

The Problem of Women in Early Modern Japan

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS

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University of California Press
Oakland, California

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Yonemoto, Marcia, author.

Title: The problem of women in early modern Japan /
Marcia Yonemoto.

Other titles: Asia—local studies/global themes ; 31.

Description: Oakland, California : University of
California Press, [2016] | Series: Asia: local studies/
global themes ; 31 | Includes bibliographical
references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2016015752 (print) | LCCN 2016017276
(ebook) | ISBN 9780520292000 (cloth : alk. paper) |
ISBN 9780520965584 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Women—Japan—History. | Women—
Social conditions—17th century. | Women—Social
conditions—18th century. | Women—Social
conditions—19th century. | Japan—Civilization—To
1868. | Japan—History—Tokugawa period, 1600–
1868.

Classification: LCC HQ1762 .Y6435 2016 (print) | LCC
HQ1762 (ebook) | DDC 305.40952—dc23
LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2016015752>

Manufactured in the United States of America

25 24 23 22 21 20 19 18 17 16
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Succession

Heaven gives birth to creatures in such a way that they have only one root.

—James Legge, trans., *The Life and Works of Mencius*, 213

Out in the world, there are those who, once they have their own biological child, abruptly have a change of heart, make false accusations against their adopted child, and send him/her away. This is the definition of inhumane behavior.

—Sanda Yoshikatsu, *Yōshi kun* (Precepts on Adoption), 1732

For warrior houses in the Tokugawa period, the extinguishing of a family line was the worst of fates. Forbidden from participating in commerce or agriculture and supported by increasingly insufficient stipends, the samurai's most important asset was his name and lineage. Of all the status groups, warrior families were most strictly bound by the conventions of patrilineal descent and thus could only survive if they had male heirs; if a family had no inheriting son, it literally had no future.¹

The plain fact of biological reproduction ensured that women were indispensable in the succession process, yet they were also threatened by the imperative to bear sons. However, the inability to produce an heir biologically by no means condemned a lineage to extinction or a woman to divorce. A woman's reproductive success constituted only a small part of her importance to her family (see chap. 4); as Kaibara Ekiken and others stressed, a talented woman could be of greater service to her family than a fertile one. In other words, while heirship was imperative, birthing an heir was not. The present chapter addresses how this was possible by showing how families resorted to frequent and relatively unfettered adoption, and it argues that women were central to the adoption and

succession processes. Women were adopted as daughters into other families, often to form political or economic alliances. But perhaps most important, in increasingly greater numbers warrior families undertook to adopt men or boys as husbands for their daughters and heirs to their lineages.² As wives and mothers, women helped orchestrate the adoption and succession of their offspring. All of these practices enhanced the importance of women in ensuring family continuity.

Building on the concept of mothering as a multifaceted process encompassing both biological and social dimensions, this chapter places women at the center of the succession process. It begins by discussing the distinctive patterns of adoption for succession that developed in Japan, particularly within the warrior class, from the late medieval through early modern periods. The chapter then turns to examine a variety of sources: an eighteenth-century advice manual on adoption; statistics on heir adoption and succession among warrior families; and women's diaries, letters, and memoirs. This layered approach to the succession problem shows how women—through biological reproduction and nonbiological production of offspring and heirs—were integral to the maintenance of family identity and lineage over time.

THE DISTINCTIVE NATURE OF ADOPTION AND SUCCESSION IN EARLY MODERN JAPAN

In contrast to the late imperial Chinese and Chosŏn Korean joint family systems, which were governed by the nearly sacred principle of consanguinity, the early modern Japanese stem family was a corporate entity defined much less by blood ties than by what one might call contextual functionality. A farming family had to function successfully as a unit of agricultural production, a merchant family had to function as a profitable market enterprise, and a samurai family had to maintain political power, economic integrity, and administrative utility. Success, in this context, was defined as perpetuation of a lineage over time, and insofar as adoption could help achieve this goal, it was widely accepted. Certainly, a priori ethical principles of hierarchy, filial piety, kinship, and gender relations grounded in Chinese classical thought mattered, and all things being equal, most families without heirs preferred to adopt a male from within the kin group, as was prescribed in Confucian texts. But in practice all things rarely were equal, and the bottom line was that family survival was itself a virtue, one that strategic adoption, even from outside the kin group, could help achieve.³

Such a pragmatic approach to succession meant that over the course of the Tokugawa period adoption became the single most effective and most frequently used strategy for families to perpetuate themselves. Indeed, the ubiquity of adoption in Japan—especially the adoption of adults and those from outside the immediate kin group—has been remarkable, and though the form, practice, and ideology of adoption shifted significantly in the twentieth century, the importance of adoption in maintaining the Japanese family system has few parallels in world history.⁴ In the early modern period, the Tokugawa shogunate issued repeated regulations regarding the adoption of heirs among warrior houses, and Confucian thinkers debated the propriety of adopting heirs from outside the kin group, but in practice there were relatively few legal or conventional restrictions on adoption, especially for commoners.⁵

Although the discussion of adoption for heirship, especially in late imperial China, often focuses on the adoption of men, in early modern Japan women adoptees also played an important part in ensuring a lineage's success. During the Tokugawa period, adoption often was used by warrior elites to solidify political ties with potential rivals for power. The Tokugawa shoguns themselves frequently adopted the daughters of allied warrior houses as a way to formalize alliances, especially in the early years of their rule. Tokugawa Ieyasu, for example, had three daughters of his own but adopted an astounding twenty-two more—all but one of whom were born to *fudai* daimyo, his most important allies. His heir, Hidetada, had five biological daughters and adopted ten, again mostly but not entirely the daughters of *fudai*, and the third shogun, Iemitsu, adopted four daughters, one from a collateral (*shinpan*) house, one from a more recently allied (*tozama*) house, and two from Matsudaira relatives.⁶ These adopted daughters were in turn married to other allies, thereby doubling the political efficacy of the adoption strategy. The number of adopted daughters of shoguns declined steadily from the reign of Tokugawa Ietsuna in the 1650s, more or less in an inverse relationship to the growth of Tokugawa rule: as they accrued more power, the shoguns needed to adopt daughters less often.⁷

While adopting daughters as a political strategy was most often practiced by the elite, for all women, regardless of status, the possibility of adopting a male heir greatly lessened the pressure to bear sons. The results of this can be seen in demographic records. Whereas the biological imperatives of consanguineal family systems such as China's contributed to the well-documented prevalence of female infanticide, the Tokugawa archives show no evidence of widespread measures taken

to suppress the number of female offspring in favor of males.⁸ To be sure, infanticide was common, especially among farm families, but it tended not to be sex-selective. Rather, when possible, parents seem to have preferred to vary the sexes of their children to achieve balance, showing a marked preference for sons only when the ideal number of children had been reached. For their part, instructional manuals for women devote considerable attention to childbearing and child rearing, but, as discussed in chapter 4, they do not show pervasive gender bias in favor of males. In other words, even though the threat of lineage extinction as a result of the absence of male heirs loomed large, Japanese families appear not to have maneuvered to have sons at the cost of daughters. The prevalence of adoption for succession seems to have been one of the main reasons Japanese women avoided the fate that befell their Chinese contemporaries. In particular, the frequent adoption of daughters' husbands as heirs paradoxically made women necessary for the functioning of patrilineality.⁹

DISCOURSES ON ADOPTION

Given the frequency of adoption, it is surprising that there are relatively few texts devoted to detailed discussions of it.¹⁰ One that stands out is *Yōshi kun* (Precepts on Adoption, 1732) by Sanda Yoshikatsu (1701–77). By coincidence, Sanda was the youngest son of Inoue Tsūjo, and he himself had been adopted at a young age by his father's heirless cousin. In *Yōshi kun*, he attempts to explain how to manage the numerous challenges posed by incorporating adoptees into the family group. This was a topic of considerable importance, for by the time Sanda's treatise was published, one would be hard-pressed to find a single samurai family of any rank whose genealogy did not contain adopted family members. But no matter how common it was, the assimilation of a new family member was not easy, for as Sanda and others acknowledged it could well challenge the interpersonal relationships and endanger the all-important "familial harmony" (*kanai wajun*). In the introduction to the first volume of *Yōshi kun*, Sanda offered the following advice to adoptive parents.

- When raising the child of another, first think of the child as your own and love and nurture him with a sincere heart. By all means communicate your feelings to your adopted child. Keep this point foremost in your mind as a secret trick as you raise your adopted child.
- Adoptive fathers and mothers should not distance themselves but remain in contact and speak frankly about all matters. If you do not

hide what you truly feel, your adoptive child will become a person capable of fully opening his heart without reservations. If the adoptive father and mother and the adopted child think “on the surface the child is acting as if everything is fine, but who knows what he feels in the bottom of his heart,” they will fall victim to [the idea that] “a suspicious heart begets secret demons” and in the end it will become a major issue.

- You were born and raised as [someone’s] biological child, and even you did not follow the wishes of your parents; how much more so the child of another [will do so toward you]; you each should not forget the word ‘endure.’
- The child-rearing methods of the natal parents and the adoptive parents will differ slightly. It is best for the natal parents to embrace “strictness” (*gen*), but in the case of adoptive parents, it is better to embrace “lenience” (*kan*).
- It is best if the adoptive father takes great care in providing food and clothing for the adopted child, and makes the child apply himself to the arts.
- When bringing up an adopted child, you should not be miserly to the degree that you cause the child hardship. By contrast, you should not give in to the adopted child’s selfishness and spoil him. Neither of these is the way to raise adoptive children.
- However sincere an adopted child may be, if you are living together day and night, surely things will not be tranquil all the time. From the perspective of the adoptive parents, even if some undesirable change occurs, act as if there is not a problem and let it go—do not lay blame. If a mistake is made, discuss it calmly and act to resolve it. Explain things quietly—do not get even a little angry or agitated.
- All adopted children lack adequate provisions from their natal parents. In the event that their clothing or swords are in a pitiful state, within the limits of your means, provide [new items]. People who do not have their own children do not truly understand the true nature of compassionate love and nurturing of children.
- If your adopted child is having difficulties, you must carefully examine his friends. Friends who are not learning their letters or practicing martial arts are worthless. Encourage him to be polite to and become close to friends of quality. When these quality friends come over, treat them to good food and see to it that they come back often. Strictly forbid him to associate with friends who are partial to gaming and lewd behavior.
- Out in the world, there are those who, once they have their own biological child, abruptly have a change of heart, make false accusations against their adopted child, and send him or her away. This is the definition of inhumane behavior.¹¹

While Sanda posits blood ties as the normative basis for family harmony, he also assumes, notably, that in cases of adoption close familial ties can be created by proper behavior. His admonitions on the latter subject are remarkable for several reasons. First is his emphasis on the responsibility of parents to ensure a successful adoption, contrary to Chinese texts, which emphasize the burden placed on the adoptee.¹² In Sanda's view, it is the parents who should accommodate themselves to the adoptee; they should exercise forbearance and err on the side of lenience. Also remarkable is his emphasis on the need for parents to be emotionally connected to their adopted children. Elsewhere in early modern East Asia, adoption was considered an administrative and ritual act, and adoptees were not expected to have much emotional connection with adoptive parents. Such adopted heirs often filled the ritual and legal role of heir only on the death of the adoptive father, and in many cases they remained in the homes and under the care of their natal parents well after being adopted. By contrast, Sanda Yoshikatsu seems to assume that adoptees were, like himself, young children at the time of adoption and that they would live in the homes of their adoptive parents. He thus exhorts adoptive parents to be emotionally open and forgiving to their adopted children, so that a close parent-child bond might develop. The emphasis on affective ties is noticeably strong, making one wonder to what degree such sentiments were widely held by adoptees and adopting families.

