighborhood lists Omiya Masa age 33 living with her uncle Eijiro (44), her son Usaburo (8) and her daughter Koto (2). Omiya is the house name, Masa is head and the other members are identified by their relation to her. From this listing we can see that Masa is clearly identified as the head of household because she is listed first, carries the house name and the other members are listed in their relation to her. Moreover, Masa signed the listing with her house seal to confirm that the listing was correct. That she is listed as head even though there was a senior adult male in her household, her uncle, as well as her two children, including one son is an important point.

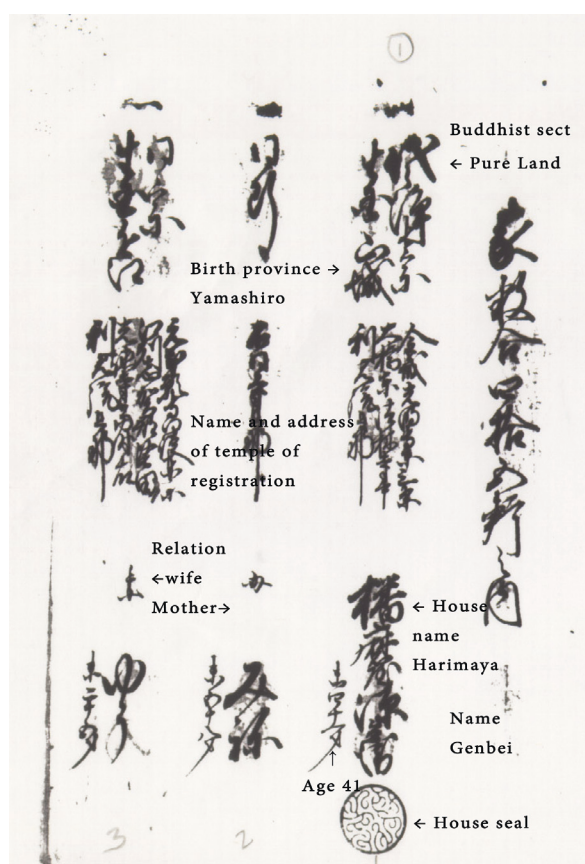


Figure 1 First page of the Individual Faith Survey of Takoyakushi Neighborhood, Harimaya Genbei household, 1847. *Kyōto Muromachi dōri Nijō sagaru Takoyakushi chō* “*Shūmon Ninbetsu Aratame Chō*”. [Individual faith surveys] 1843-1857, Takoyakushi collection, Kyoto City Library of Historical Documents.

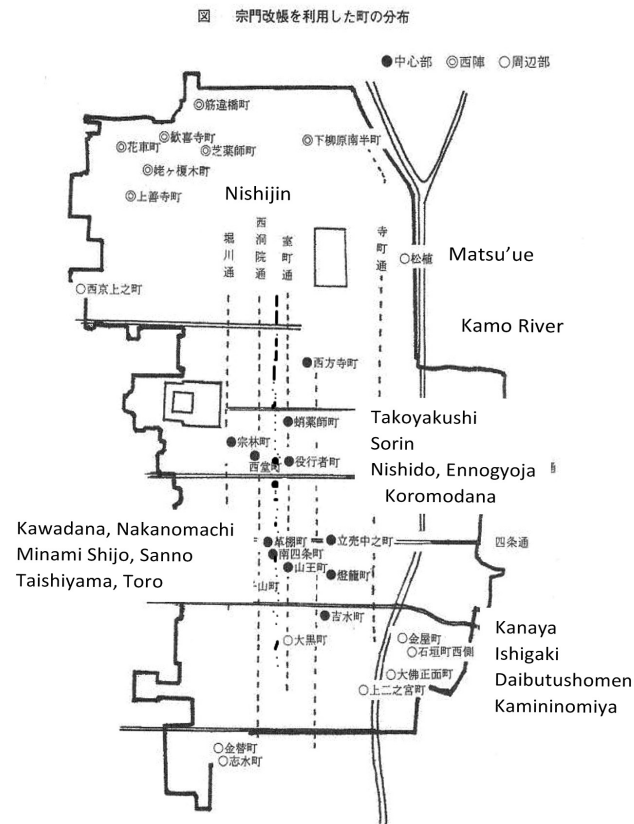


Figure 2. Map of Kyoto and the locations of the 30 neighborhoods providing data for this study, produced by Kiyoshi Hamano, unpublished.

Most neighborhoods in the data listed some households with women as head of household and only two neighborhoods list none. One of these two neighborhoods, Sannō was unusual for a neighborhood near the commercial center of the city since only three of the seventeen households list in the neighborhood included any live-in employees. This lack of live-in employees together with the fact that all but two of the households were renting their residences suggests that Sannō was less affluent than many of the other neighborhoods near the commercial center. Similarly, the surveys for the other neighborhood, Matsu'ue, include the listings for five years, 1850 and 1852-5, with only 24 households and only three servants total, each observed only once and employed by three different households. Otherwise, although not common, the remaining 28 neighborhoods list at least some households with female heads.

In summary, the various surveys compiled by Kyoto neighborhood officials, primarily the individual faith surveys, clearly identify the head of household and each household confirmed their listing each year by “signing” the survey listing with the house seal. Yet there was a three per cent probability that the listed head of household was a child ages 1-10 suggesting that some adult

member of the household was actually doing the work of managing and making decisions for or about the household and business, likely while training the child listed as head in the duties and responsibilities required of the head. The next section examines the characteristics female headed households as compared to those listing men or children as head.

