POVERTY MANAGEMENT AND URBAN GOVERNANCE IN MODERN

OSAKA, 1871-1944

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the relationship between urban poverty and local governance in modern Osaka. It seeks to elucidate the strategies and institutional mechanisms through which the authorities in Osaka attempted to regulate the urban poor from the immediate aftermath of the Meiji Restoration to the Pacific War. It begins by examining the dissolution of early modern Osaka’s beggar fraternity, the kaito nakama, and considering the impact of the Restoration and subsequent dismantling of the early modern status system on the practice of poverty management and the lives of the urban poor.

Following the Restoration, the mechanisms through which the authorities in Osaka attempted to regulate the poor underwent a dramatic transformation. For centuries, the authorities had permitted thousands of the city’s poorest residents to survive by gathering alms. However, in the early 1870s, officials came to view begging as a deleterious practice that encouraged idleness and dependence and stripped otherwise able-bodied individuals of their desire for self-sufficiency. Some asserted that if the practice were allowed to persist, it would ultimately undermine the vitality and stability of the fledgling Meiji state. In order for Japan to compete with the comparatively affluent states of the West, officials came to believe that it was necessary to mobilize the entire populous, including the members of economically disadvantaged groups previously permitted to subsist on the margins of the urban economy. Accordingly, officials began working to transform the poor into productive urban subjects capable of subsisting without external assistance.

This dissertation challenges foregoing studies of urban poverty in modern Japan, which emphasize only the coercive and exclusionary features of state policy towards the poor. While moments of repression and exclusion are certainly a vital part of the story, an analysis of poverty management efforts in Osaka reveals that official policy was designed primarily to harness, multiply, and exploit the productive capacities of the poor. Far from seeking their permanent exclusion from mainstream society, the authorities worked to encourage their sustained inclusion into the lower tiers of the urban socio-economic hierarchy through the hygienic remaking of their communities and the reform of their beliefs and practices.
CONTENTS

I. Introduction..................................................................................................................1
   Collective Resistance and Internal Stratification..................................................5
   Popular Representations of Urban Poverty...............................................................7
   The Historical Development of Urban Slums in Post-Restoration Osaka.............11
   Historiography.........................................................................................................15
   Chapter Outline.......................................................................................................32
   A Brief Note on Sources .........................................................................................37

II. Poverty Relief and Socio-Economic Integration in Late Nineteenth-Century Osaka
   Introduction.............................................................................................................38
   Urban Poverty in Tokugawa-Era Osaka.................................................................39
   The Dismantling of Osaka’s Beggar Fraternity.........................................................45
   Poverty Management and Public Relief.................................................................60
   Private-Sector Poverty Relief..................................................................................78
   A Private Work School for the Poor......................................................................80
   Kobayashi Sahē’s ‘Poor People’s Workhouse’.........................................................82
   Life in the Workhouse.............................................................................................94
   Conclusion...............................................................................................................108

III. Cholera 1886: Poverty, Disease, and Urban Governance in Meiji Osaka
   Introduction.............................................................................................................111
   Cholera and Eradication Efforts.............................................................................116
   Poverty, Disease, and Social Exclusion..................................................................131
   Conclusion: Nagamachi’s Dismantling..................................................................164
IV. Civilizing the Slums: Poverty and Social Control in Early Twentieth-Century Osaka’s “Poor Schools”

Introduction .................................................................................................................. 167

The Founding of Tokufū Elementary School .......................................................... 172

The Socio-Economic Structure of Namba Precinct’s Slums ................................. 181

Education and Social Improvement .......................................................................... 185

School Curriculum and Regulations ......................................................................... 189

Reform and Relief in Osaka’s ‘Poor Schools’ .......................................................... 201

The Integration of Tokufū School into the Municipal School System ............... 212

V. Poverty Relief, Social Surveillance, and Local Governance in Interwar Japan: A Case Study of Osaka’s District Commissioner System

Introduction .................................................................................................................. 217

The District Commissioner System’s Establishment and Organizational Structure ......................................................................................................................... 221

Ogawa Shigejirō and the Making of the District Commissioner System .......... 228

The Duties of Osaka’s District Commissioners ...................................................... 232

The Character and Function of Osaka’s District Commissioners ....................... 239

Conclusion .................................................................................................................... 256

VI. Housing Reform and Urban Governance in Prewar Japan: A Case Study of Osaka’s Substandard Housing Reform Projects, 1927-1944

Introduction .................................................................................................................. 259

The Spatial Composition and Socio-Economic Structure of Nipponbashi’s Hachijūken-nagaya Slum ........................................................................................................ 264

The Osaka City Government’s “Substandard Housing District Reform Project” .............................................................................................................................. 285

Contesting Housing Reform: Local Opposition from the Residents of
Nipponbashi’s Substandard Housing Districts..............................................299

Conclusion: The Historical Impact of Housing Reform..........................316

VII. Conclusion.........................................................................................326
TABLES

1. The Occupational Composition of Hachijūken-nagaya, 1924……………………..277
ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAPS

1. The City of Osaka and Surrounding Counties, 1886.................................334
2. Osaka’s Four Wards and Hishashinari and Nishinari Counties, 1872........335
3. Nagamachi, 1872.....................................................................................336
4. Southern Osaka and Nishinari County, Late-Nineteenth Century.........337
5. The Nipponbashi Area, 1918.................................................................338
6. Hachijüken-nagaya, 1924.................................................................339
7. Hachijüken-nagaya, 1928.................................................................340
8. Post-Reform Hachijüken-nagaya, 1931...............................................341
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

This dissertation examines the relationship between urban poverty and local governance in modern Osaka (Map 1). Beginning with the dismantling of the city’s early modern beggar fraternity, the kaito nakama, it traces the development of poverty management policy from the immediate aftermath of the 1868 Meiji Restoration to the Pacific War (1941-1945). In particular, it focuses on the strategies and institutional mechanisms through which the authorities in Osaka attempted to regulate the urban poor. At the same time, this dissertation attempts to illuminate the philosophical underpinnings and overarching objectives of public poverty management policies and seeks to understand how popular attitudes about the urban poor and the communities in which they lived influenced the government’s approach to poverty management.