Sanda's views perhaps developed from his own experience. He spent ten years—between the ages of eight and eighteen—in the home of his adoptive father, Sanda Sajiemon Katsutomi. Within his natal family Yoshikatsu suffered a fate common to younger sons: he would not inherit the house headship, so after his biological father's death he was adopted by and went to live with Katsutomi. After Katsutomi's death he wrote his treatise on adoption out of gratitude and a sense of filial piety. Still, as discussed in chapter 3, Yoshikatsu maintained close ties to his natal family and especially to his mother, Tsūjo, studying daily under her tutelage throughout his childhood and adolescence, despite residing with his adoptive family. As we have seen, Yoshikatsu's subsequent achievements as a scholar and writer are often credited to Tsūjo's tutelage.

Maintaining ties to the natal family, while beneficial to young Yoshikatsu, also presented a dilemma. In Confucian thought, in which Yoshikatsu was rigorously schooled, filial piety was "an absolute obligation whose fulfillment might not be fragmented or divided." As an adopted child, in theory he had to choose to ritually venerate either his

natal or adopted parents; he could not serve both.¹³ Yoshikatsu, however, seems to have accomplished a type of dual veneration of both sets of parents, for in *Yōshi kun* he honors his adoptive father while his successful efforts to get Tsūjo's work published during her lifetime and his authorship of her biography-cum-hagiography after her death attests to his devotion to his birth mother. His acts of piety did not take the form of the elaborate ritual sacrifices to ancestors required of members of Chinese and Korean extended families, but they were nonetheless public, enduring, and seemingly heartfelt.¹⁴

It is clear, however, that Sanda Yoshikatsu's emphasis on the importance of affective ties between parents and children in cases of adoption contrasts markedly with the opinions of commoner authors of texts on adoption and other family matters. Especially in household codes (*kakun*, *kahō*), succession and family survival were paramount and personal feelings all but irrelevant. These codes were written by heads of merchant or farming families as ways to formalize their philosophies of family governance, offering instructions and admonitions to subsequent generations. In reading the extant *kakun* authored by heads of merchant and farming families, one is struck by the writers' highly pragmatic approach to succession, especially their disregard for the primacy of the eldest son and the apparent absence of natural emotional ties that might bind parents to their biological offspring. Hayami Akira long ago deemed the dominance of primogeniture in early modern Japan a "myth," for clearly there were many exceptions to the general principle of succession by the eldest son in the early modern period.¹⁵ An eldest son might misbehave, lack talent or skill, love drink and gambling, be mentally ill or simply lazy. Letting birth order and gender determine inheritance served the goal of continuing the family line, but for household heads, depending on the vagaries of human reproduction was risky, as an unsuitable heir might very well squander the family's assets. Still, the highly conditional nature of succession by eldest sons as portrayed in commoner house codes remains surprising; the codes belie a cautiousness on the part of household heads to commit to any successor who had not proven himself a capable leader.¹⁶

In commoner and warrior houses alike, the best way to ensure that a "talented person" would become the family head was to adopt. In particular, adopting a daughter's husband—usually a man at or near adulthood—allowed a family to choose a competent and appropriate individual as heir, one who was most likely to be able to manage the family's affairs and ensure its survival and prosperity. It also enabled a family to

keep a daughter at home and benefit from her labor and natural authority. Further, adopting a son-in-law not only saved the expense of providing a daughter with a dowry, but in-marrying sons-in-law brought their own dowries to their wives' families. Commoner families could also incorporate nonrelated individuals such as employees into the family in order to increase the number of potential heirs. Clearly, many factors besides bloodline determined who belonged to the family.¹⁷

In sum, while texts like *Yōshi kun* evince an emotional component in family ties, other texts like house codes are almost ruthless in their culling of their unproductive or nonessential members. As the economic climate became in general more competitive and market-oriented in the mid- to late Tokugawa period, even wealthy families were compelled to guard their assets assiduously; this included controlling access to family membership, incorporating those who could contribute to the project of family success, and excluding those who could not. Adoption practices, in other words, clearly responded to economic and political imperatives as well as to social ones, a conclusion borne out by examining quantitative data on adoption.

ADOPTION BY THE NUMBERS

It is difficult if not impossible to deduce reliable overall numbers of adoptions or adoptees from the available documentation, because informal adoptions among commoners and surreptitious adoptions among samurai often went unrecorded. But a sampling of data on adoption within samurai families from the mid- to late Tokugawa period, summarized in table 1 below, shows that the practice of adoption was both widespread and frequent.¹⁸ Within the *bushi* class, adoption was regularly practiced from the beginning of the Tokugawa period, and overall rates of adoption increased over time.

The foregoing data require some elaboration. In one of the earliest studies of adoption published in English, Ray Moore assembled a random sample of genealogies, family histories, and office-holding records from 207 middle- to upper-ranking samurai families in the domains of Hikone, Kaga, Owari, and Sendai, which represented the “major political and historical types of Tokugawa daimyo [i.e., *fudai-kinsei*, *shimpan-kinsei*, *tozama-shokuhō* and *tozama-sengoku*] and four major geographical regions in Japan.”¹⁹ Among these families, the rates of adoption of sons rose steadily over time, from 26 percent in the seventeenth century to almost 40 percent by the nineteenth.²⁰ Moore's central

TABLE 1 HOUSEHOLD SUCCESSION BY ADOPTION, INCLUDING ADOPTED SONS-IN-LAW, IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Type of Sample	No. of Succession Cases	No. of Adopted Heirs (% of succession cases)	No. of Adopted Sons-in-Law (% of all adopted heirs)
Middle- to upper-ranking samurai families in the domains of Hikone, Kaga, Owari, and Sendai ^a	207	70 (37%)	NA
Eight lineages within the Fukōzu Matsudaira ^b	54	23 (43%)	4 (17%)
Fourteen Matsudaira lineages ^c	544	160 (29%)	46 (29%)
Fifty-nine tozama daimyo houses ^c	390	130 (33%)	20 (15%)
Warrior houses in Nanbe domain, Morioka ^d	17th century: 693 18th century: 1,037	85 (12%) 179 (17%)	50 (59%) 97 (54%)
Warrior houses in Satake domain, Akita ^e	(1681–1700): 311 (1721–40): 516	72 (23%) 152 (30%)	28 (39%) 48 (32%)
Warrior houses in Aizu domain ^f	17th century: 623 18th century: 2,018	119 (19%) 529 (26%)	61 (51%) 260 (49%)
Warrior houses in Nabeshima domain, Saga ^g	17th century: 157 18th century: 375	18 (12%) 86 (23%)	7 (39%) 51 (59%)

NOTE: The figures in this table are my calculations, based on data from the indicated sources.

^aRay A. Moore, "Adoption and Samurai Mobility in Tokugawa Japan," *Journal of Asian Studies* 29, no. 3 (1970): 617–32.

^bWakita Osamu, "Bakuhan taisei to josei," in Josei Shi Sōgō Kenkyūkai, ed., *Nihon josei shi*, vol. 3: *Kinsei* (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1982), 1–30.

^cŌguchi Yūjirō, "Kinsei buke sozoku ni okeru isei yōshi," in *Onna no shakai shi 17–20 seiki: "ie" to jendaa wo kangaeru* (Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 2001), 5–25.

^dTsubouchi Reiko, *Danshō no jinkō shakaigaku: dare ga "ie" wo tsuida ka* (Kyoto: Mineruboa Shobō, 2001), 38–39.

^eIbid., 88–89.

^fIbid., 98.

^gIbid., 139.

question, however, concerned not the frequency of adoption per se but whether or not adoption led to increased social mobility for younger sons, who were generally excluded from house headship in their natal families. He concluded that adoption did *not* measurably enhance the fortunes of the adoptees as measured in the objective terms of rank and income, although it did provide an important means for noninheriting younger sons to gain independent standing as heads of families within their adoptive lines.

