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Cover calligraphy Yan Zhenqing 顏真卿, Tang calligrapher and statesman

Cover illustration Detail from Chinese *Anti-opium poster*, c. 1895. “*Quan shi jieshi dayan wen*” [Essay Urging the World to Give Up Opium]



West Lake from Wang Villa (Wang Zhuang), Lois Conner, 2008

The editor and editorial board of *East Asian History* would like to acknowledge the contribution made to the journal by Professor Geremie Barmé.

Geremie has been editor of *East Asian History* since it began under this title in 1991, and was editor of its predecessor *Papers on Far Eastern History* from 1989. In this period, he has sustained and promoted the importance of the journal as a forum for rigorous and original historical scholarship on China, Korea and Japan. Encouraging and exacting in equal measures, he has been generous to scholars taking their first steps in learned publication. During Geremie's tenure, *East Asian History* has become a major journal in the field, noted for its consistently high standards of scholarship and the care taken in its production. His editorship stands as an example and a challenge to the new editorial team.

Sometimes words flow easily
As soon as he grasps the brush;
Sometimes he sits vacantly,
Nibbling at it.

Lu Ji, from *Literature: A Rhapsody*

Translated by Achilles Fang, "Rhymeprose on Literature: The Wen-Fu of Lu Chi (A.D. 261–303)", *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 14, 3/4 (Dec., 1951): 527–66, p.534

或操觚以率爾或含毫而邈然
陸機文賦

The editor and editorial board of *East Asian History* would like to acknowledge the contribution made to the journal by Marion Weeks.

Marion joined what was then the Department of Far Eastern History in 1977. From that time, she was involved in various capacities with, first, *Papers on Far Eastern History*, and then *East Asian History*, for which she served as business manager from its inception. By the time of her retirement from the Division of Pacific and Asian History in November 2007, Marion had become the heart and soul of the journal.

Over the years she worked with many editors—Andrew Fraser, John Fincher, Sydney Crawcour, Ian McComas Taylor, Jennifer Holmgren, Geremie Barmé, Benjamin Penny—as well as numerous associate editors, copy editors, printers and, of course, countless authors and manuscript readers. All owe her an immense debt of gratitude.

East Asian History would certainly not have been the same without Marion—at times, without her, *East Asian History* may not have been at all.



Imperial Summer Retreat, Chengde, *Lois Conner, 2000*

PORTRAIT OF A TOKUGAWA OUTCASTE COMMUNITY

史 Timothy D. Amos

The aim of this article is to examine the lives and experiences of “outcastes” in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century eastern Japan (present-day Saitama prefecture) commonly referred to as *eta* 穢多 and *binin* 非人.¹ Japanese historians have laid the groundwork for the present study with over three decades of careful empirical research. While indebted to these scholars, I wish to focus on some of the complexity and dynamism of the lives and relationships of outcaste communities occasionally lost in previous studies because of particular methodological concerns arising from ideological differences.² Understanding these groups principally as premodern antecedents of modern *burakumin* 部落民, a common teleology in literature on the subject, tends to obscure the realities of their daily lives and the deeper historical meaning of their experiences.³ In records like *Documents of the House of Suzuki* (Suzuki-ke monjo 鈴木家文書) and other previously unpublished materials,⁴ marginalized Tokugawa “status groups” (*mibunteki shūdan* 身分の集団) appear as distinct yet fluid social/occupational groups with problematic status designations who experience changes that both reflect and suggest the existence of larger historical processes at work.⁵

This study, in constructing a portrait of life in an early modern outcaste community, is concerned with three main questions. Firstly, what did life look like for members of *eta* and *binin* communities during the latter half of the Tokugawa period? Secondly, what change, if any, occurred within rural outcaste communities during this time? And thirdly, knowing from previous scholarship that this period is characterized by an intensification of discriminatory policies by the Tokugawa shogunate, what effect,

¹ The term “outcaste” is reluctantly employed here. While it is clear that the main outcaste groups in eastern Japan were subject to extreme practices of discrimination during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it is also true that they assumed official functions such as policing and guard duties—duties which located them firmly within a larger mechanism of shogunate governance. I will hereafter cease to place the word outcaste in quotes although it is my intention to continue to see this word as problematic. For a good introduction to the *eta* and problems of terminology see the introduction to Noah McCormack’s contribution in an earlier issue of this journal: “Buraku Immigration in the Meiji Era—Other Ways to Become ‘Japanese’,” *East Asian History* 23 (June 2002): 87.

² For an in-depth discussion of this problem, see “Introduction” in Timothy D. Amos, “Ambiguous Bodies: Writings on the Japanese Outcaste” (PhD diss., Australian National University, 2005), pp. 1–27.

³ Some scholars do seriously question simplistic linkages between pre-modern *eta* and *binin* groups and modern *burakumin* communities. See, for example, any of the post-1990 works of Hatanaka Toshiyuki, especially *Burakushi no owari* [The End of Buraku History] (Kyoto: Kamogawa /OVER

/shuppan, 1995) and *Datsujōshiki no Buraku mondai* [The “Un”-Common-sensical Buraku Problem] (Kyoto: Kamo-gawa shuppan, 1998).

⁴ Saitama Dōwa Kyōiku Kyōgikai Hen, *Suzuki-ke monjo: saitama-ken buraku mondai kankei shiryōshū* [Documents of the house of Suzuki: Document Collection Related to the Buraku Problem in Saitama Prefecture], 5 vols. (Urawa: Saitama-ken dōwa kyōiku kenkyū kyōgikai, 1977–1979). Because there are two numbering systems for the documents contained in the published version of the *Suzuki-ke monjo*, in this paper, the following method will be used to avoid confusion. Documents found in the published five-volume series will be written as SDKK, *Suzuki-ke monjo*, Volume W, Number X, [Number Z]. Here, X represents the number in the published series and Z refers to the number that is used in the official index used for the *Suzuki-ke monjo* (SKM) at the Saitama Prefectural Archives: Saitama Kenritsu Urawa Toshokan Monjokan Hen, *Musashi no kuni yokomi gun wana mura Suzuki-ke monjo mokuroku* [Index for Documents of the House of Suzuki, Wana village, Yokomi county, Musashi province] (Urawa: Saitama kenritsu toshokan, 1975). Unpublished documents from the *Suzuki-ke monjo* collection will be hereafter written as SKM, (Saitama Prefectural Archives), # number.

⁵ Although the term “status group” (with all of its theoretical implications) is now in relatively common currency in studies of early modern Japan, it originated in the work of Tsukada Takashi. See, for example, Tsukada Takashi, *Kinsei nihon mibunsei no kenkyū* [Research on the Early Modern Japanese Status System] (Kobe: Hyōgo buraku mondai kenkyūjo, 1987).

⁶ See, for example, Mitsutoshi Takayanagi and Takeuchi Rizō, eds, *Kadokawa nihon-shi jiten* [Kadokawa Dictionary of Japanese History] (Tokyo: Kadokawa shoten, 1974), pp.118, 802; Yoshio Sugimoto, *An Introduction to Japanese Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp.189–90.

⁷ See Amino Yoshihiko’s discussion of differences between eastern and western Japan in relation to the outcaste problem in “Nihon chūsei in okeru sabetsu no shosō” [Features of Discrimination in Medieval Japan] in *Nihon rekishi no naka no hisabetsumin* [Outcastes

if any, did these policies have on the various relationships to be found in the community? In order to answer these three questions, a close examination of the multifarious dealings between *eta*, *binin*, and other communities including intra-village, inter-village, and inter-community relations is essential. Through an analysis of these relationships, practices of marginalization in the latter half of the Tokugawa period and resultant social divisions come into sharper focus.

The Edo Outcaste Order

Firstly, then, what did life look like for members of *eta* and *binin* communities during the latter half of the Tokugawa period? *Eta* are usually described in reference texts as social outcastes who participated in flaying, tanning, leatherwork, executions, and guard duties. *Hinin* are similarly characterized as outcaste beggars who also participated in these tasks to some degree alongside other activities like animal carcass disposal and the burial of vagrants.⁶ *Eta* and *binin*, however, did not simply perform all of the aforesaid social functions from antiquity. Each of their social functions emerged at different times during the Tokugawa period and for varied reasons. There were, moreover, considerable differences between the organizational make-up of outcaste communities throughout the three main Japanese islands.⁷ In addition, it is impossible to pinpoint the exact period when the generic labels of *eta* and *binin* came to refer to specific outcaste communities.

Gerald Groemer has labelled the particular system of outcaste governance in eastern Japan which solidified during the latter half of the Tokugawa period the “Edo outcaste order”.⁸ The leader of this “order” was always a male of “outcaste background” who adopted the title *Danzaemon* 弾左衛門. Danzaemon lived in Asakusa 浅草, Edo 江戸, in an area cordoned off from the rest of the population called the *kakoi-no-uchi* 囲内 (literally “inside the fence”). In theory, Danzaemon’s position was an hereditary post, although numerous circumstances prevented stable intergenerational transmission. The outcaste order itself was a formidable size: the number of households under Danzaemon IX’s governance in the year 1800 was 7,720. Of this figure, approximately three-quarters were *eta* and the rest *binin* households.⁹

/in Japanese History], ed. Nara Jinken Buraku Kaihō Kenkyūkai (Tokyo: Shinjinbutsu ourai-sha, 2001), pp.10–20. For a lucid discussion of the composition of *binin* communities in the Osaka area, see Okamoto Ryōichi, *Osaka no sesō* [Social Conditions in Osaka] (Tokyo: Seibundō shuppan, 1989), pp.263–78.

⁸ Gerald Groemer, “The Creation of the Edo

/Outcaste Order,” *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 27.2 (2001): 263–94.

⁹ Nakao Kenji, *Danzaemon kankei shiryō-shū: kyūbakufu hikitsugisho* [Collection of Documents Related to Danzaemon: Transmitted Documents of the Former Bakufu], (Osaka: Buraku kaihō kenkyūjo, 1995), Vol.1, pp.199–201.

