

Chap. 18 : female labour and technology change
(part ii. case-studies)

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Female Labour and Technology Change

Total Household Labour and the “Wife’s Domain”

Household labour is the main form of labour in societies based on agricultural production, but the household in Japan was not necessarily a unit based on blood ties. Depending on the scale and type of production, outsiders were incorporated into the household to complete a single production unit, and all members, regardless of age or sex, were expected to work together. Thus, even the heaviest labour was performed by both men and women. What sexual divisions there were resulted from the women undertaking tasks that men were unwilling to perform. Female labour was indisputably important, not only in the preparation of meals but in the production, care, and storage of foodstuffs and clothing and in social activities centred on festivals, weddings, funerals, and similar events. Child rearing was not counted as work.

Thus, the situation in the traditional, non-farming Japanese household, in which production and social relations are the male domain and housework and child rearing the female, was not the norm in farm households. Yanagita Kunio (1875–1962), the father of Japanese ethnology, stated that the peasantry had to have more than 100 different skills to be able to provide the variety of high-quality necessities that formed the basis of a self-sufficient life-style. And these skills had to operate within the limits set by nature, beyond any human control. Besides the basic handling of crops, tasks needing to be done included the making of fuel, fertilizer, sacks, and rope; house repairs; and jobs essential to the basic functioning of the community, such as road repairs and maintenance and supervision of temples and shrines. The peasant was thus not only an expert agriculturist, he (or she) was also at times blacksmith, carpenter, stonemason, earth mover, hydraulic engineer, veterinarian, hunter, woodcutter, and weaver. Ideally, the peasant household had at all times someone able to function in one or more of these capacities.

Because the size of the household has shrunk over the past century, one peasant household after another has fallen into ruin, unable to keep enough members to maintain their existence. During the same time, new and smaller households have appeared, family units whose existence has depended on the multiple efforts of the wife.

An increase in the number of family members had been thought desirable in principle to enhance the labour force, but the bitter experience of many families was that too many children were “more a burden for the present than a help for the future.”⁸⁷

A new problem, requiring a new solution and a new setting for its solution, arose as the limits of agricultural production were reached amidst an unhealthy environment of high birth rates and high death rates. The new, smaller families could not hope to find a solution to their predicament either in the village or in agriculture. From the beginning of Meiji, surplus labour left the villages, and the basic production unit—all family members working together—was transplanted to the towns. A large family in the countryside was thought to be proof of surplus wealth, just as a small family meant poverty. In both extremes, all household members had to work extremely hard, and whether families remained in the countryside or not, all were defined by the need for all to work together to keep the household viable. This was the Japanese household when the Japanese economy was beginning to take off.

Yokoyama Gennosuke, author of *Nihon no kasō shakai*, a report on labour conditions at the end of the last century, points out that, in a survey of 1,615 Tokyo establishments employing 50 or more workers, 111,913 were men and 184,839 women (for a total of 296,752).⁸⁸ Even if we take for granted that women workers would outnumber men in such light-industry factories as those producing raw silk, tea, and matches, not to mention the weaving and spinning factories—this was after all an age of light industry—Yokoyama also looked ahead, to an age when “we will have to depend on the machine for production and women will increase in even greater numbers among the work-force.”⁸⁹ He pointed to the decrease in the numbers of male workers in lantern, spinning, and camphor factories.

Further, “even in such industries as mining and iron and steel production, where one would not expect to see women working, one in fact encounters quite a few,” Yokoyama noted, recording that more than 300 females worked daily at the Tokyo Arsenal.⁹⁰ He explained, however, that most of these women were family members of other arsenal workers.

The need to make ends meet compelled entire families into the factories. “In Japan, only glass, shoemaking, and metal-working factories relied on skilled labour”; the day would come when “we rely entirely on machines,” and, consequently, the number of women workers will increase.⁹¹

P. H. Douglas (1902–), using wage data, proved that the size of the household budget determined the amount of outside labour a household would supply. In Japan, Arisawa Hiromi provided a similar analysis.⁹²

According to Douglas and Arisawa: (1) the lower the income of the head of the household, the greater the chance that family members will work out-

side the household; (2) when the income of the head of the household is stable, the chances of other family members working outside increase with better pay; (3) the household head will seek work without regard to the level of wages. This theory, based on the premise of female labour supporting the household income, is persuasive and widely applicable.