Moore's study revealed general patterns of adoption, but it focused solely on the adoption of sons as heirs, not of daughters. Neither did it make a distinction between different types of adoptees, that is, sole male adoptees versus adopted sons-in-law (*muko yōshi*) or kin adoptees (*dōsei*) versus nonkin adoptees (*isei*). Wakita Osamu, by contrast, addressed these issues in his study of the Fukōzu branch of the Matsudaira clan in central western Honshu in the mid-Tokugawa period.²¹ Among the Fukōzu Matsudaira, a high-ranking Tokugawa collateral house, headship was passed on to adopted sons almost as frequently as it was to biological sons. Almost half of these adopted heirs were nonkin, and almost half of the nonkin adoptees were sons-in-law. These data lead Wakita to argue that househeads could and did pursue a line of descent through their daughters' adopted husbands as well as through their biological or adopted sons.²² Such alliances had the benefit of allowing the woman's family some latitude in choosing—and sometimes later rejecting—an heir. Although divorces of adopted sons-in-law were technically initiated and accomplished by male relatives for the good of the patriline (women could not legally initiate divorce), Wakita suggests that the dissolution of son-in-law marriages in actuality took into consideration the needs of the daughter/wife herself.²³ In any case, it is arguable that in the samurai class son-in-law adoption enhanced a woman's decision-making power within her family; at the very least it endowed the woman's family with legal and social authority to initiate and dictate the terms of divorce.²⁴

Ōguchi Yūjirō built on but also took issue with Wakita's study of the Matsudaira, asserting that one must further disaggregate the definition of close kin versus distant kin or nonkin when considering heir adoptions. His research showed that among middle- and upper-ranking Matsudaira lineages in the mid-Tokugawa period, one-third involved adopted heirs. Among the adopted heirs, slightly more than half were from within the kin group and slightly less than half came from outside it. While a modest number of the kin adoptions were of sons-in-law, sons-in-law constituted almost half of nonkin heir adoptions.²⁵

Finally, Tsubouchi Reiko collated and analyzed domainal records of succession in warrior houses in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Whereas the preceding studies focused on relatively small populations drawn solely from middle- to upper-ranking warrior houses, Tsubouchi assesses all recorded cases of succession in warrior houses of all ranks, across time. Similar to the findings of the preceding studies, her data indicate that the number of adopted heirs increased over time in all domains surveyed; the proportion of adopted heirs as a percentage of all succession cases ranged from a low of 12 percent to a high of 30 percent. These percentages are within the same range as those derived from similar studies of succession summarized in table 1. However, the proportion of adopted sons-in-law as a percentage of all adopted heirs in the domains surveyed by Tsubouchi is significantly higher than that found in preceding studies, ranging from a low of 32 percent to a high of 59 percent.²⁶

Tsubouchi also found that as the income of a house went down, its rate of adoption of heirs went up. Son-in-law adoptions showed a similar pattern with regard to income.²⁷ Among families with incomes of between 200 and 1,000 *koku*, regular heir adoptions accounted for 8 percent of all succession cases and son-in-law adoptions for 10 percent of all cases of succession by adoption; among families with incomes of between 100 and 200 *koku* the numbers were 9 percent and 14 percent; among the families of lowest income (less than 100 *koku*), 14 percent and 12 percent.²⁸ Tsubouchi argues that by the mid-Tokugawa period son-in-law adoptions were the “next-best alternative” to the ideal heirship scenario, in which an eldest son succeeded his father as house head. In cases where primogeniture was not possible because of the lack of male heirs (due to absence, death, or incapacity), in many domains son-in-law adoptions were preferred even over succession by younger siblings of the preceding house head, and in most domains adoptions of unrelated sons-in-law took place even when there were other potential adoptees among kinsmen.

In sum, previous studies show that (a) at least 25 percent of house heads in samurai families in the mid-Tokugawa period were likely to have been adopted; (b) approximately 30 percent or more of those adopted heirs, or 7 percent or more of all house heads, were adopted sons-in-law; (c) poorer families were more likely to adopt heirs than wealthy ones; and (d) the frequency with which warrior families adopted heirs increased significantly over time.²⁹ As we shall see below, the prevalence of adoption, especially son-in-law adoption, as a succession

strategy likely influenced family dynamics in significant ways, not least by privileging women by allowing them the dual status of daughter of the house and wife of heir to the house.

Statistics tell us much about the prevalence of adoption, but they cannot tell us much about its nature. First, why did families adopt so often, and why did they so frequently adopt sons-in-law? How were such adoptions arranged? How were potential adoptees identified? If kinship was privileged only in certain cases, what factors weighed most heavily in selecting an adoptee? And how did adoption correlate to gender roles and normative succession practices? Most adoptions, as mentioned earlier, were due to the absence or death of an heir by birth. However, a significant number of heir adoptions occurred in families with biological sons who, rather than inheriting house headship, were adopted out to other houses. This scenario occurred most frequently among the lower-ranking and less wealthy families of the samurai class, who lacked the resources to set up younger sons in branch houses (*bekke*) of their own. Such families welcomed an adopted heir and the funds he inevitably brought with him, much in the way a bride brought a dowry. In some cases, a biological son remained an unmarried dependent of the main family, becoming a so-called *heyazumi*, or housebound son, but this was far from a desirable outcome. According to Yamakawa Kikue's account of the lives of samurai-class women in Mito domain in the nineteenth century, such a son was thought of by his family as a "burden" . . . occupying himself with piecemeal work as he lived out his life in dreary solitude."³⁰ Other cases of sons being passed over for headship in favor of adoptees remain unexplained. Any number of factors might have governed decisions to pass over a biological son in favor of an adopted one, but the age of the offspring in question was often key. An aging or ailing house head whose sons were still in early childhood might prefer to adopt an older male who could immediately assume the responsibilities of headship. The physical health, mental acuity, and general competence of sons also affected decisions about inheritance. However, the number of children in the family and their gender balance also mattered, for keeping a competent or especially beloved older daughter at home by adopting her husband as heir might better serve a family's needs than marrying her out to another house and having a brother inherit. It seems, then, that despite the patriarchal and patrilineal nature of the early modern Japanese family system, the needs of the family as a whole—not just its senior males—bore heavily on a family's decision about heirship and succession.

THE ECONOMICS OF ADOPTION

There were many factors that influenced the decision to adopt an heir. But by the mid-Tokugawa period, for many warrior families, financial concerns played a major role in determining whether and whom to adopt in or out. While families of modest means turned to adoption to gain an adoptee's dowry funds, wealthier and more powerful warrior families also foregrounded economic concerns when it came to adoption for succession. Once again, we can turn to the example of the Sakakibara of Takada domain in Echigo Province. As we saw in chapter 3, even for this illustrious and wealthy *fudai* house of 150,000 *koku* financial matters weighed heavily in marriage decisions, with the issue of dowry funds brought by brides becoming a significant factor, especially in times of financial hardship. The same was true of adoptions into and out of the Sakakibara house, but in the case of adoption securing a competent and viable heir was of equal importance in the decision-making process. It is notable that five of the fourteen Sakakibara daimyo, dating from the founder, Yasumasa, to the fourteenth-generation daimyo, Masataka (1843–1927), were adopted heirs, mostly from within the kin group.³¹ Equally significant from a financial standpoint, however, were the adoptions out of the family. In the early Tokugawa period, the Sakakibara were financially able to establish younger sons in branch houses, and there are no recorded adoptions of males out of the family until the late eighteenth century. But from the 1770s on, as domain finances deteriorated, nearly all noninheriting sons were adopted out to other houses: the ninth-generation heir, Masanaga (1735–1808), adopted out six of his sons, and the trend continued with his heir, Masaatsu (1755–1819), who adopted out two sons. The eleventh-generation heir, Masanori (1776–1861), a reformer credited with reviving the domain finances, nonetheless adopted out four of his sons. Most of these adoptions followed the general pattern in which the adopting family was of lower status than the sending family, so the majority of Sakakibara sons went to lower-ranking daimyo or *hatamoto* families. As a result, the Sakakibara paid out less in dowry than they would have had their sons gone to families of higher rank than themselves.³²

In the case of adopting heirs into a family, in most cases the cash and goods furnished by a sending family to a receiving family were a decisive factor in choosing both prospective spouses and adopted heirs. As we have seen, one-third of warrior families who adopted an heir chose

a daughter's husband. While adopting in a son-in-law could be efficacious for many reasons, it also made the already complex processes of adoption and succession even more complicated. The intricacies of son-in-law adoption can be seen in a succession case within the Date and Aoki houses in the mid-eighteenth century. Aoki Kazuyoshi (1728–81), daimyo of Azada in Settsu Province whose assessed wealth was a very modest 10,000 *koku*, had five biological sons, but none survived to adulthood. Aging and in poor health, Kazuyoshi decided to adopt a husband for his five-year-old daughter, the only remaining child with his principal wife. The Aoki preferred an adoptee around the age of eleven or twelve, who was not a close kin relation. As a solution to their domain's financial problems, the Aoki also wanted the adoptee to bring with him a dowry of at least 3,500 *ryō*. They attempted to negotiate with families with suitable sons, but they found no one who met their criteria. The Aoki then were presented with the possibility of adopting Date Iori (1734–86), one of six sons of the daimyo of Uwajima, who would bring a dowry of 3,000 *ryō*. Even though the Date were a historically powerful house with holdings of 100,000 *koku*—ten times that of the Aoki—they were hard-pressed to support so many male dependents and their families, and they were amenable to an adoption proposal. However, Iori was thirty-seven, far too old to be betrothed to a five-year-old girl, so the Date proposed that he be made a direct adoptee (*jun yōshi*) instead of an adopted son-in-law, on the condition that he later adopt—instead of marry—the Aoki's young daughter. In this manner, the Date argued, the Aoki bloodline could be preserved through Kazuyoshi's daughter as originally intended. But this was a tenuous arrangement at best, and the Aoki turned down the Date's offer. The Date, undeterred, then proposed a new possibility, one involving an eighteen-year-old biological daughter that Aoki Kazuyoshi had fathered much earlier in life and who had been adopted by another branch of the Aoki family. The Date cleverly proposed a union between this older daughter and Date Iori, sweetening the pot by offering a dowry of 5,000 *ryō*. This proposal appealed to the Aoki, who countered with a request for a yearly living stipend (*daidokoro kin*) of 400 *ryō* in addition to the *jisankin*, on the grounds that the adult couple would need to establish and maintain a separate residence. The Date did not hide their displeasure at this demand, but eventually the adoption documents were written up and submitted and finally approved by the shogunate in 1770. Date Iori assumed the name Aoki Kazutsura, and within six months of the formalization of his adoption, his adoptive father retired and he

assumed house headship. Kazuyoshi's failing health had made it imperative for the Aoki to find an heir to succeed Kazuyoshi sooner rather than later. But the Date, too, seem to have had a strong desire to secure an adoptive family for Iori, in order that he avoid the fate of being a middle-aged bachelor with few prospects. Their sense of urgency is evidenced by their willingness to pay a higher dowry, as well as a yearly "maintenance fee" (*daidokoro kin*).

In this case we can see two principal and interrelated factors influencing decision making on both sides of the adoption process: kinship and cash. In the first instance, blood ties mattered, but they were not necessarily the determining factor. In considering the various scenarios put before them, the Aoki had to balance the attractiveness of a high *jisankin* with their concerns for maintaining some kind of kin relationship with their heirs. Finding a suitable kinsman to adopt was the stated ideal, but by the late Tokugawa period, monetary gain mattered as much or more than kinship for many daimyo, hence the Aoki's decision to adopt a nonkin husband as spouse for a previously neglected but nonetheless blood-related daughter.