A number of *binin* leaders (*binin gashira* 非人頭) also lived in Edo. For a good part of the eighteenth century, there were four: Kuruma Zenshichi 車善七 (Asakusa), Matsuemon 松右衛門 (Shinagawa 品川), Zensaburō 善三郎 (Fukagawa 深川), and Kubē 久兵衛 (Sasaki 佐々木). A reasonably close working partnership between Danzaemon and these *binin* leaders is visible in the latter stages of the seventeenth century, but overall early relations between these communities can be characterized as strained. In fact, a legal battle emerged between the *binin* and *eta* communities in Edo over matters related to autonomy, economic livelihood, and legal jurisdiction in the early eighteenth century. The Edo city magistrate eventually ruled in favour of Danzaemon in the early 1720s and the *binin*, not only in Edo, but also in all of eastern Japan, came under his direct governance.¹⁰

Minegishi Kentarō 峯岸健太郎 has argued that regional warriors during the Sengoku 戦国 period (period of Warring States), through legal measures and other coercive means, forced existing tanning cartels called *kawazukuri* 皮作 into hereditary occupations that over time became the targets of discriminatory practices. Danzaemon, it is argued, emerged as a successful victor in a region-wide struggle by several cartel leaders to monopolize the production of leather at around this time. As a result, he received official protection from the Tokugawa shogunate from the early seventeenth century. In time, this allowed him to emerge as the solitary ruler of *eta* in eastern Japan. As part of this process, Danzaemon slowly brought powerful regional tanners like the Suzuki family (discussed below) under his control.¹¹

The relationship between Danzaemon, rural tanning families, local farming communities, and those in authority (whether at the *Bakufu* 幕府 or *Han* 藩 (fief) level) is complex. Difficulty in comprehension is exacerbated, moreover, when *binin* are permitted to further complicate the picture. As outlined by Minegishi Kentarō by the eighteenth century it is relatively clear that regional tanner communities like the Suzuki family were subject to a system of “dual rule” (Figure 1 overleaf). What this means, in simple terms, is that by this time large regional tanner families represented the interests of their villages to Danzaemon as well as to local peasant village elders who themselves were subject to governance by local warrior authorities. Yoshida Tsutomu's 吉田勉 diagram shows the position of *binin* in relation to *eta* systems of rule within the eastern outcaste order (Figure 2 overleaf). Interestingly, rural *binin* do not appear to be part of this system of dual rule: they were only subject to *eta* rule and therefore answerable directly to Danzaemon.¹²

By the early eighteenth century, Danzaemon's headquarters in Asakusa provided a place for outcaste village officials to meet, particularly when they went to present their documentation in the second month of each year. These regular visits to Edo served to widen networks that were essential for the maintenance of rural social relations such as marriage, adoption,

¹⁰ Groemer, “The Creation of the Edo Outcaste Order,” pp.276–80.

¹¹ Minegishi Kentarō, *Kinsei hisabetsuminshi no kenkyū* [Research on the History of the Early Modern Outcaste] (Tokyo: Azekura shobō, 1996), p.72.

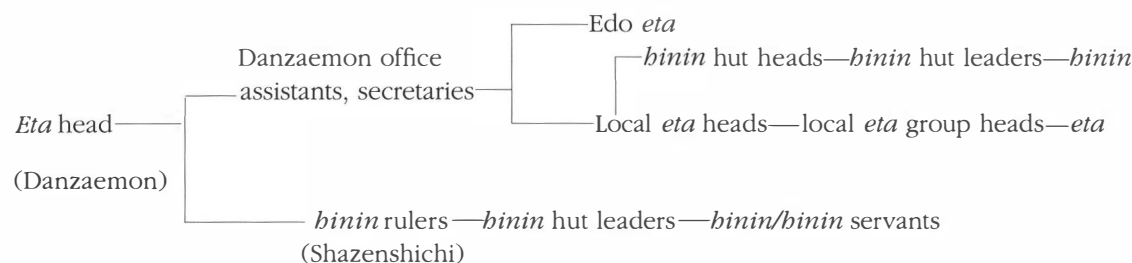
¹² Ibid.; Yoshida Tsutomu, “Bakuhan taisai no seiritsu to kinsei senmin seido: shakaiteki senshi kara seidoteki sabetsu e” [The Establishment of the Bakuhan System and the Outcaste Order: From Social Stigma to Institutional Discrimination], *Ōmiya shiritsu bakubutsukan kenkyū kiyō* [Ōmiya Municipal Library Research Bulletin] 2 (1990): 63.

Figure 1

Minegishi Kentarō's conceptual model of the "dual rule" system. Source: Minegishi Kentarō, Kinsei hisabetsuminshi no kenkyū, p. 71

**Figure 2**

Yoshida Tsutomu's concept of outcaste rule in the Kantō region. Source: Adapted from Tables 2 and 3 in Yoshida Tsutomu, "Kinsei kōmakki ni okeru ōmiya oyobi saitama no hisabetsu Buraku no jōkyō," [Conditions of Buraku Villages in Omiya and Saitama in the Late Tokugawa Period], p. 55



¹³ Yoshida Tsutomu, "Kinsei kōmakki ni okeru ōmiya oyobi saitama no hisabetsu buraku no jōkyō," [Conditions of Buraku Villages in Omiya and Saitama in the Late Tokugawa Period] *Ōmiya shiritsu bakubutsukan kenkyū kiyō* 1 (1989): 53–72.

and labour hire. Such networking was also vital to the continuation of the Danzaemon office itself, as it adopted prospective heirs from a wide area including both western and eastern Japanese provinces. As Yoshida Tsutomu has indicated in his research on outcaste networks in other parts of the wider Musashi area, it is clear that an outcaste world with Danzaemon at its apex was under construction throughout the eighteenth century.¹³

Figure 3

Eta population of Lower Wana village. Source: “Suzuki-ke monjo shūmon aratamechō,” in SDKK, ed., *Suzuki-ke monjo*, Vol.3; SKM, #155, #183

	Under 15		15–60		Above 60		Households	Total Population		
Year	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female		Male	Female	Total
1766	15	7	30	35	3	2	17	48	44	92
1768	14	8	33	32	3	4	22	50	47	97
1778	12	16	40	34	7	5	22	59	55	114
1783	9	15	42	40	7	7	23	58	62	120
1784	9	16	43	39	5	8	23	58	65	123
1786	10	16	42	38	7	6	23	58	57	115
1787	14	13	33	39	8	10	23	58	61	119
1789	13	15	34	35	10	10	23	57	60	117
1791	11	17	29	31	9	9	21	53	64	117
1792	11	17	30	34	8	10	21	50	63	113
1795	19	16	28	37	12	8	21	62	62	124

Lower Wana Village and the Suzuki Family

Lower Wana village 下和名 was just one of many outcaste villages scattered throughout eastern Japan during the Tokugawa period. It was situated in Yokomi 横見 (Yokomi-gun/kōri 郡 also written as Yokomiryō 領) in the province of Musashi 武蔵.¹⁴ Musashi is recorded as having 2,305 *chōri* 長吏, 220 *binin* 非人 (109 *binin koyagashira* 非人小屋頭 (literally “*binin* hut heads”) and 111 *banbinin* 番非人 (literally “*binin* guards”), 7 *sarukai* 猿飼, and 33 *kogashira* 小頭 households.¹⁵ More than one hundred *chōri*, and a half-dozen of the *binin* lived together in Lower Wana village (Figure 3).¹⁶

/in Musashi Province and Animal Carcass Disposal], in *Kantō/Tōkai hisabetsu burakushi kenkyū* [Historical Research on the Kantō/Tōkai Buraku], ed. Arai Kojiro (Tokyo: Akashi shoten, 1982), pp.237–64.

¹⁵ The term *chōri*, according to Sugiyama Seiko, was the appellation used by members of Lower Wana village to refer to themselves in official correspondence. Importantly, Sugiyama cannot find any evidence that the term *eta* was ever employed by members of this community to refer to themselves. Sugiyama, “Kinsei kantō ni okeru ‘hisabetsu buraku’ no mibun kōshō ni tsuite: Suzuki-ke monjo yori”.

¹⁶ Nakao Kenji, *Danzaemon: ōedo mō bitotsu no shakai* [Danzaemon: Greater Edo’s other society] (Osaka: Kaihō shuppansha, 1994), pp.123–25. There is probably some difference between the *binin koyagashira* and the *banbinin*, the former class of *binin* governing areas called the “workplace” where a number of the latter group lived. In more isolated areas though, it is feasible that there was very little difference between the two groups.

¹⁴ Shimo Wana village (Wana also written using the characters 和奈 in the late Muromachi 室町 period). Henceforth, the characters for Shimo 下 and Kami 上 will be translated as Upper and Lower in order to better relate the nuances of the terms. For works on Lower Wana village see, for example, Kashiwaura Katsuyoshi, “Kinsei hisabetsumin no jisha sankei: ‘Suzuki-ke monjo’ no kentō wo tōshite” [Early Modern Outcaste Religious Pilgrimages: An Investigation Based on the Documents of the House of Suzuki], *Nihon rekishi* [Japanese History], 626 (2000): 56–72; Minegishi, *Kinsei hisabetsumin-*

/shi no kenkyū; Nishiki Kōichi, “Kinsei ‘chōri’ mura no shinkō to chiiki chitsujo” [Religious Belief in Early Modern ‘chōri’ Villages and Regional Order], *Chūkishi kenkyū* [Local History Research] 44.5 (1994):4–21; Tsukada, *Kinsei nihon mibunsei no kenkyū*; Sugiyama Seiko, “Kinsei kantō ni okeru ‘hisabetsu buraku’ no mibun kōshō ni tsuite: Suzuki-ke monjo yori” [Regarding the Status Labels of the “Buraku” in Early Modern Kantō: From the Documents of the House of Suzuki], *Minshūshi kenkyū* [Popular History Research], 26 (1984):1–18; Shinozaki Tomio, “Bushū yoshimi no shokuba to heigyūba shori” [The Yoshimi Workplace

¹⁷ Yoshimi Chōshi Henshū linkai, ed., *Yoshimi-chōshi* [Yoshimi Town History] (Yoshimi-chō: Yoshimi-chō, 1979), Vol.2, p.927.