If we combine this theory with Yokoyama's observations, we find that the appearance of female and child labour in the market-place was due to changes not only in technology but also in the household economy. Examining Japan's experience, one is better able to understand why European skilled workers made such a negative response to technological change and why labour unions and left-wing political parties opposed the participation of women.⁹³ The response to the crisis of the traditional view of the family and the household economy was negative. In Japan, however, the response to the capitalist transformation of technology was made by entire households based on the co-operative, whole-family labour practice characteristic of the peasant economy, perhaps befitting the nation's status as a late industrializer. And this situation has not changed much today. Of families in the 1980s depending on wage labour for their livelihood, "more than half have both husband and wife working, in one form or another . . . with wives of low-income earners especially liable to be working and contributing a sizable portion of the household income."⁹⁴

Times have changed since Yokoyama made his observations. The standard of living and consumption have risen to an entirely new level, but wages have risen only after prices, often after a great time lag. Following the oil shock of the early 1970s, stagnation has affected real disposable income. This represents a modified application of the second part of the Douglas-Arisawa theory: female labour has increased, principally as part-time labour, which implies an increase in low-paid work.

Whereas before the oil shock renovation in technology brought women into the market-place to fill a labour shortage—and, in the case of married women, to defend their own household budgets against inflation—after the oil shock, companies selected part-time female labour as a cost-saving alternative. This has been made possible by the technological streamlining effected in factories (FA, or factory automation) and in offices (OA, office automation).

To understand the place of female labour in Japanese society, it is necessary to look at the wife's position within the household economy. The male head of the household in Japan does have ultimate responsibility for fiscal management (if there are finances to manage), but, traditionally, and this holds true today, the budget and the actual running of the household are the responsibility of the wife, who receives all monies brought home by her husband. After consultation with his wife, the head of the household receives an allowance from that income. It is rare for the husband to interfere in her management of the family budget, which, incidentally, partly accounts for the fact that the nation's leading economists are ignorant of everyday prices in the market-place.

It is true that a trend among young working couples is for both partners to manage the budget, but these people are still in a distinct minority. The wife's control over the family budget has no relation to the size of the income, but where all must work to maintain the economic viability of the household, her authority increases dramatically. Her responsibilities then expand to include not just all the housework, even though she is no longer a pure housewife, but also to the earning of a portion of the household income through labour in the market-place.

The biggest driving force behind supplementary family income is the cost of housing, especially of home ownership; the "new poverty" exists in housing. Because of the high cost and limited availability of housing in Tokyo, most commuters must spend an average of 90 minutes travelling each way between home and job, and even then they cannot afford a house with a garden.

The next greatest demand on the family budget forcing wives to work is the cost of children's education. Through the past century of political, social, and economic upheavals—continuing in the present drastic technological revolution—what has proved to be of most lasting value is the knowledge, qualifications, and skills acquired through education. Thus there is a high regard and high expectations for education. For the middle class, into which the majority of the Japanese fall, an educated citizenry with income but no wealth, to survive in an urbanized, industrialized, highly technological information society, families can pass on but one thing to their children and grandchildren: education.

Still following the Douglas-Arisawa theory, an increase in the income of the head of the household results in the belated entrance of his children into the labour market, after a period devoted to education. The serious burden the housing problem imposes on the family budget makes it unavoidable that the wife also enters the labour market.

I thus speak of the survival, even the thriving, of the "wife's domain," even though there is no legal basis for this authority. For the Japanese, this acknowledgement of the special role and domain of the wife is an ethic that functions subconsciously within everyday life, a natural part of that life. For this reason, especially in a large household with two or three generations sharing a rural domicile, it is usually thought natural for a bride to spend long periods of unpaid labour learning work and management skills, even under what may seem to be unbearable work conditions, to support the family. In this capacity, the bride is functioning as a candidate to be the mate of the head of the household, her husband's acceptance depending in part on her performance.

Technological Change and Female Labour

Throughout the world, as long as new technologies failed to generate the development of newer technologies or of new branches of industry, the effects were limited to the pre-existing branches of industry and few new jobs

were created. However, the spread of new technologies raised productivity, developed new products, and, by means of lower prices, deepened and broadened the market, so that employment at least was not reduced. In cases where prices were not lowered or the market expanded, however, the spread of new technologies did generate reduced employment.

