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**BASIC DATA SHEETS AND A NEW VISION OF JAPAN: A REVIEW ESSAY
OF HAYAMI AKIRA, *POPULATION, FAMILY, AND SOCIETY IN
PRE-MODERN JAPAN* (GLOBAL ORIENTAL, 2009) AND *POPULATION AND
FAMILY IN EARLY-MODERN CENTRAL JAPAN* (INTERNATIONAL
RESEARCH CENTER FOR JAPANESE STUDIES, 2010)**

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Between 2009 to 2010, Hayami Akira celebrated his eightieth birthday by publishing six books, two of which are the subject of this review.¹ *Population, Family, and Society in Pre-Modern Japan* collects nineteen articles and book chapters that appeared in English between 1966 and 2005. *Population and Family in Early-Modern Central Japan* analyzes a cluster of villages in the Nōbi region of central Japan. Originally published as *Kinsei Nōbi chihō no jinkō, keizai, shakai* (1992) and still one of the finest sets of micro-demographic village studies in the world. This second book is not a straight translation, but has been updated and adapted to the needs of an English-speaking audience. The resulting book is a feast for those interested in demographic and social history, sumptuously illustrated and wonderfully informative about the demography and economic structure of the hinterland of Nagoya.

Population, Family, and Society, meanwhile, allows the reader to trace the extraordinary development of historical demography in Japan through the writings of its central figure. A succinct and refreshingly frank preface by another leader of this field, Saitō Osamu, further enhances the value of this volume by positioning Hayami's achievements, as well as their limitations, in a larger historiographical context. Hayami's own introduction adopts a more personal tone as he reflects on his intellectual journey, whose key moments included a stint as a visiting scholar at Ghent University, Belgium at a time when historical demography in the West was just about to take off, and a conference invitation from Thomas C. Smith, the great Berkeley historian of Japan. For those of us who do historical demography today, with digital cameras, statistical software packages, and frequent international conferences, there is a poignancy to Hayami's account of how he conducted his early research, and how great a role serendipity played in his decision to make the discipline his life's work.

Both books rest on a key methodological innovation of Hayami's. When he discovered historical demography in the 1960s, it was an exclusively Western effort to extend our demographic knowledge back into the age before vital registration systems. Its

¹ In addition to the two books reviewed here, they are *Rekishi jinkōgaku kenkyū: atarashii Kinsei Nihon-zō* (Fujiwara Shoten, 2009), *Kinsei shoki no kenchi to nōmin* (Chisen Shokan, 2009), *Rekishigaku to no deai* (Keiō Gijyuku Daigaku Shuppankai, 2010), and *Kisha to rekōdo* (Keiō Gijyuku Daigaku Shuppankai, 2010).

dominant data sources—parish registers—listed events: baptisms, burials, marriages. To generate the measures that most interest demographers—life expectancies, fertility rates, ages at marriage, and so on—it was necessary to reconstruct the population at risk from its vital events through an ingenious (and laborious) set of procedures known as family reconstitution. Hayami's main data source, population registers with titles such as *shūmon aratamechō* (registers of religious surveillance, created as instruments in the suppression of Christianity) or *ninbetsu aratamechō* "person-by-person register", had a quite different data structure. These documents state how old each individual was and what role he or she occupied in the household, but do not necessarily list births, deaths, and marriages. Instead, such events often had to be deduced from changes between pairs of subsequent population registers.² Hayami was able to do so on a grand scale thanks to a device he calls Basic Data Sheet (BDS). Each BDS is a table that visualizes the unfolding life of one household, with columns for each individual member and lines for each year subsequent. Individual life courses thus became visible synoptically, and all manner of demographic information—birth and death, marriage, divorce, and widowhood, headship, labor migration, and retirement—could be counted rapidly.