Characteristics of Female Headed Households

At first glance the structure of female headed households in Kyoto was not much different from female headed households in many parts of the world. Quantitative analysis reveals that female headed households appear to be most likely the households of widows as nuclear households comprised of parent/s and child/ren 35.6 per cent and solitary households 48.7 per cent make up 84.3 per cent of all observations of female headed households (see the analysis in table 3). On the other hand, further investigation reveals that female headed households were rather different from male headed households and, of course, from the larger pattern of household structures. Female headed households were far more likely to be solitaries or other non-family households, including sibling households (total non-family probability 54.9 per cent), and far less likely to be nuclear, stem or extended households than male headed households. Moreover, female headed households were also more likely to own their residence than male headed households. In other words, female headed households appear to have been more independent than male headed households and were far more likely to represent women living alone.

Structure	Female	Male	Child	All households	Female adjusted
Extended	2.2%	4.5%	1.5%	4.3%	1.8%
Joint	-	0.6%	0.7%	0.5%	-
Nonfamily	4.2%	1.6%	14.6%	1.8%	6.5%
Nuclear	35.6%	68.1%	63.9%	65.2%	44.3%
Siblings	2.0%	0.6%	2.2%	0.8%	1.6%
Solitaries	48.7%	7.7%	5.1%	11.4%	39.9%
Stem	7.3%	16.9%	12.0%	16.0%	6.0%
Owners	33.9%	28.6%	15.0%	29.0%	27.7%
employers	15.7%	22.1%	16.8%	21.5%	12.8%
Total N	811	8224	274	9035	991

Table 3 Household structure of female, male and child headed households

A modified version of the Hammel-Laslett scheme was used for this analysis.¹² An extended household in this analysis was a nuclear family unit (married couple or parent/s and child/ren) plus other kin members of the household, such as an aunt, uncle, cousin, or grandchild that did not form other nuclear units. A joint household had two nuclear units in the same generation, a non-family household contained no nuclear units, but the households made up of unmarried siblings living together were separated out and called sibling households. When the junior generation in an otherwise nuclear unit of parents and children included a married child, that household was defined as stem. In some of the extended and stem households, the head of household was not part of any nuclear unit in the household and headship could be in virtually any generation and in any relation to the nuclear units in the household, so the direction of extension was left undefined. Although most stem households appearing in the data only had one married couple, there was a 19.7 per cent probability that the stem households had two married couples co-resident in the household, but this only represented 3.3 per cent of all male headed household observations and 3.2 per cent of all household observations. There were no households containing two or more couples that had females or children listed as head.

Households listing a young child as head were also examined to understand what adults were present as guardians to serve as *de facto* head (see table 4). Households listing a young child were most often households of a widowed parent with children, 57 per cent probability of widowed mothers and 1 per cent widowed fathers. Yet many of the households listing a woman as head of household were also widows with children. One question that needs answering will be why some households listed the mother as head while others listed the child. Even so, households listing a child as head had a 72 per cent probability that a woman – mother, grandmother or aunt – was serving as *de facto* head of household despite the listing because there were no adult men in the household.

12. P. Laslett, "Introduction" Peter Laslett and Richard Wall (eds), *Household and Family in Past Time*, Cambridge, 1972, 28-32.

Co-residence status	Probability
Single mothers	57%
Single fathers	1%
Parent couple	17%
Other adult kin	27%
Grandmother	14%
Grandfather	3%
Single aunt	5%
Single uncle	1%
aunt+uncle couple	1%
No adult kin, nonfamily	5%
Solitary household	with servants 3% alone 3%
Siblings only	3%
Cousins	0.7%
Total observations	274

Table 4 Co-residence of children, ages 1-10, listed as head of household

Recognizing that women were serving as *de facto* heads for the greater majority of households listing a child ages 1-10 as head, table 3 includes a column adjusting the numbers for female headed households by adding in the observations of households listing child heads where women were most likely the *de facto head*. This increases the observations of female headed households to 991, or 11 per cent of all household observations. This new calculation reduces the total probability of a female headed household being a nonfamily household to 49.5 per cent and increases the probability of being nuclear to 44.3 per cent. Clearly, even in the adjusted figures female headed households cannot be simply explained as widows with their children.

The above analysis suggests that women may have been more likely to live alone than men. This finding is rather surprising because there was no poor law or welfare system providing regular or emergency assistance or support for these or any households. Public assistance was mainly available on an *ad hoc* basis in times of economic disaster. If an elderly man or woman was unable to support him or herself, then the neighborhood officials remanded

them to the care of their kin. Indeed, these lone women represent a very tiny minority of the women in the data. If we look at what sorts of households older women were living in rather than at female headed households, the picture looks rather different. Table 5 contrasts households containing older men with those containing older women ages 51-60 and over sixty. Here again, older men continued most likely to be found living in nuclear households whereas elderly women were more likely than men to be living alone. At the same time, the majority of elderly women were living with their adult children or other younger kin, likely providing assistance with child care and other household duties in more complex households.