¹⁸ Seshimo Hirohito, "Kinsei hisabetsuburaku no shitchi deiri" [Early Modern Buraku Mortgage Conflicts], in *Kantō/tōkai hisabetsu burakushi kenkyū*, ed. Kojiro Arai (Tokyo: Akashi shoten, 1982), p.265. The difference between Lower Wana village and Wana village was not simply a matter of good versus bad soil quality. It can be said that the difference is also present in the degree of proximity the village had to sources of irrigation and the actual land height in the case of Lower Wana village because this factor would become important when the Arakawa River flooded, which it did on numerous occasions.

Lower Wana village was parallel to the eastern tip of Yoshimi Hill 吉見 in the alluvial soil lowlands of the banks of the Arakawa 荒川 River. The village was located at the southern tip of Kamiwana village 上和名 (referred to in this paper as Upper Wana village), and rice paddies divided the farmer-based Upper Wana village from the outcaste-based Lower Wana village (see Figure 4).¹⁷ Upper and Lower Wana Villages were geographically separate villages with the latter village treated administratively as a "branch" (*edamura* 枝村) of the former. Seshimo Hirohito 瀬下裕仁 points to the deliberate political and social practices of driving outcastes into uninhabitable places within the shared space of rural communities. He writes of outcaste residential areas in general:

The greater part were driven to the river banks or the edges of town and in the farming villages, they were forced to reside on sloped land such as between mountains or on the side of mountains, or, in riverbeds. The roads were windy and there was a marked difference compared to the lifestyles of the average farmer.¹⁸

Upper Wana village was located about 300 metres away from the western-most tip of Lower Wana village. The term *shimo* 下 or "lower" applied to the village name could be taken as a simple geographical expression referring to land elevation. Lower Wana village was positioned on a plane, Upper Wana village was situated on a slight incline. Japanese scholars, however, tend to argue that the relationship between "host" and "outcaste" communities was far more complex. Minegishi Kentarō,



Figure 4

Present-day view of the area formerly known as Lower Wana village and the Suzuki residence, taken from the direction of the area formerly known as Upper Wana village. Photograph by the author

for example, writes that Lower Wana village submitted to Upper Wana village rule with regard to the collection of farming taxes, the preparation of population and group registers and the notification of changes in village office. But all under their jurisdiction in these matters, Lower Wana village was removed from all Upper Wana village administration duties and had no voice in Upper Wana village affairs. In this sense, the label “lower” is seen to be originally a practice of administrative subordination to the main farming village that most likely developed into a form of discriminatory labelling indicating inferiority in later periods.¹⁹

Income was derived in Lower Wana village from a number of sources. Members certainly had land holdings for both residential and agrarian purposes, and this is presumably where a large proportion of income was derived. It is clear from records, however, that there was minimal arable land in the greater Wana area (the combined area of both Upper and Lower Wana villages), particularly when compared to neighbouring rural areas. Throughout the course of the eighteenth century, a constantly growing population was required to share roughly the same amount of land between them. In a 1678 cadastral survey, seven people in the village are listed as landholders. Subsequent surveys, however, record notable growth in the number of landowners. In the 1731 survey, 11 people; in 1766, 88 people; and in 1865, 146 people were listed as landholders.²⁰ In the “Report on village rice yields and household numbers in reform group villages in Musashi” (*Musashi-no-kuni kaikaku kumiai muramura kokudaka kazu torishirabegaki* 武蔵国改革組合村々石高数取調書), a document with uncertain origins but apparently composed in the mid-nineteenth century, the potential rice yield (*kokudaka* 石高) of greater Wana village is given at 306.727 koku (石), and the total number of households listed as 30.²¹ Income was also derived in the village from activities such as the sale of animal hides (predominantly horse hides), leatherwork, sandal making, executions, guard duties, and begging.²² Taxes were also payable on income derived from many of these activities: most notably from guard/execution duties, tanning, and agricultural production.²³

As seen in Figure 5 (overleaf), Lower Wana village was essentially a community built around the head Suzuki family (*bonke* 本家). The village was divided into three main groups—original (*moto* 元), middle (*naka* 中), and eastern (*bigashi* 東)—each with its own *kumigashira* 組頭 or “group leader”. The *Documents of the House of Suzuki* provide records stretching over multiple generations of the head of the main branch of the Suzuki family who was also the leader of the village. While each generational head of the Suzuki family had regular names such as Kiheiji 喜平次 or Sensuke 千助, each head also used the name Jin’emon 甚右衛門—an hereditary title inherited by the eldest son of the Suzuki family upon succession to the position of village head. The Lower Wana village head Jin’emon juggled numerous leadership positions within the village. He

¹⁹ Minegishi, *Kinsei hisabetsuminshi no kenkyū*, p.71.

²⁰ Saitama Kenshi Shiryō Hen, ed., *Shinpen saitama kenshi: shiryō hen kinsei* [New History of Saitama Prefecture] (Urawa: Saitama-ken, 1991), Vol.14, pp. 3, 752–73.

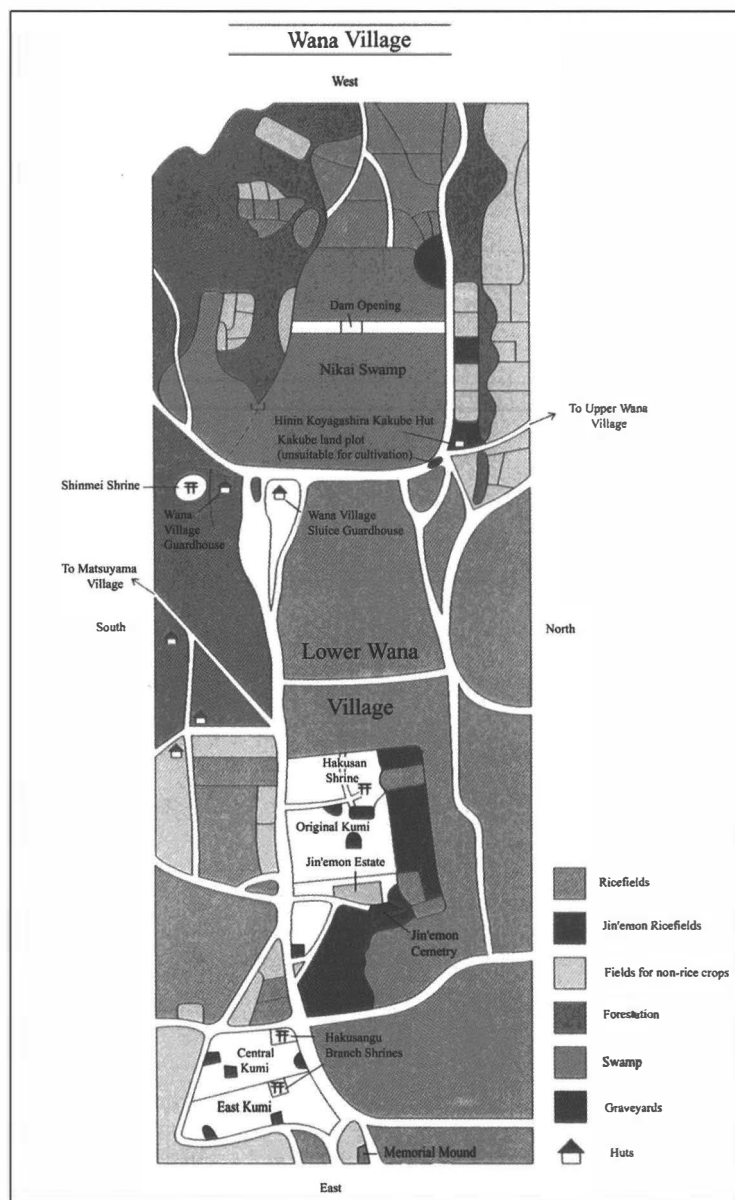
²¹ Ibid., p.54.

²² Minegishi, *Kinsei hisabetsuminshi no kenkyū*, pp.124–34.

²³ Ibid., pp.59–69.

Figure 5

Reproduction of Lower Wana Village, based on Bushū yokomi-gun shimowana sonchū ezumen [Map of Lower Wana village, Yokomi county, Musashi province] (1826) in the possession of Suzuki Mikio. Reproduction by the author



acted as “group head” and kogashira 小頭 or “local *eta* village leader”. Minegishi has argued that the titles of group head and local *eta* village leader were basically synonymous.²⁴ The term “kogashira”, however, appears to have been used only in relation to Danzaemon rule.

Interestingly, *binin* in the Lower Wana community did not live within the village itself. Rather, they either lived on the edge of the swamp that created a natural border between Upper and Lower Wana villages or in the north-eastern corner of Lower Wana village bordering a small forest. While this segregation was clearly related to the different functions of *eta* and *binin*—that is, the main *binin* hut in Lower Wana village (which probably doubled as a guardhouse) was only established in the early 1710s and presumably as a response to the growing number of vagrants passing through both Upper and Wana Lower villages—it doubtless gave rise to an internal hierarchy within the village with its own associated stigma.

²⁴ Ibid., p.74.

Inter-Community Outcaste Relations

A significant difference between Upper and Lower Wana villages existed in their notions of land. Lower Wana villagers' understandings of their local territory went beyond simple notions of land ownership and geographically or topographically defined space. Another terrain quite apart from the village existed in the imaginations of rural outcaste communities in which flaying and begging rights existed. It was labelled the "workplace" (*shokuba* 職場). Within Lower Wana village, an increasingly complex series of ways in which land, territory, and belonging were formulated emerged during the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.²⁵ Apart from the dual system of rule discussed above, there was also a difference between residential areas and work areas that increased the potential for the village to be summoned into relationships with the wider community. In fact, the notion of a workplace brought the community into contact with other regional *eta* communities also under the governance of Danzaemon, particularly into close relationships with those from neighbouring workplaces.