The resulting discoveries make both books treasure troves of the kind of highly specific information that has long formed the bedrock of historical demography. Hayami is at his best when he presents concrete findings that he has wrested from long consecutive series of population registers. A few examples will have to suffice here. Early on, Hayami found that in many villages, the number of children remained moderate during times of improving mortality conditions. This implied that deliberate control of fertility did not just respond to desperate circumstances, and challenged the then common understanding of Tokugawa village life as conditioned by exploitation and misery. Hayami's discovery of considerable social and, especially, geographical mobility similarly tempered prevailing views of Tokugawa society as regimented and static, views that were often shaped by prescriptive sources. His analyses instead revealed the central role that labor migration (*dekasegi*) played in the lives of villagers in Central Japan, where between one and three quarters (depending on period and class) of young men and women spent years working in other villages and towns, as well as in the great cities of Edo, Kyoto, Osaka, and Nagoya. In a comparison of the death rates of urban migrants with those who stayed in their villages, Hayami discovered that men suffered higher mortality in the cities, while women of childbearing age suffered slightly worse death rates in the countryside. This finding confirms the role of the great urban centers of Tokugawa Japan in reducing population growth, both by raising mortality (at least of men) and by restraining fertility; as Hayami notes, the likely reason for the slightly lower age-specific death rates of urban maids is that they were less likely to get pregnant than their sisters back in the villages.

² As is well known, the births and deaths of infants that died between the two compilations are therefore often not captured in these documents, and marriages that began and ended within the same interval might also pass unrecorded. Even where registers were annotated with information such as recent births, this was not necessarily done immediately, thus again missing some births and neonatal deaths.

One thing that makes both books so useful is that Hayami's many demographic discoveries can serve as starting points for new research projects. For example, the analysis of death rates just mentioned raises intriguing possibilities for the history of sexuality and abortion in Japan. Qualitative sources suggest that abortions were widely available in cities like Edo, and popular lore teemed with maidservants who perished in the attempt to rid themselves of an unwanted child; the fact that compared to rural women, urban maidservants did not die at elevated rates during their childbearing years suggests that either, they got pregnant less often, or that abortions in the city were safer than delivering a full-term child in the village. In this way, the facts Hayami establishes about individual villages are invaluable in the ongoing effort to reconstruct the lived experience of Tokugawa Japan.

With characteristic modesty, Hayami notes that his approach is "not a 'high tech' historical demography employing fully the advantages of advanced statistical methods."³ While readers will look in vain for event-history analyses and regression models in these pages, there are important advantages to the level of Hayami's analysis, which faithfully preserves the contours of the data and presents its complexity in ways that are easy to grasp for specialists and non-specialists alike. There are good reasons why odds ratios have become a key intellectual product of a newer wave of historical demographic research, but the regression approach often makes it hard for a reader to see how decisions about inputs of independent variables and periodization of the dataset shape the conclusions. With Hayami's work, there is no analytical black box; his categories typically have fine granularity, and thus allow readers to retrace the path that led to his conclusions and to find inspiration for their own ideas along the way.

Future historians will no doubt return to Hayami's discussions, tables, and charts many times to test their own arguments or to have new insights sparked. To relate just one personal experience along these lines, a recent conversation with a friend about rural-urban migration made me reach for the two books under review here; Hayami's careful tabulations make it clear that in the Nōbi village of Nishijō, a large number of men traveled to Edo to find employment there, but in his sample, not a single woman did so. Hayami's city-bound village women instead worked as maids in Nagoya, Kyoto, Osaka, and Ōgaki. The walk from Nishijō to these cities would have been shorter, and unlike a journey to Edo crossed no shogunal checkpoints (*sekisho*). These facts raise questions about the perceived safety of the highways for female travelers and the role of *sekisho* in constraining the movement of women into the Kantō.⁴

When Hayami paints history in broad brush strokes, he is often ingenious in the patterns he discerns. Especially in several text-book type chapters in the collection

³ Hayami, *Population and Family in Early-Modern Central Japan*, preface.