Structure	F51-60	M51-60	F 61+	M 61+	total 51+
Extended	5.7%	4.0%	4.2%	2.6%	4.3%
Joint	1.3%	0.5%	1.4%	1.0%	1.1%
Nonfamily	1.8%	0.9%	5.2%	1.8%	2.4%
Nuclear	53.4%	74.1%	28.6%	51.7%	52.5%
Siblings	0.1%	0.1%			0.0%
Solitarities	7.7%	5.5%	9.9%	7.6%	7.6%
Stem	30.0%	15.0%	50.7%	35.3%	32.0%
Total obs	1538	1411	1296	893	5138

Table 5 Structure of households containing elderly members

These two analyses, the structures of all households containing older men and women and the structures of all female and male headed households, suggest the conclusion that female headed households represented the households of women who could support themselves and their families, fulfill the private duties of headship and maintain their independence. The majority of women, however, lived in households surrounded by their kin. Significantly, the probabilities that men or women lived in nuclear households fell dramatically with age while the probability of living in stem family households increased for both genders.

Among the surveys used for data, Kanaya Neighborhood includes occupation surveys for five years. During these years there are eight women listed as head of household in the neighborhood surveys identifying occupations. In this neighborhood they all record their occupations as tailors. The surveys for Kankiji Neighborhood in the Nishijin silk textile district also includes many women listed as apprentices, suggesting they were apprentice weavers. Since silk textiles was an important industry in Kyoto, occupations in the industry would allow women to support themselves and their families.

Kin category	F heads	M heads	Heads 1-10
spouse	1.1%	72.2%	-
child	37.3%	60.1%	-
parent	7.6%	24.2%	77.3%
sibling	4.1%	11.3%	37.2%
other stem	7.4%	4.2%	29.7%
nonstem	4.1%	4.1%	9.8%
nonkin	0.5%	0.3%	16.7%
solitaries	49.4%	7.9%	5.1%
servants	15.2%	22.3%	16.7%
total obs	798	7932	274

Table 6 Probability of coresidence with various categories of kin

Note: other stem refers to grandparents or grandchildren, while nonkin does not include servants.

Differences in household structure suggest differences in co-resident kin. Already we have seen that households listing children ages 1-10 as head nevertheless often contained adult kin who could have been listed as head and even had a 17 per cent probability of including both parents. Table 6 compares the probability that a female, male or child head of household had lived with various categories of kin. For this analysis children ages 1-10 are not included in the figures for female or male heads. This analysis reveals a few surprises that deserve closer examination, not least of which is that some female heads of household were currently married. A second is that female headed households included some businesses with live-in employees, although less common than for male headed households. The next section uses case studies to examine female headed households more closely and try to understand the significance of listing a female head of household.

Women, Children and the Role of Household Head

The quantitative analyses of the previous section have shown that headship was not defined as a position of patriarchal authority. The 17 per cent probability that a child ages 1-10 listed as head of household was nevertheless living with both parents, as revealed in table 4 calls that definition into question. So does the existence of female heads of household living with their currently married spouses, as revealed in table 6, and also calls into question

the assumption that women would be listed as a last resort. The children listed as head of household also call into question the female head as placeholder explanation. At the same time, households listing women or children as head are not very common in the data. Even if we add the households listing boys ages 1-10 as head that only had adult women to support the child head to the observations of female headed households, the probability that a woman was in charge of the household is only 11 per cent. So, what did it mean to be listed as head of household? What were the duties of the head? What made men the preferred choice as head of household?

The responsibilities of the head of household can be divided into two categories, public and private. The public duties included representing the family in community councils or community decisions and duties of public service such as police, fire fighting or administration.¹³ Private duties also included managing the household labor and finances as well as carrying out the religious rites for family ancestral spirits, tutelary deities or other religious festivals. Since many of the urban households were also family businesses or branches of larger family businesses, the head also represented the business in trade association or other public business activities and, of course, had responsibility for management and success of the business, or the particular branch of the business that the household represented.

At the same time, while a household could be a business, or a branch unit within a larger business organization, the majority of households listed in the population surveys rented their housing and listed no live-in employees. Although many of these households may have subcontracted their skills and labor as artisans or in other work, it is difficult to understand why such households would list children as head of household, yet such households had only a 15 per cent probability of owning the household residence (see table 3).

One way to get around gender or age constraints on the public duties of the head of household was to delegate the duties to another member of the household to represent the head of household. When neighborhood communities in Kyoto began hiring a public servant called the *machi yōnin* to take on some of the more onerous public duties of firefighting, peace keeping and gate keeping (neighborhoods in early modern Kyoto were walled and gated communities), then there was no reason that women could not fulfill the other public duties of the head of household. Over time, the *yōnin* also came to take on some administrative duties such as neighborhood treasurer and keeping records.¹⁴

The research literature and qualitative data has shown that women could and did fulfill the duties of household head when the listed male head was incapacitated.¹⁵ This included

13. P. Laslett, "Introduction" *loc. cit.*

14. Kyoto City Library for Historical Documents (ed), 1999, *Kyōto machi shikimoku shūsei*, [Collection of Kyoto city neighborhood laws], Kyoto City Library for Historical Documents. See, for example, Kaisho yōnin Hikoroku, [to On Toshiyori Mr. Kichibei and On Machi Chū], "Sadame," Regulations, 7/1802, Ennogyōja Chō collection no. C-3, Kyoto City Library of Historical Documents.