The increase in adoption for heirship had significant effects on the family system. In the first instance, it created a situation, seen in many of the case studies I examine below, in which descent was continued through the offspring of daughters and their adopted husbands rather than through sons. This in turn increased families' preference for adopted heirs who were *not* blood kin. On the other hand, for families with "surplus" sons, adoption became an attractive alternative to establishing a branch family or having the unmarried sons remain in the natal household. As costly as providing *jisankin* might be, it was a fraction of what it would take to set up a branch house, or to support a dependent son in the long term. This plight affected younger sons of warrior houses disproportionately, for samurai were not allowed to seek a living in any way other than receiving a stipend for their service. Adoption was thus one of the few "career moves" a noninheriting younger son could make. The role of adoptee was therefore coveted by and for younger sons, as reflected in the saying, "An only daughter can choose among eight potential husbands."³³ Because of this perceived power imbalance between daughters/wives and adopted sons/husbands, the conventional view of in-marrying husbands to this day characterizes them as weak or at least significantly disadvantaged within their wives' families. In the same way that a new wife is obliged to unconditionally

obey her husband's parents, siblings, and relatives, an adopted son-in-law was subject not only to the authority of his in-laws but also to the wishes of his wife, into whose home he had come as an outsider with little natural authority. However, evidence of discrimination against adopted sons-in-law in the Tokugawa period is scarce, and it is not clear if the majority of in-marrying husbands were in fact treated poorly. Yamakawa Kikue proposed the following scenario when describing marriage and divorce in Mito Domain: "Unlike the case of brides, vulnerable to replacement because of the imbalance in the numbers of marriageable men and women, the existence of a large pool of candidates for adoption did not lead to frequent divorce of adopted sons. Since only a man could serve as head of the house, were dissatisfaction with an adopted son to lead to his divorce, both sides would lose. The man would no longer have a stipend, and, without an heir, the family's position in the domain would also be jeopardized."³⁴ While Yamakawa takes the perspective of the adopting house, from the adopted son's point of view, once married and free of the competition from other suitors, the disadvantages of his position would be counterbalanced by the security provided by his wife's family's need for an heir. Still, as we have seen, divorce and remarriage were frequent, so there seem to have been few obstacles—perhaps fewer in samurai families than in commoner ones—to prevent a woman from remarrying after the death of her spouse or the dissolution of her marriage, even to an in-marrying husband and heir.³⁵ Even in the best cases, the situation of an adopted son-in-law must have been quite similar to that of the typical bride marrying into her husband's house, with all the expectations, demands, and anxieties that came with that often unenviable role.

Considering the paradoxical plight of the in-marrying son-in-law compels us to investigate the experience of living in families with adopted offspring. Such families were obliged to assimilate numerous members, many of whom were unrelated by blood. Who within the family organized and directed adoptions and marriages? Male house heads certainly had the ultimate authority, but did wives and daughters also have a say in the process? Recalling Sanda Yoshikatsu's emphasis on close parent-child relations, what can we discern about the affective ties that bound adoptees and their adoptive families? Given the frequency of adoption, was being adopted at all exceptional, or was it simply a fact of life in most families? To consider these questions, we must turn to a more personal form of history.

ADOPTION, MARRIAGE, AND LINEAGE IN
WOMEN'S WRITINGS AND WOMEN'S LIVES IN
THE MID- TO LATE TOKUGAWA PERIOD

The lives of women writers, especially those of the samurai class, tend to be better preserved in the documentary record than are those of their less literate commoner counterparts. Standard published lineages of warrior houses rarely contain any information about wives and daughters beyond their families of origin. The family lives of women writers, however, are more amply documented. Literate women themselves wrote about the details of family life, allowing us some insight into the key roles women played in the succession process as they crafted their own roles as spouses and also as adoptees, arranged their children's marriages and, in some cases, adoptions, and maintained ties with their natal and adoptive families. Looking more closely at individual lives as chronicled in biographies, diaries, and memoirs not only shows how important adoption was to ensure succession, but also how central women were in the process of lineage management.

Inoue Tsūjo

Tsūjo was widely praised as a good wife and a wise, caring, and hard-working mother of five children, whose literary legacy was preserved and promoted by her offspring. Yet she wrote little about her own family affairs. Her extant writings deal only obliquely with her family life, so her attitudes toward succession and lineage must be gleaned from her actions and the words of others rather than from her own accounts. The sources make it clear that whatever Tsūjo herself may have thought about succession, in both her natal and married families adoption was crucial for maintaining the family line.

We know from recorded lineages and extant accounts that in Tsūjo's natal and married families succession was tenuous and lineages fragile. Tsūjo herself had witnessed the extinction of the Inoue family line when her eldest brother died and her younger brother undertook forced seppuku in the wake of a scandalous relationship with an unsuitable woman.³⁶ As we have seen, only two of Tsūjo's five children survived to later adulthood. Tsūjo's second son, Sōen, succeeded to the Sanda family headship on his father Munehisa's death in 1710. Later that same year, Yoshikatsu, author of *Yōshi kun*, was adopted by Munehisa's cousin Sanda Katsutomi.³⁷

The cross-cutting interrelationship of bloodline, formal lineage (or name), and parent-child ties is evident in the extended Inoue, Sanda, and Noma clans. Tsūjo's husband Munehisa inherited family headship from his father, but his two younger brothers were adopted out to other families and two sisters married and left home. It is not clear whether Munehisa's brothers' adoptive families were kin. Two of Tsūjo's grandsons—Sōen's son Masanoshin and Yoshikatsu's son Muneyoshi—seem to have been adopted from the Saitō house, although the purpose of those adoptions is not clear, because both Sōen and Yoshikatsu had biological sons as well.

More important, while Munehisa passed branch headship directly on to his son Sōen, in the previous generation succession in the main branch of the Sanda family would not have been possible without adoption. Munehisa's only paternal uncle and the primary heir, Denzaemon, had an older son, Jirōbei, but the latter appears to have died before succeeding to the family headship. The second son, Denzaemon II, succeeded to the headship but for unknown reasons did not marry, nor did he have children, instead adopting his nephew Noma Katsutomi, son of his sister. Katsutomi only had two daughters and subsequently adopted Sanda Yoshikatsu, whom he later married to his daughter. His other daughter married her first cousin Noma Masanojō, a union that defied what seems to have been a general practice of marrying in distant or nonkin rather than close relations. In this way, the Sanda family preserved patrilineal descent and family name over several generations, but in terms of bloodline their heirs were equally of the Noma family, tracing their descent *not* to the eldest son and heir but to the only daughter of Sanda Kazumasa. In other words, through marriage and adoption, not one but two lineages continued successfully—the public, patrilineal “name” of the Sanda and the private, matrilineal bloodline of the Noma.

While the Noma and Sanda lineages continued, that of the Inoue ended. In all three families, kinship failed in matters of succession, and adoption became not so much a choice but a necessity. Paradoxically, and in spite of its failure as a lineage, it was the Inoue family history that survived best, preserved in the writings and records of their prodigiously talented daughter and mother, Tsūjo. The fate of the Sanda, Noma, and Inoue families underscores just how unpredictable the survival of “name” and reputation could be and how women's actions behind the scenes—so often absent from the historical record—did much to enable a family's survival and success.

Kuroda Tosako

Kuroda Tosako's written accounts, unlike Inoue Tsūjo's, give insight into women's roles in both the adoption and succession processes. Like the Inoue and Sanda families, the Kuroda clan only survived through strategic adoptions and marriages. Naokuni himself was adopted as heir to his maternal Kuroda grandfather, and Tosako was the adopted daughter of Yanagisawa Yoshiyasu and his wife Sadako. Yoshiyasu and Sadako had four other daughters of their own (including Tosako's niece Orii Eiko, whom the Yanagisawa adopted), and two sons, so their reason for adopting Tosako clearly did not have to do with worries over succession. Rather, the Yanagisawa, like many other powerful warrior families—most notably, the shogunal house—adopted a daughter of allies to consolidate political ties.

In Tosako's case it seems most likely that her adoption solidified the relationship between Tokugawa Tsunayoshi and Yanagisawa Yoshiyasu, with the latter accepting the daughter of a loyal retainer of the former as a way of deepening the bonds between the two men and their lineages. The benefits of adoption for Tosako and her family were clear: Tosako could make a much better marriage if she were the adopted daughter of Yanagisawa, one of the most powerful men in the land. For the Yanagisawa, the returns on the adoption investment were less clear-cut, although they could be sure Tosako would marry well, and through her marriage the Yanagisawa could extend their influence via her spouse's family. Indeed, once married, Tosako's connections through her adoptive family aided her husband Naokuni's political career and enhanced his ties to high-ranking officials within the shogunate, but they also tied the Kuroda and their allies more firmly into a web of obligation that radiated out from the Yanagisawa family.

Just as it did for Tosako and Naokuni themselves, adoption—especially of in-marrying sons-in-law—proved crucial for maintaining the integrity and prosperity of the Kuroda family into the next several generations. This was in great part due to the propensity of Kuroda heirs to bear many daughters but few sons. Naokuni and Tosako had three surviving daughters—Toshiko, Michiko, and Toyoko—and no sons, although Naokuni had two daughters and a son, Naoyuki, with a concubine (*sokushitsu*) (see chart 2).³⁸ However, rather than make Naoyuki his heir, Naokuni adopted his nephew, Naomoto, the son of a younger sister, as an in-marrying husband for his daughter Michiko.³⁹ All of Michiko's sisters eventually married well.⁴⁰ But the heir Naomoto and

Michiko had been married five years and had only one daughter, Kayoko, when Naomoto died at the age of twenty-one. Only two scant months after the death of Naomoto, Naokuni adopted another son-in-law and husband for Michiko, this time from outside the kin group. The new son-in-law was from the Honda family, but he took the name Kuroda Naozumi when he was installed as the Kuroda heir. Unfortunately, for the purposes of succession by biological offspring, Naozumi and Michiko continued the family trend, producing five daughters and no sons. In addition to his children with Michiko, Naozumi had two daughters with one concubine and three sons with another.⁴¹ However, when it was time to choose an heir, Naozumi, like his adoptive father, Naokuni, bypassed his eldest son by birth and instead adopted Naokuni's aforementioned son by a concubine, Naoyuki (his wife Michiko's half brother), as his heir. He also adopted Kayoko, Michiko's daughter with the late Naomoto, and Kayoko subsequently married into the Honda family, from whom Naozumi himself had been adopted. All Naozumi's other biological daughters were adopted or married into daimyo houses. Naoyuki, Naozumi's adopted heir, in turn adopted his adoptive father Naozumi's son by a concubine, who took the name Naohiro (to Naoyuki, this was his nephew, his half sister's son) as *his* heir.