While there is some disagreement among scholars over certain aspects of the workplace, they generally agree that it had two aspects. Firstly, it was the legal territory for the disposal of dead cattle and horses. And secondly, it was the place where people had the right to beg. When cattle or horses kept by peasants in a particular workplace died, they were taken to a place called the animal carcass dumping ground (*beigyūba suteba* 斃牛馬捨場) located on the periphery of each village. Nearby *binin* patrolled the area on a daily basis and if they found a carcass they skinned it and disposed of the body. The economically valuable things went to the *eta* who had the rights of ownership for that day (called *banichi* 場日). "Workplace rights" were owned on a day-to-day basis by those of *eta* status. If the day on which a dead cow or horse was discovered was the first day of the month then it was the *eta* with the rights to that day that benefited.

"Begging rights", on the other hand, were generally owned by *eta* on a village basis. They were permitted to collect alms from peasant households in that village on auspicious occasions such as the time of the summer/autumn Three Grains (harvests). *Hinin* belonging to the same village were also permitted to roam around these villages begging for alms in special periods such as times of great prosperity or famine, New Year, and *Obon* 御盆. The right of *binin* to beg alms in local villages appears to have been a relatively recent phenomenon in the eighteenth century—one that was also a source of some conflict. The first time a *biningoya* (*binin* hut) was actually set up in Lower Wana village was 1706. Peasant villagers throughout Yokomi county had sought after a way of dealing with the importuning of "wild *binin*" (*nōbinin* 野非人)—unregistered *binin*—and it was decided (by whom is unclear) that a portion of the

²⁵ For a recent discussion of the Lower Wana village *shokuba*, consult David L. Howell, *Geographies of Identity in Nineteenth-Century Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), pp.37–8.

²⁶ Tsukada, *Mibunsei shakai to shimin shakai: kinsei nihon no shakai to hō*, pp.248–49.

²⁷ *Koyanagi-ke monjo* [Documents of the House of Koyanagi] (Higashi Matsuyama Toshokan). An index of the *Koyanagi-ke monjo* can be found at the Higashi Matsuyama Municipal Library. A microfilm version of the entire collection of the documents is also in the possession of the author. Hereafter, documents from this collection are cited as *KKM*, #_.

²⁸ Higashi matsuyama-shi hensanka, “Shomibun to yaku” [Various Statuses and Duties], in *Higashi matsuyama no rekishi* [History of Higashi Matsuyama], ed. Higashi matsuyama-shi hensanka 2 (Higashi Matsuyama: Higashi matsuyama-shi, 1985), pp.165–78.

²⁹ SDKK, ed., *Suzuki-ke monjo*, Vol.3, 591 [655].

³⁰ SDKK, ed., *Suzuki-ke monjo*, Vol.1, 209 [1228]. For another account of this incident see *SKM*, #169.

eta begging rights be given away to *binin* who would be employed and made to work in the *binin* hut. *Hinin* were made to perform the aforementioned duties of carcass disposal (*bayaku* 場役) in exchange for receiving the right to beg alms.²⁶

The workplaces of Matsuyama 松山 village and Lower Wana village were located alongside each other. The villages, in spite of their close proximity, were located in different counties. Lower Wana village was located in Yokomi, and Matsuyama village in Hiki 比企 county. The workplace boundaries, however, did not follow traditional landholding patterns based on warrior domains, but cut through both Yokomi and Hiki county divisions. And although members of these two villages would rarely deal directly in the everyday business of flaying, tanning, and producing merchandise through secondary industrial activity or cottage industries, close relationships were forged that predictably resulted in both positive and negative experiences for the members of both communities.

Some of the history of the *eta* settlement in Matsuyama village may be found in the *The Documents of the House of Koyanagi* (*Koyanagi-ke monjo* 小柳家文書) authored by the local *eta* village head in Matsuyama.²⁷ According to the town history of Higashi Matsuyama 東松山, Matsuyama village was a postal town along the Jōshū 上州 and Chichibu 秩父 roads that formed during the Sengoku period. It was a point of intersection for the various workplaces of Oka 岡, Matsuyama, Karako 唐子, and Honshuku 本宿. The map of the Matsuyama workplace, dated 1830, informs us that it was predominantly based in Matsuyama township, but also included parts of Yokomi county. One major difference between the workplaces of Lower Wana village and Matsuyama village was the fact that the workplace of Matsuyama village was not only a space for *eta* and *binin*, but was also a “begging ground” (*kanjinba* 勧進場) for a variety of other marginalized Tokugawa groups including *oshi* 御師 (low-ranking shrine attendants), *shugen* 修験 (hermit ascetics), *kanjin hijiri* 勧進聖 (mendicant lay priests), *zato* 座頭 (blind performers/acupuncturists), *goze* 瞽女 (blind female performers), and *onmyōji* 陰陽師 (lay diviners). In other aspects related to *eta-binin* relations, taxation, land ownership and the like, there appears to be little difference between the *eta* and *binin* communities of Lower Wana and Matsuyama villages.²⁸

The record of the first encounter between Lower Wana village and Matsuyama village in 1699 is actually a dispute over the territorial boundaries of the workplace.²⁹ A *binin* called Sajibē 佐次兵衛 allegedly procured a dead animal carcass from a village “dumping ground” (*suteba* 捨場) that lay near the border of the two separate workplaces of Wana and Matsuyama. He was subsequently captured and incarcerated by Matsuyama villagers for his action. The village elders from Lower Wana then attempted to negotiate a boundary between the two workplaces, but when negotiations broke down, they appealed to the magistrate. As a result, the authorities ruled in favour of Lower Wana village.³⁰

Incidents between Lower Wana village and Matsuyama village regarding workplace boundaries arose on numerous occasions. In 1823, Jin'emon requested the Matsuyama village headman *Sukezaemon* 助左衛門 reconfirm the area of each of the village workplaces (*mochiaiba* 持合場). Sukezaemon replied that it was the area defined in both 1699 and 1749. This indicates that there was at least one prior eighteenth-century disagreement between the two villages relating to territorial workplace issues.³¹

But not all workplace territorial disputes appear to have been related to rights over animal carcasses that died near workplace boundaries. In 1758, for example, a Matsuyama village peasant brought a prisoner to Lower Wana village and requested that Jin'emon and the *binin* hut leader Kakubē 角兵衛 take charge of the detainee. Jin'emon, before accepting the request, solicited additional information concerning the required length of detention, but the peasant refused to outline a specific time. Jin'emon subsequently declined to take charge of the convict, sending both the peasant and prisoner back to Matsuyama. Unsurprisingly, Jin'emon was shortly after summoned to appear before two local Matsuyama samurai officials. He was admonished for not taking the prisoners into his custody, and ordered to do so in the future regardless of circumstances. Eventually, the prisoner was imprisoned in the Lower Wana guardhouse (presumably the head *binin* Kakubē's hut), whereupon Jin'emon again requested information concerning the length of prisoner detention through official channels. While one day was negligible, he wrote, a week meant having to feed the prisoner: Jin'emon was deeply concerned about the added burden of procuring the prisoner's rations. The Matsuyama *binin* who brought the prisoner to Lower Wana village had suggested that Jin'emon procure the necessary provisions from the officials, an action Jin'emon did eventually resort to pleading financial hardship.³² It is unclear whether Jin'emon's request was successful, and why the *binin* from Matsuyama brought the prisoner to Lower Wana village in the first place when there was a large guardhouse in Matsuyama.³³ It is clear, though, that over the course of the eighteenth century, prisoner guard duty jurisdiction and responsibilities emerged as the dominant issue within struggles over "workplace rights".

Another incident which followed in 1767 provides additional evidence of this phenomenon. In this case, an "unregistered commoner" (*mushuku* 無宿) Kichisaburō 吉三郎 was murdered by a man called Iemon 伊右衛門 in the township of Iwadonosan 岩殿山. The son-in-law of the Matsuyama village *binin* leader Bangorō 万五郎 is mentioned in the prologue to the incident, as is another Matsuyama village resident, Jinshichi 甚七, who was present at the scene and apparently pulled Kichisaburō off the dead victim. The Iwadonosan village elder Seishichi 清七 subsequently requested that Jin'emon appoint the Lower Wana village *binin* hut leader Kakubē as Kichisaburō's guard. Jin'emon objected, however, on the grounds that the victim was born in Matsuyama territory and should therefore be handled

³¹ SDKK, ed., *Suzuki-ke monjo*, Vol.1, 245 [273]. For what appears to be an undated copy of a draft complaint concerning the 1699 incident, see *SKM*, #790.

³² SDKK, ed., *Suzuki-ke monjo*, Vol.1, 144 [646].

³³ *KKM*, #48.

³⁴ SDKK, ed., *Suzuki-ke monjo*, Vol.3, 600 [164].

³⁵ Ibid., Vol.1, 1 [2799].

³⁶ See Ooms's fascinating description of the Lower Wana village resident's participation in this execution in Ooms, *Tokugawa Village Practice: Class, Status, Power, Law*, pp.249–52.

³⁷ SDKK, ed., *Suzuki-ke monjo*, Vol.1, 141 [1281], 147 [121], 149 [2710].

by the Matsuyama *binin* leader Bangorō. Jin'emon's refusal to assume the guard duties appears to have been linked to an understanding of jurisdiction which related to the place in which a particular crime had been perpetrated.³⁴

There was, therefore, a clear shift in emphasis away from tanning and begging to policing and execution functions of *eta* and *binin* during the early eighteenth century. The establishment of the *binin* hut in Lower Wana in 1710, followed by a 1724 circular in which *eta* and *binin* of Lower Wana village were ordered to perform duties related to handling prisoners for most of the major shogunate offices in Edo, probably signalled the beginnings of this shift.³⁵ It is uncertain as to whether this was the first time the residents of Lower Wana village were ordered to perform such tasks, but it is clear that it was not the last. Members of Lower Wana village throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were thereafter regularly mobilized to assist in the escorting of prisoners. Part of these duties involved participating in guard duties related to, or the actual carrying out of, executions. Members of Lower Wana probably began to participate in numerous public executions during the first half of the eighteenth century. The earliest extant record relates to the capital punishment of a criminal named Shōhē 小兵衛 in 1743 for stealing.³⁶ Other notable examples are the crucifixions of the homeless murderer Yūkichi 勇吉 in 1816 and the local farmer Miyakichi 宮吉 during the Tenmei 天明 famine in 1835.³⁷ But as the previous two examples further demonstrate, official duties also came to involve the guarding of prisoners charged with the perpetration of certain crimes.