15. Katakura H., "Bakumatsu ishinki no toshi kazoku to joshi rodo" [Urban families and female labor in the late Tokugawa and Meiji Restoration periods], in Owada Michiko and Nagano Hiroko (eds), *Nihon Josei Shi Ronshu*, [Collection of essays on the history of Japanese women], Tokyo, 1998, 85-108. M. L. Nagata,

taking over management of the business, or a branch of a business when widowed until a son or other male family member was ready to take over. Recently Nagata has argued that since they took on the duties of a male head of household to fill in whenever necessary in case of illness or temporary absence, women clearly believed that there would or should be no barriers to them taking on these duties on behalf of someone else.

For example, in 1834 a young woman named Kane sued the measures guild for their refusal to pay for the measures manufactured by her family's workshop. Kane's father, Yamatoya Chūbei had been a member of the guild and regularly sold measures to them. Kane married Heibei, one of the craftsmen in the workshop, and he took over management of the workshop after Chūbei's death. However, Heibei did not carry out the work, but left the management to Kane, who had assisted her father since childhood. So Kane divorced Heibei and sent him home to Etchū Province, thinking to register the business in their son Matsunosuke's name while continuing to oversee the work. The guild, however, refused to recognize Matsunosuke's headship as at six he was too young and not qualified for the work. The guild also objected to a woman managing the work and this was the reason for the dispute, causing Kane's suit against the guild.¹⁶ In this case, Heibei was likely listed head of household after the former head died, but his wife Kane was able to challenge his position, divorce him and send him home. The fact that the guild later would not accept her management does not change the fact that Kane was in charge. In the end, the magistrate ruled that the guild had to pay her for the measures they had already received since they clearly had passed inspection. At the same time the guild had the right to determine its own rules for membership, so Kane needed to find some other male craftsman to take over management of the workshop until her son Matsunosuke could qualify.¹⁷ This document suggests that there were many women who acted as head of household when not listed as head.

Kane had married one of the artisans in her father's workshop. In other words, her husband was an in-marriage son-in-law. He might have been listed as head of household because he was expected to represent the household and manage the business labor, but he was still subordinate to his wife. Moreover, she could manage the business labor and control the household without being listed as head. Notice also that Kane, not her husband, inherited the business license that supported the household. Moreover, Heibei was likely listed as head of household mainly to satisfy guild requirements and Kane had originally proposed to list the business in her son's name after she divorced Heibei and sent him home. This shows one explanation for listing children as head of household: the gender requirements of guild or

"Women's Roles in the Family Business: evidence from Kyoto in the nineteenth century," presented at the World Economic Congress, Utrecht, August 2-7, 2009.

16. Plaintiff Yamatoya Matsunosuke mother Kane, Toshiyori Shinbei, Goningumi Kashichi, [to Obugyo sama], "Osore nagara on soso," Civil suit, 23/4/1834, Masu Za Fukui Sakuzaemon Collection No. 248.

17. Plaintiff Yamatoya Matsunosuke mother Kane, Toshiyori Shinbei, Goningumi Kashichi, [to Obugyo sama], "Osore nagara on soso," Civil suit, 23/4/1834, Masu Za Fukui Sakuzaemon Collection No. 248. Mary Louise Nagata, "Women's Roles in the Family Business: evidence from Kyoto in the nineteenth century," presented at the World Economic Congress, Utrecht, August 2-7, 2009.

trade association for ownership of a business license. Although the carpenters and measures guilds would not accept either women or children as head, trade associations in textiles or food processing likely would.

The households where children were listed as head of household even though co-resident with both parents suggest that their fathers were in-marrying sons-in-law who did not gain ownership of the business license. In-marrying sons-in-law and inheritance through the female line would also explain the women, although small in number, who were listed as head of household even when co-resident with their husbands. Each of those women was living on property she owned. However, there are many other in-marrying sons-in-law that appear in the listings who succeeded to headship of their marital households, so this was neither the entire picture nor the most important factor explaining the pattern. Consider the following two examples of female headed households that contained adult male kin.

The listings for Sōrin neighborhood for 1868-9 include Iseya Kane (76) living with her husband Chouemon (70), her daughter Koto (52) son Takejiro (28), and grandson Shintaro (7). In this case there are two adult males who could qualify as head of household, Chouemon and Takejiro. Kashiwaya Nobu (21) lived in Tōrō neighborhood in 1843 and is listed as head of household living with her father Kyūbei (60) and younger sister Natsu (13). The household remains unchanged until 1850 when Kyūbei (67) is listed as head and joined by his wife, who had lived down the street as Kashiwaya Sho. However, there is a gap in the data and Kyūbei is gone in 1855 with Nobu (32) again listed as head of household living with her mother Shō (66)¹⁸ and sister Natsu (25). Nobu remains head even when her younger brother Risuke (23) appears in 1858, at least until 1860. In 1861 Nobu is gone and Risuke has taken the name Kyūbei along with the position of head of household.

Iseya Kane's headship cannot be explained as substituting until an adult male became available since there were two in her household. The most likely explanation is that the property and business belonged to her family rather than that of her husband Chouemon, while Takejiro would have to wait to inherit, unless the intent was to follow the female line. Unfortunately, the series does not allow observation of the household after Kane's death. In the case of Kashiwaya Nobu, clearly her father could take headship, since he did so, but only when his wife Sho joined the household suggesting that this was actually her property and Kashiwaya was her family business owning two properties in the neighborhood. Nobu was listed as head likely as the heiress for the property and the family needed to make this publicly clear. Kyūbei's wife Shō is listed living in a solitary household as Kashiwaya Shō separate from the household of Nobu before 1848. Their son Risuke gained the property when Nobu died, or left.