The simplicity of the standard genealogical chart is wholly insufficient to reflect the complex interrelations of the Kuroda family lineage in the eighteenth century. Again, we can see that for several generations succession ran not through sons but through descendants of Naokuni's daughter Michiko. However, in the Kuroda's case, the bloodline was as fragmented as succession to the family name and headship. Naokuni adopted two successive sons-in-law as his heirs, one kin and one not, and in subsequent generations adopted sons-in-law adopted their fathers' biological sons by concubines as their heirs, thus preserving the family name and the idea of kinship, although actual blood relations were weak or nonexistent. In fact, in eleven generations of Kuroda househeads over more than one hundred years, only once did heirship pass directly from father to biological son. Because of the frequent intercession of nonkin adopted sons-in-law, by the end of the eighteenth century the successive Kuroda male heirs were bound less by bloodline than by carefully constructed affiliations that were equal parts adoption and marriage.⁴²

In spite of, or perhaps because of, the highly constructed nature of kin relations in her marital family, Tosako did not seem to favor biological over adopted offspring or stepchildren in describing her relationships

with her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. After Naokuni's death, which was a severe blow to Tosako's well-being, she explains that thoughts of Kumiko, Naoyuki's daughter with a concubine, who was then a young child, helped ease the sadness she felt after the loss of her husband: "She stood behind me. . . . I had only to think of her and I was able to keep on living day to day."⁴³ Far from being a reminder of her husband's "other" family, Kumiko was for Tosako a treasured connection to Naokuni's memory. And when Kumiko fell ill in 1742, Tosako went to nurse her, praying fervently "to the Buddhas and the gods (*kami*)," but to no avail. When Kumiko died, Tosako wrote, "My heart goes dark." She memorialized Kumiko in the same way she did her biological daughter Toshiko, even having the same section from the Lotus Sutra copied in Kumiko's honor.

Just as a good wife was expected not only to tolerate, but to welcome her husband's mistresses and their children, a good mother was not to discriminate against adopted children. In this respect Tosako adhered to the teachings of the day. She seemed to accept without question the authority of her adopted son Naozumi once he assumed the family headship. She went to his residence to see him off when he departed for his domain or on official duty and welcomed him back upon his return to the capital, and she consulted with him about important family matters. Naozumi, in turn, was a capable family head, who by the end of *Koto no hagusa* had attained the position of Osaka *kabanyaku*, which placed him in charge of the defense of Osaka Castle.⁴⁴ If Tosako had a preference for Naokuni's biological son Naoyuki as heir, or if she regarded Naozumi as a "caretaker" heir only until Naoyuki came of age, she did not reveal it in writing. Neither of these cases seems likely, however, for at the time of Tosako's death Naoyuki was nearly thirty years old and Naozumi had not yet passed on the house headship to him.

At the same time that she focused on succession within the Kuroda house, however, Tosako maintained ties to her adoptive and natal families. Throughout her life she attended memorial services for Yanagisawa Yoshiyasu and his wife Sadako, and she maintained close contact with her adoptive brother, the Yanagisawa heir Yoshisato. She also took her family members on visits to the various Yanagisawa residences, especially their lower residence (*shimo yashiki*), with its elaborate gardens, full of fireflies in summer and perfect for viewing the changing leaves in autumn.⁴⁵ Her ties to her natal family, the Orii, were somewhat more distant, but given that Tosako was adopted as a child, it is significant that she maintained them and made note of them in her diaries. There

are three occasions on which Tosako mentions her Oriti relatives in *Koto no hagusa*. On one of these occasions her nephew, to whom she refers rather vaguely as “Oriti something-or-other,” sent plum flowers from his own garden and she wrote a poem in response.⁴⁶ On another occasion she exchanged poems with the wife of a different nephew, this one the son of her biological older brother, who was adopted into the Tsuda house.⁴⁷ The poem exchange was accompanied by a gift of flowers from the nephew. Finally, she notes that “Mitsuko in Tsukiji,” the granddaughter of her older Oriti brother, sent her flowers from her garden every month.⁴⁸ These relatives, while not nearly as close as the Kuroda, seem to represent touchstones of sorts to her natal family, and her poems in response to their gifts is indicative of their meaning to her.

Kuroda Tosako’s experiences of adoption and marriage were singular, yet they are indicative of broader trends among daimyo families in the early to mid-eighteenth century. In records of personal visits, ritual observance, gifts, and correspondence, we can see the ties that truly bound the woman known as Kuroda Tosako not only to the Oriti and the Yanagisawa but also to the many families into which her children and grandchildren married and were adopted. Tosako’s writings show how women could and did maintain multiple family ties and identities throughout their lives, ties that transcended name, formal lineage, and bloodline.

Itō Maki

The lives of Inoue Tsūjo and Kuroda Tosako in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century show how families exercised a measured, pragmatic, yet inclusive approach to marriage and adoption in order to ensure succession. But by the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, especially among the lowest ranks of the *bushi* class, many families chose to exploit adoption and marriage as part of a calculated strategy to increase family income and status. Indeed, according to observers of the social and political scene at the time, such as the sharp-tongued early nineteenth-century writer and critic known as Buyō Inshi (dates unknown), adoption, often for nefarious reasons, was increasing at alarming rates. In his *Seiji kenbunroku* (Record of Political Matters Seen and Heard, 1816), Buyō denounced changes in adoption practices in recent decades.

In adoptions these days people put aside issues of good or bad [character of the adoptee], and they don’t care about the reputation of their family either;

all that matters is that the *jisankin* is abundant. . . . Even when there is an appropriate individual [who could be adopted] from within the kin group or from within the social network, there is a tendency for people to ignore this, and adopt someone totally unrelated who is offering *jisankin*. . . . One can see that because [in these cases] parents and children are bound by desire and greed, there is no end of disagreement between them: the parent does not want to hand over the house headship too soon, and the adoptee wants to succeed earlier. Lately such fights have become tiresome, and so from the outset, in exchange for a promise of “immediate succession” (*choku katoku*) [by the adoptee], large sums of money are offered; “retirement money” (*inkyō ryō*) is also offered in this way [to the house head, as incentive to pass on headship].⁴⁹

Buyō noted that this situation gave rise to an environment in which status lines were blurred: “*Hatamoto* succession is turning into a financial transaction. Even lowly functionaries, commoner officials, physicians and the like—‘the children of those whose occupations are not on the samurai side’—are entering into the great families.”⁵⁰ While Buyō’s criticism is particularly caustic, there is no doubt that families forthrightly used adoption as a means of both financial gain and social mobility. This is most apparent in the case of Itō Maki. Maki herself, as we know, was of commoner birth, the daughter of a physician, and therefore just the type of commoner vilified by Buyō Inshi. Still, looking at the fate of Maki, her siblings, and her children, it is clear that adoption was a key not only to the family’s prosperity, but to its very survival. In Maki’s natal family, the Kobayashi, there were four siblings. Maki’s older brother, Tetsuzō, the family’s heir, died at the age of twenty-five, at which point the heirship passed to her younger brother, Kyōzo. Kyōzo, however, fell victim to serious mental illness in his mid-twenties and died in confinement in the family home at age thirty-nine. In the meantime, the family had arranged for succession to pass through Maki’s younger sister O-Noe, whose husband Gunsuke was adopted into his wife’s family and served as acting heir until his and O-Noe’s son Sōsuke came of age and undertook both the heirship and the duties of continuing the family’s medical practice.⁵¹

Maki herself, as we have seen, was adopted twice and married twice: after the death of her first husband, Sugiura Tamesaku, she was briefly adopted for a second time by the Nakamura family in order to raise her status and make possible her remarriage to her second husband, Itō Kaname. Kaname was adopted from the Doi family, who were blood relations of the Itō, and the Itō lineage for the preceding several generations had been sustained largely through adoption. According to the

genealogy *Kansei chōshū shokafu*, the fifth-generation Itō house head, Sukehisa, was adopted from the Furusato family, whose connection to the Itō is not known. The sixth-generation head, Suketaka, was adopted in from maternal relatives, the Mizugami. Suketaka had two sons, but both predeceased him, so the family again resorted to adoption to sustain the house headship. At this point, the records stop; it may be that Kaname was adopted in from the Doi at this point or perhaps later.⁵²

Once Maki married Itō Kaname, her life became somewhat more settled, but even after her marriage Maki's letters to her parents report details of the family's persistent money troubles. For Maki and her husband, adoption addressed these problems, for it provided economic benefits as well as the possibility of status improvement. For example, one of Maki and Kaname's strategies for easing their financial burden was to arrange for the early adoption of a thirteen-year-old boy as husband for their five-year-old daughter, Tama. The adopted son-in-law would bring with him a substantial dowry of 80 *ryō*.⁵³ As reported in a letter by Maki to her parents, the boy, Heikichi, was the fourth son of Kaname's nephew Wakabayashi Ichizaemon (thus a first cousin once removed to his future wife, Tama). As Maki explains, they adopted Heikichi on a temporary basis (*kari yōshi*), for about a year, to see if the situation was workable, and when they saw that it was, the family went through the formal procedures to adopt Heikichi legally so that he could "be called a member of the Itō house."⁵⁴ It was made a condition of Heikichi's adoption that he would inherit the headship of the Itō house as the husband of Tama, superseding the rights of any boy born to Maki and Kaname subsequently (and making the adoption a more favorable option for Heikichi's biological parents). In fact, Maki was pregnant at the time and later gave birth to a boy, Kinnojō. The circumstances suggest that Heikichi's adoption was only in part due to worry about having a male heir, for Kaname and Maki could have waited until after Maki gave birth to determine whether adoption of an heir was really necessary. However, as is evident in Maki's letters, they pursued Heikichi's adoption aggressively because of an immediate and pressing need for Heikichi's dowry funds.⁵⁵ In the end, Tama's marriage plans turned out well for the Itō, if not for the hapless Heikichi, who disappeared from family records after several years and is assumed to have died sometime after the marriage but before reaching adulthood. This left Kaname and Maki's son Kinnojō free to inherit the house headship, which he later did.