Inter-Community Relations

³⁸ Minegishi, *Kinsei hisabetsuminshi no kenkyū*, p.82. SKM, #1388.

³⁹ One of the most interesting examples of extensive community interaction can be found in Nishiki Kōichi's account of a large festival hosted by Lower Wana village in the early nineteenth century. "Bushū shimo wana no sairei kōgyō," in *Buraku no seikatsusbi*, ed. Buraku mondai kenkyūjo (Kyoto: Buraku mondai kenkyūjo, 1988), pp.124–28.

⁴⁰ SDKK, ed., *Suzuki-ke monjo*, Vol.1, 149 [2104].

Any notion that *eta* only mixed with *eta*, or *binin* with *binin*, would clearly be a misconception. Deep interpersonal relationships existed between members of Upper and Lower Wana villages, as illustrated in Minegishi Kentarō's example of the participation of farmers in the marriage ceremony of Jin'emon's second son.³⁸ In fact, the Suzuki household documents are replete with examples of inter-village relations with local peasant and town communities.³⁹ A local pawnbroking family from a nearby peasant village that lent ten bags of rice to the Suzuki household to assist with financial expenses related to execution duties during the Tempō 天保 famine (arguably the period with some of the strictest legislation on outcaste activity) is another striking example confirming that this was the norm.⁴⁰

Interestingly, however, the investment of a social disciplinary authority in rural *eta* and *binin* communities ultimately caused friction within the wider community. The aforementioned 1743 execution involving the punishment of Shōhē, first introduced in Anglophone scholarship in

Herman Ooms' groundbreaking *Tokugawa Village Practice*, is particularly interesting. Local peasant officials argued in the lead up to the execution that there was a custom in country areas to charge eight *mon* 文 to watch a crucifixion and 9 *mon* to look at the decapitated head of a criminal. Jin'emon from Lower Wana village responded to this remark, however, by stating that he was unfamiliar with this practice. Charging a toll to passers-by to witness an execution, he added, would mean locals would simply choose alternate routes to avoid the spectacle, thereby nullifying any deterrent function the punishment was supposed to produce. This extraordinary confrontation between local officials and Jin'emon also spilled over into a debate over the number of people who should be allowed to work as guards during the execution.⁴¹ By all accounts, Jin'emon successfully persuaded the officials to concede to his position, demonstrating that he actually wielded a considerable amount of authority in relation to local punitive practices at this time.

One of the earliest records of policing duties in Lower Wana is actually a 1750 incident involving a murder investigation. A *binin* guard in Maegōchi 前河内 village (under the jurisdiction of Jin'emon) was murdered in bizarre circumstances. The *binin*'s name was Tōshichi 藤七, a single male in his mid-thirties. Born near Honjō Station 本庄宿 on the Nakasendō 中仙道 Highway, he worked as a minion for another *binin* in the Yoshimi area for two years before being permitted to take on the job of *binin* hut leader in Maegōchi. This job he performed for three years. Tōshichi became involved in gambling with some men from Nakaarashi 中嵐 village, and proceeded to get into a fight, in the course of which he was tied up and beaten. Gambling was an extremely serious offence in Tokugawa Japan, subject to extreme punitive measures particularly from around the mid-eighteenth century. Tōshichi, however, was shown mercy by members of his village on this occasion and granted a reprieve. Shortly after, however, Tōshichi began gambling again, this time in Ezuna 江網 village. Tōshichi soon became embroiled in another dispute, but this time he was murdered by a mystery assailant (later records had it that a man named Asaemon 浅右衛門 was the murderer and had actually let Tōshichi escape from the hut before chasing him down and killing him with a sword). Tōshichi's body was found in a field close to the bridge near the local river, and the Maegōchi village officials, following the letter of the law, came and inspected the body before temporarily burying it (*kariume* 仮埋). Tōshichi's assailant, however, failed to be identified, and only the head *binin* in the Yoshimi area, Kakubē, along with one other person showed any interest in solving the case. Kakubē decided to instigate his own undercover investigation. He developed a sudden addiction to *kingo* きんご (a form of gambling, also called *Caruta*, derived from Portuguese cards) and tried to gain clues as to the identity of the guilty party by speculating with the group leader Taemon 田右衛門 from Maegōchi village. Kakubē played *Caruta* and other betting games with Taemon, gaining his

⁴¹ Ibid., 141 [1281], 142 [56], 143 [1169].

⁴² Harada Tomohiko, ed., *Hennen sabetsu-shi shiryō shūsei*, (Tokyo: San'ichi shobō, 1998), Vol.11, pp.482–87.

⁴³ Tsukada, *Kinsei nihon mibunsei no kenkyū*, p.22. For definitions of these terms refer to Chapter 8.

trust and eventually securing the facts about what had transpired on that fateful day.

When the truth about the incident came to light, Kakubē and the *eta* village members in Lower Wana village took the matter to the three village leaders of Ōkushi 大串 where the perpetrator of the crime was presumably resident. The authorities in Ōkushi, however, refused to deal with the matter. Their reasons for doing so are unclear but the law stated that the relatives of the criminal, members of the same residential group (*kumi*), and the village elders would all be punished if a gambler/murderer was discovered to live in their village. To acknowledge that someone from their village had committed a crime, therefore, was to offer themselves up for a similar punishment. Their refusal to accept the word of a *binin* was probably a desperate attempt at self-preservation. To the members of Lower Wana village, however, an important *binin* worker in their community had been slain. Their livelihoods were directly dependant on people like Tōshichi who would perform duties on behalf of the village. The *eta* villagers certainly had no reason to doubt the word of Kakubē, and they informed the elders of Ōkushi village that they would need to consult with the authorities in Edo. Upon hearing this, two village leaders of Maegōchi along with one of the leaders from Ōkushi, quickly responded saying that if the matter went that far it would become a terrible problem for all parties concerned. They begged for the affair to be written up officially as death through illness (*byōshi* 病死), offering as a sign of reconciliation for their previously harsh attitude to the *eta* and *binin* of Lower Wana a sum of five *ryō* 両 (or “gold pieces”). The *eta* leaders also received an additional sum of two *ryō* from the three men. That night, one small part of the gold was used to buy sake, which was consumed by the members of Lower Wana who had been clearly worried about the breakdown in negotiations between the Ōkushi authorities and their village. The rest of the money was used to build a statue of a Jizō 地藏 (a *bodhisattva* popular in Japan) and a stone bridge reinforced with pine that would serve all members of the community.⁴²

Interestingly, in 1765, a circular summons for certain local village heads arrived in Lower Wana from Danzaemon ordering the village rulers to go immediately to Asakusa and bring the necessary documentation related to the workplace as well as any documentation regarding “outcaste-farmer” conflict.⁴³ The aforementioned 1767 incident relating to the Iwadonosan murder reveals, moreover, the relatively short-lived nature of “outcaste power” accumulated throughout the course of the eighteenth century. The ability of local *eta* authorities to unilaterally exert their will over local authorities in matters pertaining to policing and execution was relatively short-lived. The Suzuki household head did eventually agree to perform the guard duties of the prisoner allegedly responsible for the Iwadonosan murder. A subsequent record reveals that in the nineteen day period, Lower Wana were requested to take care of the prisoner, 216 people

(presumably 216 man days) had been mobilized, but only 2,000 *mon* was offered in payment (the equivalent of a day's wages for approximately four to six carpenters at that time). Kiheiji's 喜平次 (Suzuki X's) father exhibited his disgust at the payment by telling the town elder Seishichi from Iwadonosan to donate the money to the local *Kannon* 観音 (*Avalokiteśvara bodhisattva* or Goddess of Mercy) as he would not accept a payment that placed him and his villagers in such a tight position (*mizumari* 身詰). Jin'emon possibly feared that accepting such inconsequential reparation for their labour would only further contribute to the creation of a nasty precedent within the community and endanger the future livelihood of members of the village.

About a month and a half later, the same official, Seishichi, offered Jin'emon an extra 400 *mon* above the original figure for having "personally received his assistance." Jin'emon, aware that this was an attempt at silencing him, refused the enticement. Seishichi, indignant at such an attitude, visited the Upper Wana village elders and asked Hanbē 半兵衛 to speak with Jin'emon privately about the matter. Jin'emon repeated his reasons for not accepting the payment, but Hanbē secretly summoned the other Lower Wana officials Sehē 瀬兵衛 and Hikojiro 彦次郎, who took the money and distributed it to the villagers. Jin'emon's account suggests that all villagers were aware of Jin'emon's position but followed through with their action regardless. Jin'emon subsequently proffered his resignation as local *eta* village leader to his fellow official Sehē when the incident of mass village disloyalty was eventually discovered, declaring *fushinjō* 不身上 (literally "loss of standing"). Another document makes it clear that Jin'emon believed he had lost "all standing in the community" (*mibun aitachigataki* 身分難相立) through the actions undertaken by his fellow rulers and fellow villagers. Whatever the case, a large crack had emerged between the Suzuki family and the rest of the Lower Wana village community.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ SDKK, ed., *Suzuki-ke monjo*, Vol.3, 602 [875].