The above example of Yamatoya Kane suggests the person listed as head of household was the one responsible for representing the household publicly in the neighborhood or business organizations. These organizations often preferred to deal with men, but some would accept some designated substitute for the household head. At the same time, some households lived on property belonging to the bride or were supported by a business that belonged to the

18. The Kyoto surveys do not identify fictive kin relations, so an adoptive son is listed as a son, and in this case the father's wife is listed as mother.

bride and the bride's family, as with Kashiwaya Sho and Kashiwaya Nobu. When a woman was listed as head of household despite the presence of adult males in the household, most likely the property or the business license belonged to her or to her family.

Closer examination of the households, neighborhoods and any other documentation available regarding the households with no adult kin listed as co-resident with a child head of household reveals that adult kin were often living nearby. Several of these children appear as younger sons in a large business household before moving out to what would later become a branch business under their control and there appears to have been an educational aspect to this situation.¹⁹ This emphasizes that these households were not entirely independent economic and social units, but could represent individual units within a larger family and business structure. The same may likely be true of many of the other households in the data, but the data is insufficient to fully investigate this aspect of household and family at this time. Keeping this aspect of the Japanese family in mind, however, provides another clue to the significance of being listed as head of household.

For example, Kondaya is one of the larger family networks appearing in the population surveys for Takoyakushi Neighborhood. Other research has shown, however, that the main base for Kondaya was the adjacent neighborhood Reizei. The main Kondaya household in Takoyakushi was that of Kondaya Jinbei, a branch of the Reizei Kondaya established by a younger son in 1773.²⁰ In 1843 there were nine Kondaya households in Takoyakushi, the largest of which belonged to Jinbei, the name inherited and used by each successive head of this branch of Kondaya.

Takejiro was a younger son of the current Jinbei in a large and complex household that included his parents, his grandmother, his mother's sister, an older brother Kyutaro and an older sister who died at the age of 14. In addition, the household was also a large business with 18-25 live-in employees. When Takejiro was ten, he moved out to another household with his eight-year-old cousin Sotaro and two maids. His elder brother Kyutaro succeeded to headship two years later when their father was only 43. Takejiro thus became head of his own household at the age of ten, but an older maid Mitsu age 59 most likely was in charge of the welfare of the two boys and Takejiro's parents lived practically next door. In a sense, Takejiro's household could be considered an extension of Jinbei's household. Although the household would continue to be "independent", the independent authority of Takejiro as head at age ten is doubtful.

Another important point is the listing of a child as head of household when he is co-resident with his parents and other adult kin, as noted above. Clearly these listings do not identify children as the representative of the household who should fulfill public duties in the neighborhood administration or attend council meetings in the neighborhood government.

19. M. L. Nagata, "Adoption, Apprenticeship and Headship Succession: Childhood in Early Modern Kyoto." Paper presented at Society for the History of Children and Youth mtg., Norrköping, Sweden, June 27-30, 2007. Mary Louise Nagata, "Women's Roles in the Family Business: evidence from Kyoto in the nineteenth century," presented at the World Economic Congress, Utrecht, August 2-7, 2009.

20. Sugimori T., *Kinsei Kyoto no Toshi to Shakai*, [City and society in early modern Kyoto], Tokyo, 2008, 157-9.

Likewise, these children would not be solely responsible for managing family finances or business management, although they may be learning how to do so under an adult mentor. The significance of listing a child as head of household must be, therefore, related somehow to ownership or inheritance of the property or that branch of the family business. Yet, investigation of the residence status of households with children listed as head of household reveals an 87 per cent probability of living in rented housing. Thus the issue was not ownership or inheritance of that particular property. The example of Yamatoya Kane discussed above, however, suggests that the issue may have been ownership of a business license rather than a specific piece of property.

Japanese historiography has paid some attention to the family networks called *dōzokudan* of family businesses. Nakano Takashi translated this term as “merchant federations” in his seminal work *Shōka Dōzokudan no Kenkyū*, [Research on merchant federations].²¹ This research has largely focused on the family as business, as implied by Nakano’s title, or on the *ie* as the traditional family structure of the Meiji period (1868-1912). Of course, this structure has been described and discussed in the field of family history, but mainly using the standard rubrics of stem, nuclear and joint family patterns with particular focus on the stem family.²² In this literature, this network “federation” was clearly not limited to merchants or commercial family businesses, but was also found in rural villages. This network is often conceived as a hierarchy of main and branch households, with assumptions that the main households would take the stem form with headship succession by the eldest son, while branch households could take simpler forms or be newly established by younger sons or employees.

The analyses and case studies examined above suggest that this network of households formed by families owning multiple properties is closely tied to the choices of listing women and children ages 1-10 as head of household. Certainly this was the case for Kondaya Takejiro, Kashiwaya Nobu and Kashiwaya Shō. Yet this is not the entire story, since the majority of households, including those listing women or children as head, lived in rented housing. Even, so, the probability that a household owned its residence was stronger for those with female heads than those with male heads (see table 3).