One characteristic of modern technology is its tendency toward skill saving. But, when an economy is in a stage of development and expansion, technological change does not exclude skilled labour. Instead, the saved skills are spread to new, previously unskilled labour. In general, even if modern technology causes a reduction in the number of skilled workers, specialized, high-level skills are still necessary; indeed, their importance is enhanced. Knowledge gained from experience, based on previously existing high levels of education and knowledge, varied skills, and expert judgement become critical assets. The skill-saving process involves a parallel reduction in time needed to acquire new skills and an increase in less-demanding work. This process coincides with the rise of female labour as a percentage of the total number of workers employed.

A simple way to demonstrate this process is to consider the changes in the proportion of labour employed directly in production with that employed in ancillary fields. In Japan in 1950, the ratio of men employed in the former was 1.26 times what it was in the latter; for women, the ratio was 3.1. Most women were employed in agriculture. By 1970, however, the ratios had changed to 1.53 for men and 1.06 for women; the 1980 figures were 1.15 and 0.61. Total employment for each year was 32,020,000 in 1950 (13,940,000 females), 52,110,000 in 1970 (20,390,000 females), and 55,650,000 in 1980 (21,070,000 females).⁹⁵

The most distinctive change in these figures was the decline of female employment in production and its movement into ancillary fields. Where three women had once been employed in production for every one working elsewhere, by 1980 these three were matched by five in other fields (a ratio of 1 to 1.7).

As a result of technological change during this period, the skill saving of labour and the rise of the service sector in the economy brought on changes in the structure of female employment. Among men, in contrast, although skill-saving and the service sector's rise have affected the production branches of industry, most male workers remain engaged in productive labour. Women have moved from agricultural work to office work and the service sector (represented by an 80 per cent drop in agriculture and an increase of 3.6 times in the clerical and service sectors).

If we look at wage differentials between men and women, female wages amounted to 42.8 per cent of male wages in 1960, 47.8 per cent in 1965, 50.9 per cent in 1970, 55.8 per cent in 1975, and 53.8 per cent in 1980. The shortage of labour in the period of rapid economic growth caused wages to rise, and the continuing presence of females in production work also caused the gap to shrink between their wages and male wages during that period, but after the oil shock of the early 1970s, the economy entered a period of stable growth, and the gap again began to widen, if only slightly.

On this macro-economic scale, distinct differences are evident between male and female wages, but on a micro-economic level, where jobs require special skills, qualifications, length of service and training, the difference disappears. We must therefore look for wage differentials between men and women in non-skilled, non-specialized jobs. Also noteworthy is the phenomenon of frequent changes in place and type of work among women. Female labour is not abundant in the kind of permanent jobs that hold a central place in the labour market. Female labour is fluid and peripheral.

This last point is related to the proportion of women actually employed in the labour market relative to the total population of women at least 15 years old. In 1980, 47.6 per cent of all women were employed. This represented a slight increase over the post-war low, reached in 1975, when only 45.7 per cent were employed. The recession caused by the oil shock brought on a reduction in female employment. The proportion of women engaged in productive employment in 1975 dropped below the proportion of those in ancillary occupations. Also in 1975 the national unemployment figures topped 1 million for the first time in the post-war period, and, of this figure, 340,000 were women, who, with older men, were a buffer against depression.

The highest proportion of employed women is in the 20–24 year-old age group; the lowest is in the 25–35 year-old age group. After age 40, the proportion again rises (55 per cent of urban women in their 40s are employed; 70 per cent of rural women in the same age group). The M curve for Japan is the sharpest among all industrialized nations. It coincides with the withdrawal of female labour from the labour market during the period of early marriage, childbirth, and child rearing. Because the peak of employment is in the 20–24 year-old age group, the proportion of 15–20 year-old women in school is high.

Compared with other industrially advanced countries, Japan's lack of nursery and day-care facilities stands out dramatically (especially the scarcity of centres able to care for children the entire time parents are commuting to good-paying, full-time jobs). On the other hand, relative to the underdeveloped countries, the burden of housework is much less severe, and the nuclear family has become dominant.

If the extended family is characteristic of the Asian household, we can say that in the post-war period the Japanese household has rapidly become non-Asian—that is, nuclear—as a result of rapid industrialization and urbanization. In 1980, the total number of households was 34,080,000, with the average household comprised of 3.3 persons. Even in a country such as India, the extended family system is said to be maintained only in wealthier households. In 1946, in Japan, the average household size was 5.09 persons, though that figure reflects the special conditions and devastation resulting from the war. In 1920, the average was 4.85, which remained more or less unchanged for some 50 years.