The Emergence of the Outcaste in Wana Village

The *Documents of the House of Suzuki* indicate that the second half of the eighteenth century was a particularly troubled time for the Lower Wana village leaders, particularly in relation to *binin* rule. Records indicate that the vast majority of *binin* hut leaders absconded (*kakeochi* 欠落), leaving the greater Wana area without police or guards. It is informative to look at some of the specific cases of runaway *binin* (see Figure 6 overleaf). In 1767, the same year as the Iwadonosan murder, Jin'emon (Suzuki IX) lodged an appeal with the local authorities because the local *binin* hut leader Kakubē had absconded. In this case, Kakubē had apparently informed Jin'emon that he had some errands to run at the town

Figure 6

History of Kakubē (the head of the binin hut in Lower Wana village in eighteenth-century Yoshimi. Source: SDKK, ed., Suzuki-ke monjo: saitama-ken buraku mondai kankei shiryōshū, Vol.3, 557[2105], 608[2387]

Year	Name	Place of Birth	Retirement Age	Reason for Retirement	Hut Location
1706.4	Kakubē	Hyakketsu	1710.4	Absconded	Ezuna village
1710.4	Monbē		1712.4	Absconded	Border of Upper and Lower Wana
1711.8	Hanbē				"
1712.4	Taken from the Eta village		1712.8		"
1712.8	Hanbē and 5 others		1716		" (Under the control of the farmers)
1716	Magoshichi	Annyūji village, Adachi county	1775.9	Absconded	"
1767.9	Kakubē			Absconded	Border of Upper and Lower Wana
1774.4	Tōsuke	Yono, Musashi	1780.2	Absconded	
1775–1777 No Hinin hut					
1777.2	Tōsuke		1777.4	Absconded	"
1780.2	Ichibē (Tōsuke's son-in-law)		1781.5	Absconded	
1781.8	Kakubē			Absconded	
1781.11	Heijirō		1782.9	Officially absconded but in actuality "banished"	Border of Upper and Lower Wana
1782.8	Zenbē				Border of Upper and Lower Wana
1783	Gensuke	Sakata Post Town	1783.7	Absconded	"
1783–1785 no Hinin hut (Ezuna and Maekagōchi villages take on duties)					
1783	Ichibē		1786.1	Absconded	"
1786.2	Chōsuke		1788.1	Banished for Gambling	
1789.2	Ichibē		1790.3	Absconded	
1791.2	Isaburō		1794.4	Absconded	
1794.8	Isaburō				

market but had not returned. Less than a week later, Jin'emon records that Kakubē's wife and children also absconded, leaving the *binin* hut unoccupied (*akegoya* 明小屋). As a countermeasure, Jin'emon ordered two of the *binin* formerly under Kakubē's charge to perform his duties from within their respective villages located at a distance from Lower Wana village. Moreover, he sequestered the help of some of his own *eta* villagers to assist in performing guard watch duties (*hi-no-ban* 火之番).⁴⁵

But the above example proved just the tip of the iceberg for Kiheiiji and his father. In 1774, Kiheiiji again concluded paperwork on another incident. According to this document, Kakubē ran away with his wife and children because he could not afford to repay a loan, presumably financed by Jin'emon or another wealthier village member.⁴⁶ In 1782, Kakubē again took flight for unspecified reasons, and once more Jin'emon summoned Kakubē's *binin* associates from other villages to help shoulder the burden.⁴⁷ In a 1796 record of the *binin* hut in Lower Wana village, Kiheiiji stated that there had been problems since the 1750s. The *binin* hut leader Kakubē had ignored the instructions of *eta*, who had the rights to the workplace on certain days of the month. Moreover, he had become recalcitrant and hard to live with in the village. Examples of his obstinate behaviour included his demands to only perform official guard duties, and his obstinate refusal to personally escort prisoners past a certain point on the road to Edo preferring to make others complete the task for him.⁴⁸ An *ukesbō* 請書 (oath of obedience) drawn up and signed during Kiheiiji's time as local *eta* village leader in Lower Wana also revealed a statement to the effect that *binin* (read Kakubē) were not permitted to flaunt their authority to farmers in the area.⁴⁹

The desertion of *binin* from Lower Wana village not only created problems within Lower Wana village and headaches for Jin'emon. It also heavily impacted Upper Wana and its relationship with Lower Wana. A major incident occurred in the village in 1768 related to this issue. Jin'emon, Kiheiiji's father, directed an official complaint to the local officials about an incident that involved Kakubē, the local peasants, and the temple register. Every year in May, Jin'emon submitted the temple register to the peasant village elders in Upper Wana village. But in 1768, when Jin'emon repeated this established practice, the Upper Wana village elder Den'emon 伝右衛門 suddenly questioned Jin'emon as to why Kakubē's name was not recorded on the register. Jin'emon, at that point in time, was still constructing a separate register of *binin* in the village, so such an action would have been a glaring omission in the eyes of the peasant officials.

Jin'emon answered that the Upper Wana officials that Kakubē had run away with his wife and children the previous year in September, and that he had followed the official procedures for desertion to their logical conclusions. He had alerted Danzaemon, searched for Kakubē over the appropriate time period, and finally listed him as missing. He was thus

⁴⁵ Ibid., 868 [697].

⁴⁶ Ibid., 870 [707].

⁴⁷ Ibid., 875 [696].

⁴⁸ Ibid., 557 [10].

⁴⁹ Ibid., Vol.1, 93 [282].

entitled to close the investigation and remove Kakubē's name from the official temple registers. According to Jin'emon, a debate then ensued with Den'emon concerning the duties and privileges of the *binin* hut where Kakubē was meant to live and work. The Upper Wana villagers demanded to know what was going to be done with the workplace. It was obvious from this line of questioning that the Upper Wana village officials required nothing less than a *binin* hut leader in the village to protect their water supply and crops, as well as to guard against vagrants that might wander into their village. It was manifestly unacceptable for the peasant community not to have a *binin* hut leader resident on the border between Upper and Lower Wana villages.

Jin'emon, however, refused to be pushed on the matter. He replied to the Upper Wana officials that the duties and privileges of the hut were ones that Jin'emon had ascribed to Kakubē: the workplace in the region surrounding Lower Wana village belonged to him. Moreover, Jin'emon added that he could not reasonably be requested to record Kakubē's presence in the village if the *binin* hut leader was not in fact residing there. This defiance by Jin'emon bought the wrath of the Upper Wana village officials. They argued that a *binin* hut had existed in Lower Wana village since antiquity, and the farming village would not accept the ruling of Danzaemon on this issue. They essentially disputed the fact that Danzaemon was permitted to do as he pleased with *binin* hut guards in their village. They continued to argue, moreover, that simply handing over the duties of the workplace to *binin* in other villages was a selfish act on the part of the *eta* villagers. They gave the *eta* villagers a terse ultimatum: decide whether they were under local rule (implying the rule of the local fief authority) or the jurisdiction of Danzaemon.

In response, and by way of a quick compromise, a visibly concerned Jin'emon wrote down Kakubē's name as well that of his family in the register, but included the date they absconded. The Upper Wana village elders refused this attempt at conciliation, however, stating that it would be just as difficult to accept a register with the name of someone who had run away as it would be to allow Kakubē's name to simply disappear entirely from the page. The implication was that Jin'emon should go and find another *binin* hut official who would take on the name of Kakubē and perform the duties of the *binin* hut leader. Jin'emon's extreme reluctance to do this suggests that he was content to have the *binin* hut leader resident in another village where they would still perform their official duties for Lower Wana village, but provide him and the villagers with fewer annoyances through their unpredictable and "selfish" ways.

Upper Wana village's ultimatum was nonetheless worrying. Jin'emon and the residents of Lower Wana village would be held accountable to authorities for not having submitted population registers. Regardless of whether the Upper Wana villagers refused to accept the submission of the registers, the onus was on Jin'emon to submit official documentation

to the local peasant officials on time, a fear that probably brought about his drafting of the legal appeal in which this incident is recorded. To the Upper Wana village ultimatum, Jin'emon formulated a careful response. He replied that he was certainly under the rule of Danzaemon, but that in matters pertaining to the "earth" (*jimen* 地面), he was under the rule of the local rulers. He did not desire to be excluded from receiving future directives from local rulers as was the village custom from antiquity. Jin'emon also conveyed to the farmers that the *eta* were under divided rule, and they wished to maintain the status quo on this issue. The social position (*mibun* 身分) of Lower Wana residents dictated that they were subject to Danzaemon, but Jin'emon argued that he and his fellow village heads were in charge of the *binin* in the area designated as the "begging grounds"—this being the case not just for Lower Wana but for all regional *eta* villages.⁵⁰ Jin'emon was clearly asserting here his right to rule over the *binin* in the way that he saw fit: Upper Wana village should not consider Lower Wana village a place consisting of a gathering of *eta* and *binin* (that is, "outcastes") that were subject to their authority.

From subsequent accounts we learn that Jin'emon recorded the name of Kakubē in the document and resubmitted the register a few days later.⁵¹ This reflects a bowing to the pressure applied to the *eta* village leader by the farming village authorities. Kiheiji's father drafted a legal document six months later that recorded his official status, reiterating what he had said in the document half a year earlier. The documents spelt out that both Jin'emon and his entire village were under the rule of Danzaemon in Asakusa with regards to workplace and status (*mibun*), but concerning the earth, they were subject to the authority of the Upper Wana village farmers (*murakata* 村方).⁵² As the amalgamation of *eta* and *binin* temple registers from 1778 indicates, however, the discourse of "commoner-outcaste" was increasingly making its presence felt in this community.

The tension created here was clearly the result of increasingly well-defined boundaries that delineated who people were. There was a mounting awareness of a "commoner-outcaste" distinction based upon what constituted "normal" practices. Kiheiji's father defined himself in his document in three ways: in terms of status, work, and the earth (a term by which he probably did not just mean land and taxes, but also more broadly physical locality). He expressed a sense of belonging that was clearly different to the local peasants', whose status (= peasant), workplace (= house + land), and physical location (= village) for the most part all comfortably overlapped. These three elements of belonging existed as one for the peasant: there were no intricate complexities that were difficult for others to comprehend regarding their work, status, and area of residence. The Lower Wana villagers' social and legal standing, however, was dependant on an authority that existed more than 50 kilometres away in Asakusa, and the workplace, although local, was inextricably linked to the larger work undertaken by Danzaemon in Edo, cutting across established boundaries

⁵⁰ SDKK, ed., *Suzuki-ke monjo: saitama-ken buraku mondai kankei shiryōshū*, Vol.3, 869 [848], 601 [640].

⁵¹ Ibid., 600 [164].

⁵² Ibid., 549 [1110].

⁵³ Saitama-ken, ed., *Shinpen saitama-kenshi shiryōhen*, Vol.14, pp.224–25.