When a household is one unit in a network, the public responsibilities of headship can be supplied from within the network. Then the significance of who was listed as head of household may be public recognition of ownership and control of the property or business license. When the head of household was a child, then an adult from the network would provide the training for that child to learn to manage the household and business.

21. Nakano T., *Shōka dōzokudan no kenkyū*, 2 vols, [Research on merchant houses and federations], Tokyo, 1978-1981.

22. For a review of the Japanese research literature until 1998, see Chiyo Yonemura and Mary Louise Nagata, “Continuity, Solidarity, Family and Enterprise: What is an *Ie*?” in Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux and Emiko Ochiai (eds), *The Stem Family in Eurasian Perspective: Revisiting House Societies, 17th-20th centuries*, Bern, 2009.

Property transmission, ownership and headship

This section examines land transmission documents called *yuzurijo* from three families in Koromodana Kita and Koromodana Minami neighborhoods written during the individual faith survey data period so they can be cross-referenced to clarify what was happening in the households living on the property transmitted and the timing of the documents. These will also provide some understanding of the significance of headship in households listing women or children ages 1-10 as head of household.

The land transmission documents are called *yuzurijo* and read rather like wills. However, there is reason to believe that they had a very different purpose, and were used to include new members into the group of individuals who would be responsible for managing the property as well as identifying who would be responsible if the head of the owner household died. In the *yuzurijo* translated below, Tambaya Genkichi is designating who would be responsible for the property upon his death (original document shown in figure 3).

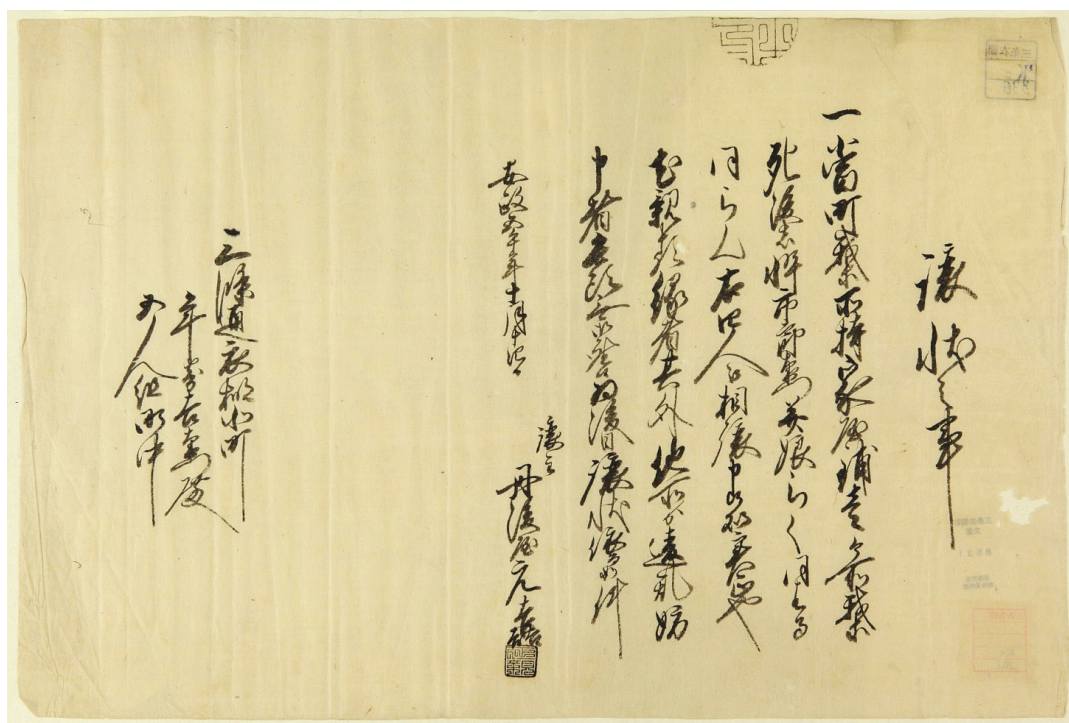


Figure 3 Transfer owner Tambaya Genkichi, [to Koromodana Kita cho (neighborhood), Toshiyori (elder) Kichiuemon dono, Goningumi (representatives) Choju (neighborhood community)], “Yuzurijo no koto,” Land transmission, Ansei 5 (1859), 11.14, Kyoto Prefecture Archival Library.

The house we own in this neighborhood, a single property I declare and aver will transfer to my son Ichirouemon together with my daughters Raku, Haru and Ran, four people upon my death. Of course our kin and relations in other places have no objection to this change and this document will serve as certificate of transfer henceforth.

Ansei 5 (1859)11.14 transfer owner Tambaya Genkichi

Sanjo St. Koromodana Kita neighborhood

Elder Mr. Kichiuemon, the representatives and the neighborhood community²³

According to this document, ownership was described as plural and the author of the document had the authority to designate who would receive the property, suggesting that the author was the head of household. At the same time, the agreement of other kin or associates needed to be secured to avoid future interference by them, evidence that his authority over the property was not absolute. In addition, the owner transferred his rights to four individuals – his son and his three daughters. While this information is important, the document does not reveal who is included as “we”, the ages of any of the parties, nor the context of the timing of the document, so the ability to cross reference some of these documents with a population survey that lists the household in the transmission document is also important for answering some of these questions.