The proportion of female labour in the entire work-force was 38.2 per cent in 1920. Considering that it was 37.9 per cent in 1980, the labour market has experienced long-term stability. The number of household heads has not

risen, nor has the percentage of women workers. What has changed, though, is the pattern of work, with a shift of female labour from the primary to the tertiary sectors of the economy. Over the long term, this reflects technological progress and improved female education.

Focusing on the primary sector of the economy, no significant lightening of the work burden or spread of services is detectable. Instead, the mechanization of agriculture has increased the burden of female labour. To pay for new farm equipment, the head of the household must seek employment off the farm. This has become common practice among purely farming households, and most men must travel far from their farm homes for work. The work they find is the kind of menial drudgery or night work the urban dweller shuns. As one young farmer summed it up, "We must increase productivity to ease our work load, and we need money for that; to get that money, we must leave the farm. Something is wrong."

This is often referred to as the poverty of modernization. Since the machines needed for increasing output and productivity are so expensive, work must be sought far afield to pay for them. Consequently, all of the non-mechanical work in agriculture is becoming the province of female labour. To allow the farm wife to devote more time to farming, labour-saving household machinery has spread to the farm.

When scholars from underdeveloped countries visit the Japanese countryside, the usual reaction is an insistence that, with their radios, televisions, cars, Tokyo newspapers delivered at the house, Japanese farmers are not farmers—they want to see real farmers. What they fail to notice is the occurrence, in the women especially, who shoulder a huge burden in having primary responsibility for the farm and family, of the same kind of ailments that afflict factory labour.

Family labour was once the basis of Japanese agriculture, of its efficiency. Now the Japanese countryside is characterized by the same kind of "both-partners-working" situation that has long defined the lower-class urban couple.

In fishing villages, a different effect of mechanization has emerged. The spread of small motorized craft has destroyed the old way of life in which the wife processed and sold the fish brought in by the husband. Now what the fisherman needs, since he can go farther out for his catch, is a partner to help with the net spreading, hauling, and carrying. The wife's role in this is made possible by the lightening of her housework. Family income has risen, to be sure, but so have expenses and debt, which have necessitated harder work by the fisherman and his wife. The intensification of family labour in fishing mirrors the same process once characteristic of the economy's agricultural sector.

These changes are a result of the urbanization and factory-type proletarianization of labour. This "urbanization of life-style," for example, the spread of home appliances and the products of the factory—food and clothes—has aided in the lightening of the burden of housework.

Whether this structural change in the way of life represents a qualitative

improvement is another matter. Nevertheless, the change is probably irreversible and it creates new problems of life-style and culture. Indeed, there are those who lament that, though people were poor before, they at least had "lots of good things to eat." Even given that taste is partly a matter of custom, universal standards remain; consider the widespread popularity of French or Chinese cuisine.

The quality and content of the Japanese way of life are now being transformed by the overwhelming dominance of computers and the electronics industry in the national economy. Previously, the heavy and chemical industries had this effect. Whether we view these developments positively or negatively, the rapid changes taking place in the structure and content of family life cannot be denied.

These changes, whose effects have reached into the primary sector, have both broadened the scope of female labour and enlarged the problem of female unemployment. The new employment opportunities being offered are available only to those women with proper qualifications and sufficient education who are thus able to respond to the changes in technology. Labour that is unable to adjust to the changes is shunted aside. The results are lower wages and worse working conditions, a spread of part-time work (with less cost for the companies), and indirect hiring. There is thus the problem of women abandoning the search for work in the highly technological labour market-place. This problem is especially common among middle-aged and older women, creating an economic crisis for the "all-work-together" household and, indirectly, for the culture that has maintained the institution of the wife as household budget manager.

The particular structure of labour and the unemployment of middle-aged and older women in Japan are a result of the original decision Japan made to industrialize. The decision was not simply a matter of applying Japanese values; it was the result of the particular historical experience of the Japanese people. Modernization is not a problem whose solution can be postponed or drawn out, but one that requires a once-and-for-all solution. It is a question of national society and culture, and the problems each country faces cannot be blamed on others. The efficiency of Japan's farmers in response to the demands of modernization assumes new importance in this consideration. We must also recognize, however, that conditions prevailing when Japan began its modernization, both external and internal, were markedly different from those faced by underdeveloped countries today.