⁵⁴ Arai Kōjirō, “Sagami-no-kuni ni okeru kinsei senmin shakai no kōzō,” pp.251–52.

⁵⁵ SDKK, ed., *Suzuki-ke monjo*, Vol.1, 10 [67].

that were traditionally used to define rule and legal jurisdiction for the rest of the community. The questions of community and belonging were not something that could simply be defined in a sentence or two, and neither were members of this community required to carefully articulate it before this time. But by the third quarter of the eighteenth century, the greater Wana area had reached a historical point where Jin'emon and his fellow villagers were forced to identify their place in the local community. They chose an explanation that tried to preserve the ambiguity of their existence as both “normal” and “different”. Their position, taken for granted in earlier periods within the wider Wana community, by the late 1760s had suddenly become incomprehensible.

Many shogunate laws and legislation directed at the definition and discrimination of *eta* and *binin* were promulgated throughout the course of the eighteenth century in eastern Japan. Even the Danzaemon himself participated in the creation of legislation that assisted in an increased definition of who the late Tokugawa outcaste was. In one 1765 document, for example, an entire village in Musashi appealed for an *eta* doctor to be permitted to have his status distinction of *eta* altered in order to function more effectively in his occupation of local doctor. Somewhat ironically, though, the elevation in his status would cause problems for the *binin* leader in the village. The shogunate consulted with Danzaemon about established practice, to which he responded with firm reasons why the *eta* in question could not possibly be permitted to become a commoner.⁵³

The idea of a “commoner” (*beinin* 平人) can be detected in Danzaemon's writings directly after he had incorporated the *binin* under his rule in the 1720s. He used the expression “normal *binin*” (*beihinin*) to refer to the new social position of the four *binin* rulers who were sentenced by Danzaemon to life imprisonment. Arai Kōjirō, moreover, records the use of the expression *beikumishita* (literally “ordinary under-the-group”) within *eta* villages that referred to the majority of villagers who did not have “workplace rights” in outcaste villages.⁵⁴ It is evident, therefore, that shogunate and Danzaemon laws and legislation based upon “commoner-outcaste” distinctions also found their way into outcaste community practices. Other examples exist too. In 1778, two laws were issued in Lower Wana village in successive months censuring the bad habits of the “outcaste” (*eta-binin-nado* 穢多非人等). The first order castigated them for being insolent to farmers and townsmen, being indistinguishable from farmers, entering palanquin bearer's huts (*kago ya*) and taverns (*sakaya*), harbouring criminals and banding together to commit larceny. The law stated that from that point onwards, outcastes found responsible for these unlawful actions would be severely punished.⁵⁵ The following month, a decree was also circulated by the city magistrate regarding “outcaste” (*eta-hinin-nado*) misbehaviour, ordering the *eta* and *binin* to conduct themselves properly, to keep the servants of *binin* (*teka* 手下) in order, and not to be rude to *eta* workers from other “workplaces” (*banushi* 場主). Interestingly, this

law also contained a clause forbidding the community members from taking orders directly from the *binin* leader Kuruma Zenshichi: legislation presumably appended to the original shogunate order either by Danzamon or the local *eta* village leader.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Ibid., 5 [632].

⁵⁷ Ibid., Vol.1, 79 [296].

⁵⁸ Ibid., 69 [1029].

The central mechanism used to great effect in the establishment of systems of social regulation was “outcaste-ness”: an idea that was clearly a derivative of emerging ideas of the commoner during the eighteenth century. An outcaste order could naturally only really exist in a “stable” sense if it was clearly definable: predicated upon a system that could distinguish between “non-outcastes” or “commoners”. Logically, therefore, the point at which an outcaste was most dangerous was the point at which they were able to shed their “outcaste-ness”. The 1778 piece of legislation that cautioned against Lower Wana residents “being indistinguishable from farmers” demonstrates that in rural communities in Musashi province in the latter half of the eighteenth century, the commoner was basically being understood as the peasant. There was little official patience for the inevitable blurring of the official boundaries between outcaste and commoner.

Two laws were issued in Lower Wana village in 1778 condemning the bad habits of the “outcaste” (*eta-binin-nado*). Yet commoner-outcaste discourse, in spite of the conflict mentioned in the previous section, does not appear to have been explicitly expressed in Lower Wana village through labels like *heinin* or *shirōto* 素人 until the nineteenth century. In a document presumably dated in the 1820s, a caution was given to *eta* villagers not to sell the hides, nails and hair from animals to “commoners” (*shirōto*) or to people outside the local jurisdiction (*shibaigai* 支配外).⁵⁷ This appears to have been the first use of the official discourse of “commoner-outcaste” in locally produced legislation.

From the 1820s, relations between Upper and Lower Wana village appear to have become dominated by this discourse. An oath dated 1825 submitted by Lower Wana villagers to the farmers in Upper Wana (a document in which the word *eta* is used considerably) reveals the emergence of a stringent set of rules that were to be imposed on Lower Wana villagers. *Eta* were forbidden to use the shade of a tree on farming land, to ride farmers’ horses they borrowed, and to cut and use the grass from paddocks set aside for grazing. In the same document, Lower Wana villagers were also ordered not to cut across rice fields on errands to and from the village. Interestingly, farmers in this document were referred to using the highly honorific titles of *onbyakushōsama* 御百姓様 and *onjikatasama* 御地方様 (literally having the meaning of “Sir” or “Honourable”), and duties peasants ordered *eta* villagers to perform had to be completed within the new time limit of three days.⁵⁸ By the 1820s, therefore, the peasant community in Upper Wana had carefully delineated acceptable spaces and acceptable practices, and the *cordon sanitaire* based on a discourse of “commoner-outcaste” urged in legislative discourse in the previous century had evidently become more dominant throughout this

⁵⁹ Ibid., 72 [135].

⁶⁰ Based on my analysis of documents authored by local *eta* leaders in eastern Japan, it does not appear as if the word *beinin* was used by these communities themselves.

⁶¹ For a technical discussion of the differences between these two kinds of documents in relation to status consult Satō Shin'ichi, *Shinpan komonjogaku nyūmon* (Tokyo: Hōsei daigaku shuppankyoku, 1997), pp.162–63.

⁶² SDKK, ed., *Suzuki-ke monjo*, Vol.1, 111 [1127].

community. In 1855, a striking law warning members of the *eta* community not to comport themselves in ways that caught the attention of commoners and led to the neglect of workplace duties (*shirōto no kiuke ni nazumi bayaku wo naozari mata wa mibun wo kazari hyakushō-ke ni tachiri* 素人之氣受二泥場役ヲ等閑又者身分ヲ飾百姓家ニ立入) was issued.⁵⁹

It is important to record here, though, that the term *shirōto* is used instead of *beinin*. This suggests a way in which the meanings of these two terms differed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and that the discourse of commoner (almost exclusively written as *beinin*), like the label *eta*, may not have been adopted within Lower Wana village itself.⁶⁰ One may speculate that *beinin* was, rather, a term used by the shogunate, by domain authorities, and by Danzaemon himself during the eighteenth century to define the precarious lives of different people under the one label “outcaste” (*eta-binin-nado*). It was an official discourse used as a mechanism to enable stable rule and unify punitive powers. But local *eta* and *binin* communities themselves did not internalize it. The “other” for *eta* and *binin* was not a *beinin* 平人 but a *shirōto*: a word that would appear to connote a lack of expertise in agriculture rather than an absence of normality. This is not to say, however, that a “commoner-outcaste” discourse had no impact on the village. Although members of Lower Wana village did not overtly appear to internalize a “commoner-outcaste” polarization, considerable attempts at self-definition were made by the Suzuki family head from around the 1770s. While adoption of the official terminology was rejected, the idea that *eta* and *binin* were in some way different from the rest of the community and therefore a phenomenon that demanded historical explanation appears to have been accepted.

Eta-binin relations too may be seen as becoming increasingly influenced by an “outcaste-commoner” binary distinction during this period. *Hinin*, it may be argued, were also increasingly treated as a kind of outcaste within Lower Wana village. From around the middle of the eighteenth century, for example, oaths of obedience addressed from the *binin* hut leader Kakubē to Jin'emon were written on *tategami* 縦紙 paper (as opposed to the oaths of obedience from *eta* villagers to Jinemon, which were written on *yokogami* 横紙 paper), indicating a clear difference in perceived status.⁶¹ Kakubē was, moreover, consistently the last name listed on official documentation that needed to be signed by the entire village from around this time. But perhaps the most blatant example of the appropriation of the binary logic of “commoner-outcaste” within the Lower Wana village community can be glimpsed in a document presumably dated in the 1850s where Jin'emon listed his place of residence as “Wana village” and Kakubē's as “Lower Wana village.”⁶² Moreover, in a dispute between the residents of Upper and Lower Wana village over land ownership and management only a few years later, a resident of Upper Wana village planted *ushigoroshi* 牛殺 or “butcher trees” (*Pourthiaea Villosa*) in three places along the boundary between his land and Kakubē's