The analyses combine examination of 22 land transmission wills from two neighborhoods, Koromodana Kita and Koromodana Minami, that were written during the years 1845-1863. These wills can therefore be cross-referenced with the population surveys from these two neighborhoods compiled 1843-1868 for Koromodana Kita with no missing years and 1843-1867 for Koromodana Minami, missing only the survey for 1844. These two neighborhoods are located on Koromodana Street in the commercial center of Kyoto one block north of the intersection with Sanjo Street for Koromodana Kita and one block south of the intersection for Koromodana Minami.

The land transmission documents include 1-4 transmission wills for nine families, five resident in the neighborhood and four absentee landlords. Table 7 lays out the information for fourteen transmission wills in five families and even this survey reveals some important features of land ownership and transmission. First, most wills transmit to 2-4 individuals and some also include the neighborhood community as one of the “recipients”. Second, some wills transmit more than one property and a later will in the series for that family may transmit one of those properties separately. Third, the list of “recipients” is occasionally revised. Fourth, nearly every transmission includes a female among the list of recipients, whether mother, sister, aunt, daughter, cousin or grandmother.

23. Sanjo Koromodana-chō collection 8531, 11.14.1859. Kyoto Prefecture Archival Library.

House name	No. of wills	1 st trans	2d trans	3d trans	4 th trans	Notes
Kameya Moto (female)	2	To husband's brother Tokubei, sister Hisa 1845	Son Riemon to Uncle Tokubei and Aunt Hisa 1847			1 property Final listing 1859
Chikiriya Kyubei (male)	4	To mother Riku, sister Kuma 1840	Mother died, to daughter Nobu and community 1845	Nobu 1 property to cousin Gombei and community 1847	Property to cousin change to cousin's employee Yohei 1848	2 properties Final listing 1847
Bundaiya Kau (female)	4	To grandson Minnosuke and community 1845	Minnosuke to Uncle Kohei and Aunt Tome 1848	Tome to nephew Minnosuke, son Kajinosuke, daughter Take 1849	Minnosuke to cousins Kajinosuke and Take 1852	1 property Final listing 1853
Echigoya Jusuke (male)	1	To sons Bisaburo, Gosaburo and daughter Chie 1851				1 property Final listing 1852
Omiya Jinsuke	3	To wife Tatsu and son Jinkichi 1854	Tatsu to son Jinkichi 1855	Jinkichi (now Jinsuke) to mother Tatsu, Uncle Chojiro and community 1859		1 property Final listing 1861

Table 7 Land transmission wills in 2 Koromodana neighborhoods

This table only shows the transmissions for families with households listed as living in the neighborhood population surveys. The transmissions for an additional 4 families owning 6 properties have not been included on the table because they only appear as absentee landlords.

For example, Kau appears in the survey of 1843 as mother to Bundaiya Tahei (33) at the age of 63. Tahei and his wife Kuno have an infant son Minnosuke, who was born that year. Tahei is still listed as head of Bundaiya in the 1845 survey, but he is missing in 1846 and his

mother Kau listed as head. Kau also wrote a *yuzurijo* on 12.4.1845²⁴ releasing her property rights to her grandson Tamenosuke (listed as Minnosuke in the surveys) upon her death, suggesting that Tahei had died.²⁵ Minnosuke was three that year, so she also included the neighborhood community in her transmission, but she skipped over Minnosuke's mother Kuno, although Kuno is still listed in the household in 1846, possibly because Kuno married into the family and Kau was trying to keep the property in the bloodline.

In 1847 Kau's daughter Tome (39) moved into the household with her two children, Take (21) and Kajinosuke (12). Kau must have died after this listing, likely early in 1848 because the next *yuzurijo* is by Minnosuke age 6 identifying his Uncle Kohei and Aunt Tome as receiving his ownership upon his death.²⁶ The survey for 1848 lists Minnosuke as head of household living with his aunt and cousins, while his uncle is listed as a boarder. The situation changes yet again in 1849 as Tome is listed as head of household. Minnosuke is still there, but Tome also already had ownership rights received when Kau died which she now says will transfer to her nephew Minnosuke, son Kajinosuke and daughter Take.²⁷ The survey listing of 1849, however, lists Minnosuke as Tome's son with Take and Kajinosuke as his older siblings.

On 5.14.1852, however, Minnosuke wrote as owner of the property that he would transfer it upon his death to his cousins Kajinosuke and Take.²⁸ The population survey that year lists Minnosuke as head living with his siblings Kajinosuke and Take in a non-family household. Tome has disappeared at age 44 and ownership transferred back to Minnosuke and his cousins. The final listing for this household is 1853 with Minnosuke as head of household at age ten living with his cousins, who, at ages 26 and 18, are identified as his guardians.

The example of Bundaiya Kau shows the process of various women becoming head of the Bundaiya household and how the choice of who to list as head of household was closely related to property ownership and family strategies of property transmission. These family concerns regarding ownership and control of property were more important than questions of gender or patriarchal authority. Indeed, Tome's husband Kohei appears to be peripheral to the family, even listed as a boarder while his wife is a regular member of the household. Tome's kinship to the family is more important than Kohei's gender. In the end, the main goal is to establish Minnosuke's ownership with stable oversight.