Although little attention has been given them, I contend the two aspects of complete family employment and the wife's domain, her role as the household budget manager, were important contributors to the favourable conditions prevailing when Japan undertook to modernize. These two features characterized the farm and small independent family-run businesses.

This position may be criticized for overstressing what is simply an ethos, a generalization of a particular life-style, the life-style of the independent producer, for whom it is natural for all family members to work and for the wife to assume great responsibilities within the household. The Douglas-Arisawa

theory, which describes the later stage of Japanese industrialization, makes apparent that the social and economic characteristics of the independent farm household were transplanted to the urban setting, so that it can be seen that the above argument is not merely an after-the-fact characterization of capitalist society in its early stages. Economic history and the history of technology show that the current problem of female unemployment is a result of the present social and economic stage of industrialization, which is one characterized by the mass consumption and production of diverse products manufactured in small lots.

The term "wife's domain" is based on Yanagita Kunio's coinage *shufuken*. My own use of it is aimed at deepening the possibilities for discourse on the Japanese experience, with reference to the problem of underdevelopment. In Japan, 70 per cent of labour is externally employed (versus 90 per cent in the United States), leaving as much as 30 per cent that is self-employed or family labour. It would be an obvious exaggeration to say that only this 30 per cent of the population nourished and preserved the vitality of Japanese society, but without a doubt, the notions of communal work and the wife's domain are most appropriately applied to this sector of the working population. The ethos of a wife's special responsibilities regarding household finances permeates the other 70 per cent of the population, accounting in large measure for the willingness of housewives to work once their child-rearing responsibilities are reduced.

At this time, however, this pool of labour cannot be fully absorbed or employed, as reflected in the unemployment figures for women, which are significantly higher than for men (in 1980, 3.1 per cent female; 2.6 per cent male). Since the concept of unemployment varies from country to country, international comparisons are difficult. The Japanese concept includes no one until they have entered the labour market, which explains the lower figures than for other countries.

Nevertheless, there is a serious problem of structural unemployment in Japan, one neither easily grasped nor easily solved. High levels of female unemployment occurred both in 1970 and in 1980, with the latter being marked by a spread of unemployment among middle-aged and elderly women as a result of the automation of office work through the introduction of labour-saving devices. Japan thus exhibits a trend—which is opposite the experiences of other industrialized countries—towards a more youthful labour force.⁹⁶

Addendum

In this section I would like briefly to return to the early years of the Japanese spinning industry, highlighting a few of the leading figures and works of the period.

Upon leaving the government-owned Tomioka Spinning Mill, Wada Ei (1857–1929), along with her co-workers, was awarded the special title of

“Women Spinners’ Victory Battalion.” The year was 1874; such magnanimity in a factory supervisor would not be possible only a few years later. This incident provides an expression of the spirit of early Meiji, the days of “a rich nation and a strong army,” of government sponsorship of industrial development.

Later, in 1913, Wada wrote that “military men would doubtless have been furious at this act, but given the national effort that the government coordinated in building this factory, such an expression of feeling seems only natural.” The year 1913 was also the year her husband, a professional soldier, died from wounds received in the Russo-Japanese War. Several years later, Wada began her famous *Tomioka Diary*, composed while she was living in the Furukawa Mine company house at Ashio Copper Mine. Although she most likely never met Tanaka Shozo (1841–1913), the famous leader of the struggles against the severe pollution from the Ashio mine, coincidentally, 1913 was also the year in which he died, in the nearby village of Yanaka.

Wada Ei’s life—a spinner while still a young girl, officer’s wife, and mother of a mining executive (she died during her second stay at Ashio, in 1929)—represents the course of modern Japanese history. Her *Diary* was written in 1927, but it was not published until 1931, after her death, by the Shinano Educational Association, in Nagano Prefecture.

Another work about the spinners, *Jokō aishi* (The sad history of the girl spinners), written by Hosoi Wakizo, was published in 1925, one month after the author’s death from acute peritonitis. These two records of factory life, one from early Taisho and the other from late Taisho, represent “extremely valuable material.” This was the evaluation at least of Wada’s book by the Nagano Prefecture supervisor of factories, Ikeda Nagayoshi. It is likely that Ikeda knew also of Hosoi’s work.