As for Maki's other children, as discussed in the preceding chapter, Itō Kaname adopted her elder daughter, Nao, who then married a *hatamoto*

of slightly higher income than Kaname himself. Kaname did not, however, adopt Maki's son Seigorō, her eldest child. Instead, Maki's uncle/adopted father, Kōzaemon, after the death of Maki's first husband, secured Seigorō's future by arranging for a different form of adoption for him. Through Kōzaemon's connections Seigorō became the putative birth son (*ireko*) of Watanabe Gentayū, a retainer to the local magistrate (*daikan*). Becoming an *ireko* differed from regular adoption in that it consisted simply of assuming another family's deceased offspring's identity. Unlike a regular adoption among samurai, which required formal procedures and notation in the *koseki* of both the sending and receiving families, *ireko* were not formally recorded in the family registers or temple registers. In an era in which infant mortality was high, rather than submit a birth notice and then immediately a death notice, another child would "enter" the family in place of the deceased, and no death notice would be issued.⁵⁶ Thus the only account of Seigorō's entering the Watanabe house is in the records of his birth father's family, the Sugiura. Kōzaemon appears to have orchestrated Seigorō's *ireko* adoption in the hope that he could later be adopted by *another* shogunate retainer house, preferably as an heir. In other words, much like Kaname's adoption of Nao served as a springboard to her marriage to a man of higher status and income than himself, Seigorō's adoption was intended to lead to a subsequent and more beneficial alliance with yet another family.

Seigorō's relationship with the Watanabe, whose family he had surreptitiously entered, was ambiguous. Even after being adopted, he continued to live primarily with Maki and Kaname. Much like Inoue Tsūjo and Sanda Yoshikatsu, who maintained a mother-son relationship even after Yoshikatsu was adopted, throughout his childhood and into his early teens Seigorō remained close to Maki. It was she, not his adoptive family, who oversaw his education, and she remained his mother for all intents and purposes. In a letter written to her parents in 1832, when Seigorō was thirteen years old, Maki reported that he was engaged in practicing reading and writing intensively and progressing well, although she lamented that, perhaps because of her husband's absences, she alone was in charge of the boy's education and feared that because she was an "insufficient woman" her efforts would not suffice. For a short time after becoming an *ireko*, Seigorō lived with Watanabe Gentayu and then with Gentayu's son Shionotani Zenji when the latter was stationed on official business in Edo. But just as his uncle Kōzaemon had planned, Seigorō's status as an adopted son of the Watanabe was short-lived and utilitarian, for at age fifteen he was formally adopted

into the Yamamuro house as their heir. The Yamamuro were *batamoto* with a modest 100 *hyō* income, but they had relatively high prestige within their class.⁵⁷ In fact, it is likely that Seigorō's houseman (*gokenin*) status had to be purchased as part of his adoption by the Yamamuro in order for him to become heir. Maki worried about Seigorō's fate right up until his adoption by the Yamamuro was formalized, and she wrote to her parents in detail about the situation, remarking that Kōzaemon's money did not cover all the costs of the adoption, which probably amounted to a substantial sum.⁵⁸

Why did Kōzaemon arrange for an intermediary *ireko* adoption to the Watanabe? In part, it was a matter of expediency. In a regular adoption among families of this rank, the parties involved would have been bound by regulations regarding status and bloodline, and in the case of very distantly related families, special permits or applications were required. Also, the adoptee was obliged to pay appreciation funds (*reikin*) and dowry funds to the adopter. By contrast, becoming an *ireko* was informal, requiring no paperwork or payment, and there was no requirement of blood relation or commensurable status. It was also technically illegal: those involved could be punished if they were found out, although this rarely happened.⁵⁹ And of course, because Seigorō was moving up in status between his birth family, the Sugiura, and his formal adoptive family, the Yamamuro, it was more efficient to have him go first as an *ireko* to the Watanabe, who were of more comparable status to the Yamamuro. All of this Kōzaemon apparently anticipated and orchestrated for Seigorō before his death. Once Seigorō was formally adopted by the Yamamuro family in 1834, he finally left Maki and Kaname for good, returning home to visit about once a month.⁶⁰ Maki wrote to her parents that she prayed only that he would grow into a "person of quality (*yoki hito*)—that is all I wish."⁶¹

The way in which Maki records the personal as well as financial details of her daily life in letters to her natal parents tells us much about women's roles in the adoption and succession processes. For instance, it seems to be Maki herself who is the driving force behind her children's marriage and adoption alliances. With Kaname absent on official duty much of the time, Maki was in charge of most household matters. Her knowledge of the procedures, costs, and benefits of her children's alliances seems far deeper than that of a passive observer. Second, like the negotiations among higher-ranking daimyo houses outlined earlier in this chapter, for chronically cash-strapped *batamoto* like the Itō, pragmatic and financial concerns played a major role in choosing spouses or

adoptees, to the degree that succession by the eldest son or by a younger birth son might be disregarded if more financial gain could be had by adopting a daughter's husband. Third, profit notwithstanding, Maki, as chief orchestrator of succession, took into consideration her children's needs, emotional and otherwise, in arranging adoptions and marriages and, in the case of her daughters, adopted sons-in-law. Finally, it is remarkable how women and men, especially in Itō Maki's families but also among the daimyo families discussed earlier, seemed to marry and remarry, to be adopted and readopted as necessary, yet also maintain important ties to their natal families. Maki's life is a case in point, as is that of her children Nao and Seigorō.⁶²

Multiple adoptions and marriages seem to have conferred distinct advantages on women and their families, because women (to a greater extent than men, it seems, judging from Moore's research) could rise in status, sometimes substantially. We cannot know precisely how many women achieved social status gains of the sort that Maki and her children did. Genealogical records only occasionally provide information about women's or wives' families, and these records elide cases of adoption. But anecdotal evidence suggests that cases of commoner women like Maki rising to samurai status by means of adoption and marriage were not rare and can be found throughout the Tokugawa period. This suggests that the family system was remarkably pliant, and opportunities for women to act to improve their own and their families' status were more plentiful than is often acknowledged.

CONCLUSION

Domicide, or the killing of a lineage[,] . . . is not suicide, it is homicide.

—Yanagita Kunio, *Yanagita Kunio zenshū*

The fear of lineage extinction resonated well into the twentieth century, and it is forcefully encapsulated in the words, quoted above, of the prominent anthropologist Yanagita Kunio.⁶³ Yanagita argued that if a person allowed his lineage to die out, he was not only extinguishing a part of himself, he was in effect taking the life of his descendants. Because of this, no effort should be spared in protecting and preserving the integrity of the family line. There is no doubt that Yanagita had many reasons for making this argument that were based in his extensive fieldwork and other academic research; he wrote extensively on the Japanese marriage and family systems. But he also had a personal

investment in the subject of family continuity, for he himself was an adopted son-in-law. Born in 1875 in Tsujikawa, Hyogo Prefecture, as Matsuoka Kunio, he was adopted at the age of twenty-six by the Yanagita family and, as planned beforehand, was married three years later to one of their daughters.

Matsuoka Kunio was the fifth of eight children of a local physician and the third of four surviving brothers. Like so many younger sons before him, Kunio's prospects of inheritance were dim, so adoption as heir to another family was an attractive possibility. The Yanagita family, for their part, saw in the young Kunio—a recent graduate of Tokyo Imperial University and an aspirant to a coveted civil service position—a very promising prospective family head. In 1901 the Yanagita officially adopted Kunio, and in 1904, as planned, he married Ko, the fourth Yanagita daughter. The Yanagita family was well known in Meiji political circles, and Ko's father, Yanagita Naohei, was a high court justice with many connections throughout the higher levels of the bureaucracy. The adoption was thus mutually beneficial. The former Matsuoka Kunio gained in family status and political clout, while the Yanagita acquired an ambitious young heir with a proven record of high achievement.

At this point in the story, it would seem that Yanagita Kunio's statement about the importance of continuing the family line refers to his stepping in as an adopted heir to reinvigorate the fortunes of the Yanagita family. However, it is equally as likely that Yanagita was thinking of the sadder fate of his natal family. The Matsuoka had been riven by dissent after the disintegration of the first marriage of his eldest brother, the family heir, who subsequently moved to the northeast to start a new life far from his hometown. Yanagita's second-oldest brother, like Yanagita Kunio himself, went to another family as an adopted son and heir. None of the sons continued the medical practice in Hyogo that had been established and passed down in the Matsuoka line. The apparent success of Kunio's and his brother's adoptions thus had a negative impact on their own kin. And although adoption seemed on the surface to work out well for Yanagita Kunio, according to his own writings and the recollections of those who knew him, Yanagita was deeply shamed by his status as an adopted heir. He felt he had abandoned his natal family and—in line with the stereotypical view of adopted sons-in-law—he was consistently treated as an outsider and an inferior by the Yanagita elders, right down to the small, cramped space he was allotted for his study in the Yanagita residence, a house that was ostensibly his by inheritance.

While the majority of this chapter has focused on the role of women in adoption and marriage for lineage maintenance, it has not engaged the effects the system had on adopted men, and in this respect Yanagita's story is a useful one. We might imagine that many adopted sons-in-law in the early modern period experienced adoption as Yanagita did. The demands placed on adopted sons-in-law were pressing, and their responsibilities were many, for the fate of the family and the lineage depended on their fulfilling the role for which they were brought into the family. In short, cut off from their natal families and marooned in the often-hostile territory of their spouses' families, adopted sons-in-law were given the unenviable treatment accorded most wives and daughters-in-law in the Japanese family system.⁶⁴ This trend reached far beyond the Tokugawa period, for just as the challenges facing married-in daughters-in-law remain considerable today, one imagines that adopted sons-in-law, who at present make up the majority of adult adoptions in Japan, continue to struggle within their adoptive families in the way Yanagita Kunio did. It is no surprise that writers of instructional manuals like Sanda Yoshikatsu warned against the problems inherent in the adoptions he witnessed in the eighteenth century, for however common adoption was, it was never carefree.