Cross-referencing the *yuzurijo* wills reveals they were written when the new owner succeeded to headship or received ownership due to the death of the previous owner. With these documents, the new head identified who would take over responsibility for the property after s/he died or otherwise became unavailable. At the same time, the new owner usually identified multiple people to take responsibility for the property as one never knew what would

24. The dates are those from the documents, although I have adjusted the year to the western calendar. Japan, however, used a lunar calendar until 1870, so the date 12-4-1848 represents the fourth day of the twelfth lunar month of approximately 1848, but not 4 December 1848.

25. Koromodana Minami cho, No. 08517, 12.4.1845. Kyoto Prefectural Library of Historical Documents.

26. Koromodana Minami cho, No. 08521, 2.14.1848. Kyoto Prefectural Library of Historical Documents.

27. Koromodana Minami cho, No. 08522, 4.24.1849. Kyoto Prefectural Library of Historical Documents.

28. Koromodana Minami cho, 08252, 5.14.1852. Kyoto Library of Historical Documents.

happen and people died at any age; revisions to transmit the property to a new person because the former one died were common. In addition, children were listed as head of household living on properties they owned because they had inherited the property. This suggests also that when a child was listed as head of household despite living with adult male kin, it was because the adult male kin were not among the owners responsible for the property.

So it would seem that property ownership and transmission together with a family network of households living on multiple properties jointly owned by the family and managed by whichever family member lived on or rented out the property serves to explain many listings of women and children as heads of household. The network view of even a nuclear unit, indeed even a married couple, split between multiple properties is an important characteristic of households in Kyoto. At the same time, there was only a 29 per cent probability that a household would live in a residence it owned and any discussion of female headed households, or households listing children as head, must consider that the grand majority of households rented their residences.

Conclusions

This study questions the significance of listing women or children as head of household in nineteenth century Kyoto and what female headed households reveal about gender, headship, and family in early modern Japan. Theoretical discussions of headship, succession, and household structure have tended to assume that the head of household is a position of authority reserved for men unless there were no adult men available to take the position. So in a stem family household the co-residence of the young head, or heir with his father is seen as submitting to the authority of the father. Of course, women would submit to the authority of their fathers, husbands, brothers, uncles, or even sons due to the patriarchal authority of gender. This view assumes the authority of gender – male over female – and of seniority – senior men over junior men. In such a society young men have greater chance for independence and authority by forming new nuclear households upon marriage and women can only realistically be head of solitary or other nonfamily households, usually comprised only of women, or if they are widows living with their children. Moreover, the proportion of female headed households depended upon the ability of women to financially support themselves and their families through their work, and this would depend upon the availability of occupations for women.

At first glance, this picture is no different for households listing female heads in nineteenth century Kyoto. Nearly half of the observed female headed households were solitaries and the next most common category was nuclear households, likely widows and their children. Moreover, women were more likely to be head of other types of nonfamily households than men were. In addition, female heads of household were most likely to be women in their late forties and older. Closer examination, however, causes the assumption of headship as a position of authority dominating other members of the household to fail.

For one, households listing a woman as head often included adult male members. Some women were listed as head of household despite having co-resident husbands, brothers, fathers, uncles and adult sons. Moreover, there were children ages 1-10 listed as heads of households that included their mothers, fathers, uncles, and older brothers. The argument

that the married man who was not head of household was submitting to the authority of his father or other senior male head breaks down when the head is his wife, daughter or young son. Clearly headship was not a simple matter of power or authority. Understanding headship and the significance of female headed households in nineteenth century Kyoto requires understanding households listing children as head as well as households listing women as head, even when there were co-resident adult males in the household.

Comparing female headed households with male headed households revealed that female headed households were more likely to own their residences. Case studies also revealed that women and children were often listed as head of a household that was one of multiple properties owned by their family network, likely their natal family network. Moreover, land transmission documents reveal that many properties were jointly inherited and owned by several family members, frequently including women in the group of owners. Indeed, a topic for future consideration is that Kyoto families appear to have practiced multiple inheritance rather than the single inheritance expected of a stem family system. So, headship appears to have been a matter of management responsibility and inheritance rather than of authority. At the same time, if a woman, or a child, was listed as head of household on property owned by her family, or the mother's family, then the listing would also clarify ownership and prevent marital kin from taking control of the property.²⁹

At the same time, certainly households listing women as head of household in Kyoto share many of the same characteristics as female headed households in other places. Since there was no regular system of poor relief, women could only live alone if they could support themselves, or if their household was a unit in a larger business organization and contributed to it. Since female headed households had a 66.1 per cent probability of renting their residences, elderly single women and widows were by far the most common female heads of household. In addition, Japanese women had a tradition of filling in temporarily until an appropriate male was able to take over, and the example of Yamatoya Kane reveals this aspect of female headship. The important point is that these Japanese women and Kyoto society had no doubt or hesitation that they could do the work, at least temporarily. However Kyoto communities and business organizations usually would not allow them to do the work or take on the responsibilities on a more permanent basis.

29. Katakura H. discusses legal suits against in-marrying sons-in-law who tried to claim control of their wives' property for their natal families. Katakura H., "Edo Machikata ni okeru Sōzoku", [Inheritance among Edo townspeople], 177-218 in Hayashi R. *et al.*, *Ronshū Kinsei Josei Shi*, [Collection of essays on the history of early modern women], Tokyo, 1986, 193.