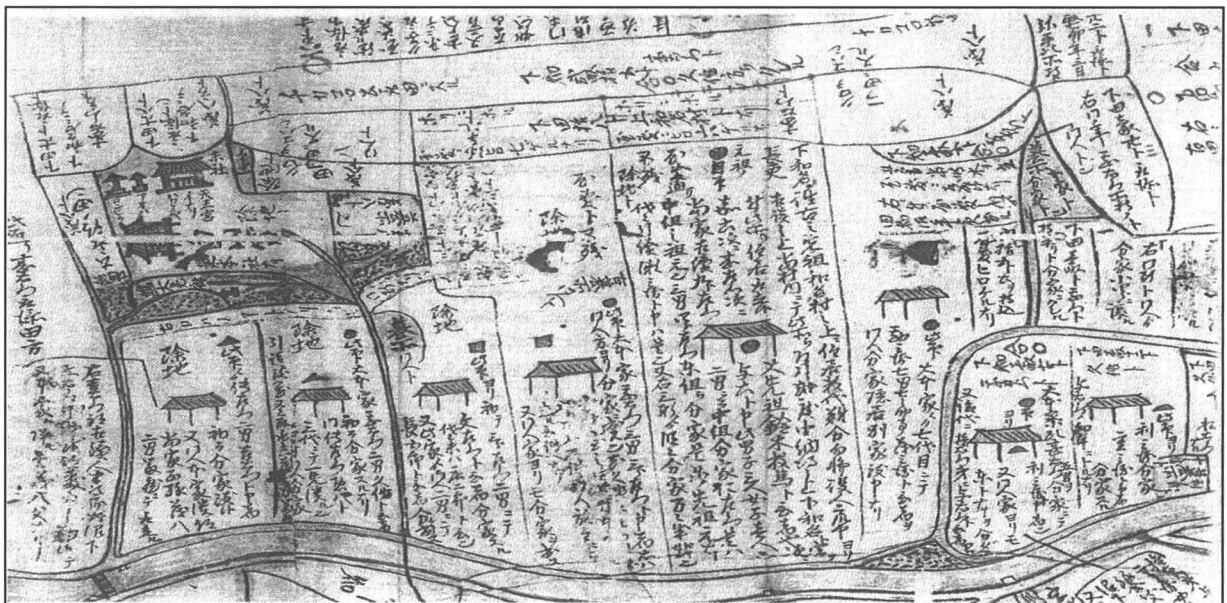
binin hut. The savage intimation involved in the act was presumably not lost on members of the community.⁶³ It also leaves little doubt, moreover, that village *binin* like Kakubē were increasingly caught in the middle of such disputes due to their policing and guard functions. By the mid-nineteenth century, the binary logic of the commoner-outcaste defined in legislation throughout the previous century had seemingly pervaded practices in Lower Wana village as well.

Late Eighteenth- and Early Nineteenth-Century Suzuki Family Identity

Certain documentation, especially maps, provides interesting examples of a process that might be expressed as positive self-identification. The Suzuki family heads who authored the documents depicted themselves as the founding family of Lower Wana village and it is due to their singular efforts that the village is purported to have developed. Within this conception, the establishment of the village, the foundation of the three groups, or *kumi*, that constituted the village, and the application of hard work, intelligence, and planning guaranteeing the permanent existence of

Figure 7

'Original Group' (motokumi 元組) of Lower Wana Village. Portion of Bushū yokomi-gun shimowana sonchū ezumen [Map of Lower Wana village, Yokomi county, Musashi province] (1826) in the possession of Suzuki Mikio. Reproduced with permission



⁶⁴ This is a sentiment that the current head of the Suzuki household was able to recount to the author in relation to a map that features in this chapter. Suzuki Mikio 鈴木幹雄 informed me that his father had told him that the map had been kept in his family for generations and must never be parted with. That is apparently why it had not been donated to the Saitama Prefectural Archives with the other household documents. For an early use of family decrees to preserve documentation for future generations see the 1770 document in *ibid.*, 188 [2255].

⁶⁵ Refer to the document relating to a certain Yaheiiji's (Lower Wana resident) land mortgage to Jin'emon in 1784. *SKM*, #1008.

the village are all traced back to the Suzuki family. These achievements were documented for the benefit of future generations through a variety of colourful maps and elaborate ledgers that concluded by telling subsequent generations of the Suzuki family to preserve the records and to treasure them forever.⁶⁴

The "pride" that emerges from these documents is also reflected in the stunning colours used in the maps: another clear reflection of the obvious wealth the Suzuki family had accumulated by the early nineteenth century. In some respects, it is accurate to state that the Suzuki family's affluence was directly attributable to their own accomplishments. However, it is also true that prosperity was achieved as a result of the hardship of others who resided in both Upper and Lower Wana villages.⁶⁵ The extinction of certain branch family lines, and the misfortunes of others in the village resulting from famines and floods (but probably also to poor financial management and planning), meant that many local community members were forced to mortgage their lands to individuals and households with capital—like the Suzuki's. And while the Suzuki family also experienced many disasters, in some cases to the extent that they too had to plead with authorities and local peasants for financial assistance, the head Suzuki family nonetheless managed to forge a solid existence for itself within the village, and within the eastern outcaste order.

The process of the settlement of Lower Wana village and the way subsequent generations of Suzuki family households identified with this process is outlined in the Map of Lower Wana village, Yokomi county, Musashi province (*Bushū yokomi-gun shimowana sonchū ezumen* 武州横見郡下和名村中絵図面) drafted by Jin'emon (Suzuki Masanori 政徳—Suzuki XI, also known as Sensuke) in 1826. This map, in the possession of the present-day Suzuki family and previously unsighted by Japanese scholars, records the reasons for its creation in the following section:

The village boundaries of this place, the origins of our ancestors, the establishment of dwellings, the branching-off of households, from generation to generation even to the names of the *kumi* leaders, have been established according to the greater principles. In spite of this, is it not true that even if something is written with a fine brush, it is still sometimes difficult to comprehend? Even though this may be so, there is no real discrepancy here in the use of distances handed down to us from old. Therefore, this map is a treasure not only for our family, but also for the entire village. If this map is treated carelessly and improperly, it will not last for a long time. This explanatory note, written with an aged hand, is the first of its kind. Therefore, our descendants for time immemorial shall diligently preserve it.

Lower Wana village, Lower Yoshimi territory, Yokomi County
Suzuki Jin'emon Governor, Masanori (seal)
Ninth Year of Bunsei [1826], Year of the Dog, At the time of his 58th year
An auspicious day in the 6th month

Interestingly, here Jin'emon is not just the village leader but the "governor" (*soyō* 総領) of Lower Wana village. The following information is also contained on the map about the history of the Suzuki family:

Our ancestors of old from Lower Wana village lived in Wana village. For several generations there were hardships, and after consulting with the officials, they spoke of their desire to move to this place within the village. With their [Wana village's] consent, the characters Lower Wana village were designated and we were able to settle here. Our earliest forefathers were called Suzuki Kazuma, Karoku, Jinzaemon, then Yoroku—three men and one woman. Kyūrōzaemon, who succeeded this house, had his second son branch off into a separate household in middle *kumi* and he, Jinzaemon, became the founding father of the middle *kumi*. The third son [of Kyūrōzaemon], Shirōzaemon branched off into a separate household in eastern *kumi*, and he became the founding father of eastern *kumi*. Addressing [the village elder with the title] *Sehē* from generation to generation originates here. From [the generation of] Mataemon, households gradually broke away one after the other and we now have everlasting prosperity.

Several points of great interest surface in these passages. First, the narrative of the Lower Wana village origins, as related by Suzuki Masanori, concentrates on the Suzuki family: the village was created, settled, and brought to prosperity by the solitary efforts of Suzuki household forebears. They were not "outcastes", but former Upper Wana village residents, and the success of Lower Wana was also the story of the opulence of the Suzuki family. Within this tale, the initial reason for moving to the village was "hardship," and the process of settling in Lower Wana village was one of "consultation" and eventual "consent," because the land originally lay within the boundaries of Upper Wana village. The document does not explain who chose the characters for Lower Wana village, but it is nevertheless apparent that the Suzuki family perceived their historical role in Lower Wana as that of pioneer. Moreover, the initial nuance of the term "Lower" did not necessarily denote a status-based inferiority to the original Upper Wana village, but was in all probability based upon geographical or topographical considerations. It is also significant to note, from the perspective of women's history, that women in the Suzuki family played an important role in the establishment of the village, a fact that holds important ramifications for ideas about the status of women in early rural Tokugawa society. A female ancestor named Yoroku 与六 became a local *eta* village leader within Lower Wana, bearing three sons that ensured the family could branch out and establish the *kumi*, or groups, that were to eventually become the structural foundation for village growth.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ My thanks to Gerald Groemer for pointing out that Yoroku is not recognizable as a female name used in the Tokugawa period in spite of the fact that the relevant passage on the map states that the person named Yoroku was female and bore three sons. Subsequently it may be more appropriate to interpret this passage as "the wife of Yoroku bore three sons". Regardless of Yoroku's gender, however, it is still significant that she is singled out for attention as the progenitor of the three sons who established the village.

Conclusion

Relations between neighbouring *eta* and *binin* communities changed during the first half of the eighteenth century. What were formerly disputes between *eta* communities over tanning duties in the previous century shifted to conflicts concerning policing jurisdiction. Within this process, the position of *eta* and *binin* within rural Musashi also became ambiguous. On the one hand, they were visibly able to project their will on numerous matters related to policing and execution in disputes with local peasants and authorities. But on the other hand, their authority to discipline and punish criminals was quite distinct from warrior law enforcement that retained a function of intimidation that was capable of deterring illegal activities. The refusal of communities to pay for the *eta* and *binin* guard duties clearly demonstrated the tenuity of outcaste claims to this kind of punitive power.

The discourse of the commoner based on a notion of normality also came to significantly impact social practices in within Lower Wana village in the second half of the eighteenth century. The head-on collision between Upper and Lower Wana village over the *binin* hut in 1768 is perhaps one of the first clear evidences of a clash between these two communities based on such a discourse. Naturally, the ultimatum presented by the Upper Wana villagers to their Lower Wana counterparts was not necessarily the result of a firm belief in their “outcaste-ness”, but perhaps rather a harsh response to a refusal by Jin’emon to ensure the safety of their community through the provision of a policing agency. Nevertheless, just as the Tokugawa shogunate used the discourse of the commoner as a mechanism to facilitate stable rule by a homogenisation of the population into obedient masses, so too did Upper Wana village. They ignored established differences between *eta* and *binin* within Lower Wana and merged them together as an object which they then attempted to govern. This ensured their control over them and therefore the possibility of communal stability.

Lower Wana village certainly attempted to reject these attempts by the Upper Wana community to merge them into a manageable “outcaste” body. But at the same time, there appears to have been an acceptance by this community of the logic behind claims that Lower Wana community was different. Members of the Suzuki household began to articulate this distinction in terms of a unique local identity from the late eighteenth century. The official discourse of commoner-outcaste continued to be more pronounced during the early nineteenth century until it appeared as a hegemonic discourse by the 1820s. And it is clear that some *eta* practices related to *binin* governance during this time also contained traces of marginalization influenced by this discourse.

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