54. *Ibid.*, 215–16. For an edited version of “Oguri,” see Shinoda Jun’ichi and Sakaguchi Hiroyuki, eds., *Kojōruri sekkyō shū*. An English translation of *Oguri* can be found in R. Keller Kimbrough, ed. and trans., *Wondrous Brutal Fictions*, 123–60.

55. *Osaka monogatari*, in Watanabe Morikuni and Watanabe Kenji, eds., *Kanazōshi shū*.

56. Sakurai, in “Haha to ko no monogatari,” sees this as a uniquely “early modern” perspective.

57. Sakurai, “Haha to ko no monogatari,” 222.

58. Both plays can be found in Yūda Yoshio, ed., *Bunraku jōrurishū*; both also have been translated into English by Stanleigh H. Jones Jr. as *Sugawara and the Secrets of Calligraphy* and *Yoshitsune and the Thousand Cherry Trees*.

59. Jones, ed. and trans., *Yoshitsune and the Thousand Cherry Trees*, 185.

60. Another example of a mother forced to witness the sacrifice of her son is the 1777 kabuki play by Nagawa Kamesuke et al., *Meiboku Sendai hagi* (The Precious Incense and Autumn Flowers of Sendai); for an English translation, see Brandon and Leiter, *Kabuki Plays On-Stage*, 2:50–71.

61. Sakurai, “Haha to ko no monogatari,” 222.

62. The details of this adoption are discussed in chapter 5.

63. Okada Tatsujirō and Nagai Torao, *Masumi no kagami Inoue Tsūjo*, 194.

64. Chikaishi Yasuaki, “Inoue Tsūjo shōden narabi ni nenpyō,” in *Inoue Tsūjo zenshū*, 374.

65. *Ibid.*, 375.

66. *Ibid.*, 378–79.

67. *Ibid.*, 377.

68. *Ibid.*, 376.

69. Kuroda, *Koto no hagusa*, 113.

70. *Ibid.*, 289.

71. *Ibid.*, 80.

72. *Ibid.*, 81.

73. On Chie’s marriage and the birth of her son, see Ōguchi Yūjirō, “Nōson jōsei no Edo-jō ō-oku hōkō,” 162–65; Ōguchi, “Kinkō nōson to Edo.”

74. On Sekiguchi Junji’s marriages, see Nagashima Junko, “Bakumatsu nōson jōsei no kōdō no jiyū to kaji rōdō,” 155; see also Ōguchi Yūjirō, “‘Goten oba’: Sekiguchi Chie no sei to shi.”

75. Nagashima Junko, “Bakumatsu nōson jōsei no kōdō no jiyū to kaji rōdō,” 155.

76. *Ibid.*

77. *Ibid.*, 146–55.

CHAPTER 5

1. There are examples of inheritance of house headship by women in the early modern period, but the cases are overwhelmingly those in which the husband or father died and house headship was passed onto a wife or daughter, but only temporarily, until a suitable male came of age or could be adopted or married into the family to serve as heir. See Yanagiya Keiko’s analysis of cases of

female house headship and inheritance in northeastern Honshu in *Kinsei no josei sōzoku to kaigo*. Inheritance and family headship by women was common in the medieval period, but under warrior dominance the practice ceased by the fourteenth century; see Hitomi Tonomura, “Women and Inheritance in Japan’s Early Warrior Society.” On the politics of “name” and the fragility of lineage and family in the medieval era, see David Spafford, “What’s in a Name?”

2. Son-in-law adoption to continue a lineage remains the most common form of adoption in Japan today.

3. For a comparative study of kinship and succession in early modern China, Japan, and Korea, see Evelyn S. Rawski, *Early Modern China and Northeast Asia*, 144–87.

4. The history of adoption in Japan from 1600 to the present—focusing on the dramatic transformation in adoption practices in the twentieth century—is the subject of my next book.

5. On debates over nonagnatic (not related through male kin) adoption, see I. J. McMullen, “Non-Agnatic Adoption.” The Tokugawa shogunate issued more than two dozen addenda to the “Laws for the Military Houses” (*Buke shohatto*, originally issued in 1615) concerning adoption within the samurai class. All are recorded in Takayanagi Shinzō and Ishii Ryōsuke, eds., *Ofuregaki Kanpō shūsei* (Collection of Edicts from the Kanpō Era [1741–44]).

6. Fifth shogun Tsunayoshi adopted three daughters, eighth shogun Yoshimune one, tenth shogun Ieharu one, and twelfth shogun Ieyoshi two. Although he adopted no daughters, the eleventh shogun, Ienari, managed to have twelve biological daughters by eleven different consorts, and the fifteenth and last shogun, Yoshinobu, adopted none but had eight biological daughters by two consorts. For a complete list of all the Tokugawa shoguns’ biological and adopted daughters, see Shiba Keiko, “Tokugawa shogun-ke no himetachi,” 217–21. On marriages of adopted daughters of the Tokugawa, see Cecilia Segawa Seigle, “Some Observations on the Weddings of Tokugawa Shogun’s Daughters, Part I and Part II.”

7. The decrease in the number of adoptions as Tokugawa rule strengthens indicates that such politically motivated exchanges of daughters (and wives as well) were perhaps a variation on hostage-taking and gift-giving, both processes that emerged from the tenuous nature of late medieval/Warring States politics. On this subject, see Mary Elizabeth Berry, “Public Peace and Private Attachment.”

8. On female infanticide in China, see D. E. Mungello, *Drowning Girls in China*.

9. In-marrying husbands were much less common in late imperial China, although certain regions and classes, such as literati families in parts of the Jiangnan region of southwestern China, were known to marry uxoriously; however, they rarely adopted the son-in-law as heir. On uxorial marriage among Jiangnan elites, see Susan Mann, *The Talented Women of the Zhang Family*. Korean families did not practice son-in-law adoption until it was forced on them under Japanese colonial rule in the 1930s; see Sungyun Lim, “Enemies of the Lineage.”

10. Possible explanations for the dearth of writings on adoption are that it was so common as to be unremarkable; that debates over the importance of

adopting from within the kin group inhibited authors from taking a stand on the issue; that adoption followed established rules and principles but tended also to be case-specific and therefore resistant to generalization.

11. Sanda Yoshikatsu, *Yōshi kun*.

12. An adoptive son in late imperial China was caught between his obligation to offer full mourning rites (and thus ritual filial devotion) to his adoptive parents and maintaining putatively organic emotional ties to his natal parents. On Chinese views of adopted child-parent relations, see Ann Waltner, “The Loyalty of Adopted Sons in Ming and Early Qing China.”

13. Waltner, “The Loyalty of Adopted Sons,” 441.

14. In preserving his mother’s literary legacy, Sanda Yoshikatsu acted much as did men in late imperial Chinese literati families whose members included talented women (*guixiu*). The relatives of *guixiu* often collected and circulated the writings, poetry, calligraphy, or artworks of their female kin. For a key example of this, see Susan Mann, *The Talented Women of the Zhang Family*.

15. Hayami, “The Myth of Primogeniture and Impartible Inheritance in Tokugawa Japan.”

16. For example, some merchant house codes state explicitly that the house head had the authority to order that any family member, male or female, who was guilty of “misconduct” (*kokoroe chigai*) be punished by “forced retirement” (*oshikomi inkyō*), thus forfeiting any position of power she or he might hold within the family. Other merchant family heads stated unambiguously that anyone aspiring to inherit house headship must be a “person of talent,” specifically, one who had been sent out at a young age to serve or apprentice in another household in order to learn necessary skills. As one house head put it, “Those who have not gone into service are useless as successors.” Cited in Yonemura Chiyo, “*Ie no sonzoku senryaku*,” 102.

17. In merchant houses in particular, capable employees were often given considerable power in the family business, and in wealthy families these employees could be set up as heads of separate houses (*bekke*), subordinate but tightly related to the main family. In the eighteenth century, the Shimomura family, founders of what became the Daimaru conglomerate, made a practice of marrying their daughters into their most successful *bekke* houses, thus formalizing an economic relationship through marriage and shared bloodline. The Itō family, whose enterprises were the antecedents of the Matsuzakaya department store chain, made a practice of adopting their most talented employees and then later establishing them as heads of their own separate houses, which were of course bound by adoptive family ties to the main house. There were often restrictions on *bekke*, including prohibiting them from going into the same business as the main family (*honke*). Families were limited in the number of separate houses they could establish, both financially and by the restrictions of larger governing entities of which they were a part, such as guilds (in the case of merchants’ houses) or villages (in the case of farming families). The internal succession process of an individual house was thus shaped by that house’s place within the larger community of which it was a part. See Yonemura, “*Ie no sonzoku senryaku*,” 110.

18. Adoption was frequent among commoners as well. On the extreme end are the four villages studied by Susan Hanley and Kozo Yamamura where over

half (53 percent) of families adopted children. In the village of Numa between 1860 and 1871, there were more recorded adoptions than marriages. See Hanley and Yamamura, *Economic and Demographic Change*, 229-30.

19. Ray A. Moore, "Adoption and Samurai Mobility in Tokugawa Japan," 618.

20. *Ibid.*, 618-19.

21. Records also show cases in which even childless non-Matsudaira widows, who ordinarily would have been "returned" to their natal families after the deaths of their husbands, were kept in the Matsudaira family via adoption by their late husbands' parents. See Wakita Osamu, "Bakuhan taisei to josei," 27, 29.

22. Wakita, "Bakuhan taisei to josei," 28.

23. *Ibid.*, 27.

24. Ōto Osamu shows that among rural commoners, divorcing a *muko yōshi* could be more difficult than cases of ordinary divorce because the adopted son-in-law was the intended heir. Such cases thus had to be presented to village councils, which had the authority to order the couple to remain married in the interests of preserving the integrity of household and succession. See Ōto, "Fūfu kenka, rikon to sonraku shakai," 198-200.

25. Among large *tozama* daimyo houses in the same period, approximately three-fourths of adopted heirs were from within the kin group and approximately one-fourth were from outside it. In both the Matsudaira and the *tozama* daimyo cases, it seems clear that when adopting a male heir, families preferred a blood relative, but when adopting a son-in-law, they tended to choose individuals who were not kin. See Ōguchi Yūjirō, "Kinsei buke sozoku ni okeru isei yōshi."