⁴ The checkpoints controlled women's movement out of rather than into the Kantō, but for a maid who intended to return to her village upon the completion of her employment contract, they may nonetheless have made Edo a less attractive destination. That no women from Nishijō crossed a *sekisho* in their search for employment is particularly striking given that historians now believe that commoners found it relatively easy to circumvent them. See Constantine Vaporis, *Breaking Barriers: Travel and State in Early Modern Japan* (Harvard University Asia Center, 1995).

of articles, however, these observations are not closely documented and not always tightly argued. Nevertheless, the chapters are well worth reading even just for Hayami's uncanny ability to coin memorable phrases. In Japanese, he has given us *toshi arijigoku setsu* ("the city as antlion," now the Japanese version of the "urban graveyard effect") and *kūhaku no shihanseiki* ("the blank quarter century," which refers to the absence of official Japan-wide headcounts between 1846 and 1870). Remarkably, the impact of his English neologisms has been equally great. "Industrious Revolution" (and its Japanese version, *kinben kakumei*) is probably the most influential of these. Hayami first coined it in a Japanese article published in 1977.⁵ "Industrious Revolution" was subsequently adopted by Jan de Vries, Alan Macfarlane, and others; but in contrast to de Vries's vision, which portrays the "Industrious Revolution" as preparing the ground for the Industrial Revolution, Hayami sees it as an alternative path, which increased output by ever greater inputs of labor rather than by growing inputs of capital.

Beyond the Industrious Revolution, "Industrious Revolution" the basic assumption that early modern Japan was fundamentally comparable to Europe permeates Hayami's approach. Just as early modern Europe is widely seen as the origins of Western modernity, Hayami portrays the Tokugawa period as laying the foundations of modern Japan, especially in terms of fostering what he calls an "economic society." On this front at least, Hayami's work in these two volumes resonates with the sensibilities of such scholars as Robert Bellah, Ronald Dore, John Hall, Edwin Reischauer, Thomas Smith, and Umesao Tadao, who in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s stressed the salience of Tokugawa-period transformations in society, economy, and mindset for the successes of modern Japan.

While much of Hayami's research pays close attention to historical change and often captures its contours with new precision, one recurring theme in these essays instead stresses continuities across millennia: the diversity of demographic cultures within Japan, which he understands as rooted in environmental conditions and ancient ethnic essences. In reviewing longitudinal village studies from various parts of Japan and in mapping out the statistics of the Meiji period, Hayami and his coauthors, Ochiai Emiko and Kurosu Satomi, have demonstrated that the age at marriage, the frequency of divorce, the size of households, the role of premarital sex, and the scale of labor migration all differed widely within eighteenth and nineteenth-century Japan. These findings led him to conclude that "the idea of Japan as a country of one people and one language is a myth. The Japan described by the [population registers] of the Edo period is one of people with a diverse sense of values."⁶ In pronouncing this view, Hayami participated in a larger discursive field that questioned the homogeneity of the Japanese archipelago and stressed its connections to other parts of the world. We find the same themes in the work of scholars such as Umehara Takeshi, Oguma Eiichi, and Amino Yoshihiko, who by a remarkable coincidence was Hayami's colleague at the *Nihon Jōmin Bunka Kenkyūjo*

⁵ Hayami Akira, "Keizai shakai no seiritsu to sono tokushitsu: Edo-jidai shakai keizaishi he no shiten," in Shakai Keizaishi Gakkai, eds., *Atarashii Edo-jidai-zō wo motomete: sono shakai-keizaishiteki sekkin* (Tokyo: Tōyō Keizai Shinpōsha, 1977), 3–18.

⁶ Hayami, *Population, Family, and Society in Pre-Modern Japan*, xxi.

at beginning of their careers.