In the summer of 1927, when Ikeda made this comment, a strike of unprecedented scale occurred in one of the largest factories in the Nagano spinning area, at Yamaichi Hayashi-gumi, in the city of Okaya. After the third week of the strike, the employers resorted to a lock-out, closing of the dormitory, termination of meals, and the use of hooligans and the police to suppress the strikers. The 1,300 strikers suffered a bitter defeat.

The first signs of recovery from the 1929 depression began to appear in 1931, and this was when Japan began its move towards a war-time economy. Also at this time, the Shinano Educational Association chose *Tomioka Diary* to be a school reader. What was the reaction to the *Diary*, and later to *Jokō aishi*? Since the events of the strike were probably still fresh in the minds of many readers, their reactions must have been varied indeed.

The threat of financial ruin was a powerful force in the early years of the textile industry. The term *seishigyo*, which means “spinning industry,” could also, as a pun, be understood to mean something like “life-and-death industry.” This word-play aptly symbolizes the life-and-death struggle constantly waged in the textiles market-place. As Nakamura (1985) has pointed out, the good times of 1919 quickly turned sour in 1920, forcing many establishments out of business. Managerial strategy to deal with the crisis took two forms: buying up of cocoons and wage cuts.

According to Yamamoto (1952), what would often happen was that wages would be reduced or recalculated, so that part was held over until the next season. If a spinner did not agree to work the next season, however, this portion “often would never be paid.” So to be sure to be able to receive the deferred portion, the spinners would stay at their jobs, which was just what the deferments were intended to induce.

Around the turn of the century, a carpenter’s wages were about 60 sen (1 yen was equivalent to 100 sen) per day in the rural areas and 66 in Tokyo; this was at a time when rice cost 119 sen for 10 kilograms.⁹⁷ A high-ranking spinner was earning more than 100 yen per year, an ordinary spinner in the range of 40 to 50 yen (according to records from 1899). This was indeed, in the words of the popular phrase, the age of the “100-yen spinner.” One acre of paddy around Hida, in northern Gifu Prefecture, cost between 100 and 150 yen at the time.

However, only a determined minority of skilled spinners were able to earn such wages: one in four was said to be in debt at the end of each year. But wages, which were stable between the late 1880s and the mid-1890s, began to rise rapidly towards the turn of the century.

Not long before this, however, there were many cases in which spinners were “not paid anything that could be called a real wage,” receiving instead used clothing or cloth as compensation. This was common among Hida girls working in Nagano; in nearby Hirano (present-day Okaya City), ordinary spinners were paid wages comparable to the very low wages of road-gang workers.

The spinning factory owners, motivated by a sort of Protestant work ethic, drove themselves and their employees—many of whom were mere children—mercilessly. Their sober enthusiasm for hard work, which they forced on their workers, was, at the same time, a manifestation of the cruelty of the capitalists. Holding wages to within 5 per cent of total production costs and buying from a wide variety of cocoon suppliers to provoke competition and thus keep supply costs down, were means to cope with the wide fluctuations in the silk market.

Because of the importance of a stable labour supply, and because differences in spinning skills made for great differences in product value, owners made great efforts—including attractive wage rates and a bonus system—to retain their more-skilled workers.

In both the silk-spinning and cotton-spinning industries, there was a need for skilled machine operators, and so, many highly skilled women spinners were able to use the chronic shortage of skilled labour to their advantage, travelling around the countryside and working at different factories and thus creating for themselves a relatively free existence. But others, as described in *Jokō aishi*, underwent great trials, such as those who were permanently blacklisted for union activities. This happened to several friends of Hosoi, including his wife.

“Spinner for ten years, waitress for a year and a half, five years on the black market, twenty years as a day labourer, and twenty as housewife . . . no house, no pension . . . too old to work . . .” This was how Hosoi’s wife

rather modestly summed up her life. Though her life contrasted greatly with that of Wada Ei, their lives overlapped, forming a counterpoint in women's social history. The reflections of Hosoi's wife, published in 1980 as *Watashi no jokō aishi* (My sad spinner's tale), read with Hosoi's book and alongside the *Tomiooka Diary*, provide a unique glimpse of the spinners' lives and hardships. Another work of interest in this regard is Hayashi Fumiko's autobiographical work, *Hōrōki* (Diary of a vagabond).⁹⁸

These and other works are not well known outside Japan, and it is hoped the brief mention of them here will stimulate interest for future dialogue.