26. Tsubouchi, *Danshō no jinkō shakaigaku*, 101-3.

27. *Ibid.*, 101.

28. *Ibid.*, tables 6-7, 6-8(1), 6-8(2), and 6-8(3), 102-3.

29. Tsubouchi's data also yield information relevant to the increase in the overall number of adoptions in the mid- to late Tokugawa period. Tsubouchi collated data on reasons for lineage extinction (*kakei no danzetsu*) that show that in certain domains lack of heirs was not a determining factor in lineage extinction after the seventeenth century; e.g., in Morioka in the seventeenth century there were 80 cases of lineage extinction: the most frequently cited reason for extinction was crime (25 cases), and the close second was lack of heirs (23). But in the eighteenth century, the reasons shifted: out of 338 cases of lineage extinction, absconding by the heir was the most frequent reason (129 cases), crime slipped to second (103), and lack of heirs fell to a distant third place (14). In the nineteenth century, out of 41 cases of extinction, the most frequent reason was absconding (22 cases), second was crime (11), suicide third (1), then "other" (6). In no cases was lack of heirs cited as the reason for extinction. See Tsubouchi, *Danshō no jinkō shakaigaku*, 57-60. So while *bushi* houses were going extinct at a much faster pace in the eighteenth century, the problem was not lack of heirs. The concomitant rise in rates of adoption suggests that adoption solved the problem of heirs if not of lineage extinction itself. In addition to this data, research by Taniguchi Sumio on Okayama domain shows a rate of adoption among all samurai there of about 30 percent; Harafuji Hiroshi's

study of Kanazawa shows rates of adoption among samurai of nearly 50 percent, numbers more comparable to those from domains studied by Tsubouchi. See Taniguchi Sumio, *Okayama hansei-shi no kenkyū*; Harafuji Hiroshi, *Keijihō to minjihō*, vol. 4.

30. Yamakawa, *Women of the Mito Domain*, 102.

31. Of the five adoptions, two were of close kin (sons of branch families and younger brothers) and one was from an unrelated daimyo house (the Ōsuka). The twelfth-generation heir, Masakiyo (1798–1846), had no children and so adopted his own younger brother Masachika (1814–61) as his heir, and Masachika, who had two daughters but no sons, in turn adopted another brother, Masataka (1843–1927) as the fourteenth and final heir. See Matsuo Mieko, “Kinsei buke no kon’in, yōshi to jisankin,” 242–46.

32. The notable exceptions are two sons of the eleventh-generation heir, Masanori (1776–1861), who, perhaps because of the reputation their father had gained as a successful reformer, and also because the revived domain finances allowed for the furnishing of hefty *jisankin*, were adopted by the Hosokawa (Hitachi, 163,000 *koku*) and the Inaba (Tango, 102,000 *koku*). While the family sending the adoptee (in this case the Sakakibara) was obliged to furnish dowry funds to the adopting family, the amount correlated to the receiving family’s status. In cases where the receiving family was of lower status, the dowry funds were less. See Matsuo, “Kinsei buke no kon’in, yōshi to jisankin,” 245–46.

33. Yamakawa, *The Women of Mito Domain*, 103.

34. *Ibid.*

35. As we saw in chapter 3, rural commoner families who adopted a son-in-law as heir and then sought to divorce him from their daughter often were compelled to get formal approval from village councils or five-family groups, on the grounds that they were endangering household and therefore community integrity; see Ōto, “Fūfu kenka, rikon to sonraku shakai.”

36. Both Tsūjo and her younger sister Setsu had married into other houses before the death of their younger brother, so neither of them could provide a *muko yōshi* to continue the family line.

37. Katsutomi was the son of Sanda Munehisa’s sister, who had married into the Noma family, and Katsutomi thus began life as a Noma. However, Katsutomi was adopted by his uncle Sanda Denzaemon, thereby taking the Sanda name and ultimately succeeding to the headship of Denzaemon’s family on the latter’s death, a position that was later passed on to Yoshikatsu.

38. Naokuni and Tosako’s firstborn child, also a daughter, died in infancy.

39. Under shogunal law first-cousin adoptions were allowed, and in fact there were few if any restrictions or taboos pertaining to close kin marriages in Japan in the premodern period. If anything, close kin marriages within the imperial court nobility during the classical period served as a key strategy for families aiming to consolidate and increase their power in a political system that privileged lineage ties over all else. On the Heian marriage system, see William McCullough, “Japanese Marriage Institutions in the Heian Period”; and Peter Nickerson, “The Meaning of Matrilocality.”

40. Toshiko wed Kuki Takanobu (1700–1786), daimyo of Hayashida in Harima (wealth assessed at 10,000 *koku*); Toyoko married Matsudaira

Tadaakira (1691–1712), daimyo of Kōri (20,000 *koku*); and half sister Kumiko married Naitō Masaatsu (1711–41), daimyo of Yunagaya (15,000 *koku*).

41. Naozumi's sons with the concubine were Naohiro, Kamejirō, and Naoyoshi.

42. Contrast the Kuroda tactics of son-in-law adoption with that of the Noma family, cited above, in which close cousin marriage was used to preserve the bloodline of an adopted heir's natal family. Although adopted sons-in-law were sometimes nonkin, both forms of marriage can be considered endogamous. Anthropologists have long observed that in many patrilineal cultures endogamous marriage is a means to keep resources transmitted through women and maternal kin within the patriline; this, too, argues for the importance of women in the early modern Japanese family system. On endogamy and family relations, see Jack Goody, *Production and Reproduction*, 21; on women, inheritance, and family structure, see also Hitomi Tonomura, "Women and Inheritance in Japan's Early Warrior Society."

43. Kuroda, *Koto no hagusa*, 134.

44. There was only one other official at this level, the Sunpu *kabanyaku*, who was in charge of defending Ieyasu's strategically located home territory. Both *kabanyaku* were appointed from among the ranks of daimyo.

45. Now the famous public park Rikugien, in northern Tokyo.

46. Kuroda, *Koto no hagusa*, 152.

47. *Ibid.*, 175.

48. *Ibid.*, 283.

49. Buyō Inshi uses the term *jisankin*, which referred to a woman's dowry and in cases of adoption to the funds paid to the adopting family. It is not clear whether he is referring here only to cases of son-in-law adoption or using the term more broadly to refer to fees that passed between the parties to any adoption. Buyō Inshi, *Seiji kenbunroku*, vol. 1: *Bushi no koto*. Quoted in Matsuo, "Kinsei buke no kon'in, yōshi no jisankin," 236. See also the full-length English translation of *Seiji kenbunroku*, in Buyō Inshi, *Lust, Commerce, and Corruption*.

50. Quoted in Matsuo, "Kinsei buke no kon'in, yōshi no jisankin," 237.

51. Mega, *Buke ni totsuida*, 18–23.

52. In a case of drastic understatement, Mega Atsuko comments that because the Itō had resorted to adoption so many times in the generations leading up to Ito Kaname's headship, "it would not be inappropriate to say that it was a house whose bloodline was in the process of being lost." Mega, *Buke ni totsuida*, 43.

53. The sum pales in comparison to the thousands of *ryō* exchanged as dowry among high-ranking daimyo families like the aforementioned Sakakibara and Nabeshima; it is indicative of the vast differences in wealth and power within the samurai class.

54. On the practice of *kari yōshi* among daimyo houses in the mid-Tokugawa period, see Ōmori Eiko, "Kinsei chūki ni okeru daimyō-ke no kari yōshi," 54–85.

55. In this case the financial survival of the house trumped the biological prerogatives of the patriline; see Mega, *Buke ni totsuida*, 48–51.

56. For details on *ireko*, see Mizutani Mitsuhiro, *Edo no yakunin jijo*—“Yoshino zōshi” *no sekai*.

57. For details on the Yamamuro, see Mega, *Buke ni totsuida*, 84.

58. Mega, *Buke ni totsuida*, 88–89.

59. See Mizutani Mitsuhiro, *Edo no yakunin jijo*.

60. Mega, *Buke ni totsuida*, 92.

61. *Ibid.*, 92.

62. With regard to readoption, Tokugawa law permitted serial adoption for women but not for men. This is to say that women could be adopted by one family and then adopted and/or married out again from the adopting family to another family, without “return” to her natal family, after the death of the husband or the termination of the marriage. See Kamata Hiroshi, “Bushi shakai no yōshi.”

63. Quoted in Iwamoto Yoshiteru, “Ie sonzoku senryaku toshite no yōshi, muko yōshi,” 47.

64. In the Meiji period, one sees new indications of the pressures felt by adopted sons-in-law in the form of newspaper reports of violent crimes perpetrated by such men, usually against their adoptive wives and families. Even a cursory review of one major newspaper during the decade 1875 to 1885 reveals that there were twenty reports of violent acts by adopted sons-in-law published in the *Yomiuri shinbun*. See *Yomiuri shibun*, *Yomidata rekishi* database.

CHAPTER 6

1. On versions of the tale, see Laurel L. Cornell, “The Deaths of Old Women”; “Obasuteyama,” in Mori Rintarō, ed., *Nihon otogi shū*. On negative portrayals and ostracism of the aged, see Susanne Formanek, “Traditional Concepts and Images of Old Age in Japan.” It is worth noting that although in the original tale it is both women and men over the age of sixty who are supposed to be abandoned, over time the legend has come to focus on abandoning old women, and the name of the mountain itself references only “discarded” women.

2. Cornell, “The Deaths of Old Women,” 80–87.

3. On retirement and succession in peasant families, see Laurel L. Cornell, “Retirement, Inheritance, and Intergenerational Conflict in Preindustrial Japan.” There was considerable regional variation in retirement practices among rural families—rates of antemortem retirement were relatively high in the southwest but much lower in the northeast, except in Nihonmatsu. See Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux, “A Comparative Study of Family Transmission Systems in the Central Pyrenees and Northeastern Japan.”

4. In cases where women assumed house headship after the death of their husbands, that authority was often passed on to a new spouse or to a son during the woman’s lifetime, but this act seems not to have been deemed “retirement.” See Fauve-Chamoux, “A Comparative Study of Family Transmission Systems.” The more common form of retirement for women in Tokugawa Japan was informal and conventional.

5. Kagetsudō Keiseki, *Joyō misao bunko*, 4.

6. Anonymous, *Hyakunin issbu*; Anonymous, *Jokyō taizen hime bunko*, both undated, late Edo period.