In the global context of historical demography, Hayami's emphasis on Japan's internal diversity could be read as meaning that it was a fairly typical country of the nineteenth century. To name but three examples, in France, the vanguard of the European fertility decline coexisted with areas such as Brittany where few couples practiced contraception. In Germany, the infant mortality rate was ten percent in parts of the North and a third in parts of the South, a situation Arthur Imhof has interpreted as reflecting "fundamentally different attitudes . . . to life and death in general."⁷ In the early twentieth century, in some parts of the Chinese subcontinent (including, famously, Taiwan), minor marriage was very frequent, whereby little girls were raised alongside their future husbands by their mothers-in-law, while in other regions, brides typically arrived in their husband's household as young adults on the day of the wedding; and in the Pearl River Delta, it was customary for new wives to leave their husbands and live with their native families for three years. That Japan's internal diversity was not unique would not surprise Hayami. His own thinking on regional diversity responded in part to Emmanuel Todd's analysis of European family patterns; and a large international collaboration in historical demography that Hayami was instrumental in launching in the 1990s, the EurAsia project, deliberately compares not entire countries, but regions (in Southern Sweden, Belgium, Northern Italy, Southern Manchuria, and Northeastern Japan).

Understanding regional variation is often a balancing act between overgeneralization and getting lost in the fractal nature of geographical complexity. Hayami and his collaborators distinguished three "regional demographic and family patterns," the Northeast, the Center, and the Southwest. As somebody whose own research has been inspired by this bold generalization, I am well aware of its heuristic value; however, future descriptions of the cultural diversity of demographic cultures within Japan are likely to lump and split in different ways. Hayami's own maps of Meiji-period ages at marriage or household size do not all follow a neat Southwest-Center-Northeast division. His village studies, meanwhile, remain small point samples from a large and complex island chain. For example, the stipulated Northeastern pattern rests on a cluster of village studies in Nihonmatsu and Aizu, while the Central pattern is largely informed by village studies in Shinano and Nōbi. It is therefore not surprising that not all parts of the Northeast behave as the sample from its southern edges would predict. Around 1800, villages in Hirosaki, for example, had fertility rates of about six children per woman compared to about four in much of Nihonmatsu and Aizu.⁸ At the same time, there were also clear commonalities between different areas. For example, in the eighteenth century, permissive attitudes to infanticide were apparently shared between parts of Kyushu, western Honshu, and Shikoku on the one hand and the North Kantō and parts of the Northeast

⁷ Arthur Imhof, "The Amazing Simultaneousness of the Big Differences and the Boom in the 19th Century: Some Facts and Hypothesis about Infant and Maternal Mortality in Germany, 18th to 20th centuries," in T. Bengtsson, G. Fridlitzius, and R. Ohlsson, eds., *Pre-industrial Population Change: The Mortality Decline and Short-Term Population Movements* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1984), 203.

⁸ See Fabian Drixler, *Mabiki: Infanticide and Population Growth in Eastern Japan, 1660–1950* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), Appendix 4.

on the other. All that said, Hayami and his coauthors have opened an important line of inquiry, and many of their conclusions are likely to stand the test of time. For example, the role of the great cities in restraining population growth in Central Japan has yet to be challenged.

From describing the different regional patterns in terms of their demonstrable demographic diversity, Hayami moves to understanding the underlying reasons in terms of environmental conditions (harsh Northeast, congenial Southwest) and the deep past. In this view, nineteenth-century household strategies reflected the legacy of Jōmon hunter-gatherers in the Northeast (who treated the carrying capacity of the land as a given, and were thus careful to limit their own numbers) and Yayoi agriculturalists in the Center (who assumed that more food could always be grown by creating new fields). Questions of evidence aside, this belief in the salience of submerged ethnic essences and ancient ecological attitudes leaves little room for the history of the intervening millennia. Much of that history is beyond recovery, of course, but the often dramatic demographic changes in the four centuries that we do understand in some detail—not least thanks to Hayami's own labors—shift the burden of proof to those who would claim such *longue durée* continuities.

It is given to few scholars to shape an entire field of inquiry. Hayami continues as productive as ever, but by making accessible in English many of his writings up to 2005, the two volumes under review document the development of historical demography in Japan; in their fine-grained detail, uncovered in painstaking research, the more focused demographic studies among them will continue to inform and inspire efforts to understand Japan's demographic history in all its diversity.