In addition, it analyzes the formation and internal composition of modern Osaka’s vast and internally diverse “urban lower class” (toshi kasō). Throughout the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, Osaka’s poor lived in densely populated settlements along the city periphery popularly referred to as hinmin kutsu, or “slums.”

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1 I have elected to use the term slum in describing the urban districts examined in this dissertation because it is the English-language term that most precisely captures the character of those districts as they were described in contemporary written sources. The word suramu (a direct adaptation of the English-language term slum) is commonly used in postwar Japanese-language scholarship to describe crowded and unhygienic urban districts inhabited by large concentrations of economically disadvantaged persons. While it also appears frequently in a number of well-known prewar publications, including Dai-osaka magazine, in many of the writings published between 1880 and 1945, the word suramu is not used. During the period in question, there were actually five commonly used terms: hinmin kutsu, saiminkutsu, hinmingai kikankutsu, and saimingai. The first two terms translate literally as “den of poor people” and along with the third term, hinmingai (town of poor people), were used most frequently between the 1880s and early 1900s. Kikankutsu, which was employed less frequently during this era, translates as “den of starvation and cold.” The final term, saimingai (town of poor people), appears most frequently between the second half of the 1910s and the end of the Pacific War. It comes to be used equally in newspapers, scholarly journals, magazines, and a variety of official publications. Urban geographer Mizuuchi Toshio has argued that the term came to be employed in government publications in the second half of the 1910s as a neutral alternative to terms, such as hinmingai, which increasingly came to be viewed as pejorative. In general, all five of these words were employed to describe specific unhygienic and overcrowded urban districts with large concentrations of dilapidated flophouses and run-down back-alley tenements inhabited by beggars,
Through an analysis of the socio-economic structure of a series of slum districts in southern Osaka’s Nipponbashi neighborhood, this dissertation seeks to elucidate the nature of internal relations in lower-class urban communities. Furthermore, in order to understand the place of Osaka’s slum dwellers in the urban socio-economic order, it seeks to elucidate the broader network of relationships that guaranteed their survival and shaped their daily lives.

In the aftermath of the Meiji Restoration, the mechanisms through which the authorities attempted to regulate the poor underwent a dramatic transformation. Throughout the early modern period (1603-1867), the authorities in Osaka permitted thousands of the city’s poorest residents to subsist by gathering alms inside the city. Begging was strictly regulated and carried out in accordance with government-issued guidelines. City officials never moved to ban the practice entirely. By permitting the poor to gather alms in city neighborhoods, the authorities were able guarantee their survival, while delegating responsibility for their care to the city’s general population.

However, the situation changed dramatically in the aftermath of the Meiji Restoration. In an effort to break the dependence of the urban poor on the largesse of more affluent city residents, the authorities in Osaka moved to ban the practice of almsgiving, thereby officially depriving thousands of beggars and vagrants of their thieves, pickpockets, and *burai* (ruffians or scoundrels), where access to safe water sources and sanitation was severely deficient. In general, from the early decades of the Meiji period onward, these districts also came to be frequently seen as places to which criminals from around Japan could escape and live anonymously without fear of capture while continuing to participate in criminal activities. Also, particularly from the 1880s onward, these areas came to be seen as insalubrious dens of contagion where the deplorable living conditions and benighted beliefs and practices of the residents combined to encourage the outbreak and spread of infection. Lastly, these districts were commonly described as areas where immoral and depraved acts, including gambling, child abuse, and sexual deviance, were commonly practiced. Therefore, the term slum is appropriate on a number of levels.
primary source of subsistence. At the same time, however, the prefectural authorities began to actively promote the economic self-sufficiency of the urban poor and worked to encourage their controlled integration into the urban economic system through the establishment of a series of publicly administered relief institutions where the poor would be trained in a vocation and provided with basic educational instruction. By teaching impoverished beggars, vagrants, and ragpickers a trade, the authorities hoped to provide them with an alternative means of subsistence and dissuade them from begging for alms.

The 1880s, however, saw a dramatic, albeit temporary, shift in official attitudes regarding the regulation of the urban poor. Between 1877 and 1886, the city of Osaka experienced a series of devastating cholera epidemics. During the 1885 and 1886 epidemics, urban slum districts reported infection and mortality rates more than triple those seen in other city neighborhoods. In fact, during the 1885 epidemic, more than half of the cases of cholera infection reported in Osaka occurred in the city’s Nagamachi slum. As news of that fact spread, newspapers and official reports alike came to characterize urban slum districts, such as Nagamachi, as “dens of infectious disease” (densenyō no sōkutsu). Accordingly, in the summer of 1886, Osaka Prefectural Police Chief Inspector Ōura Kanetake, presented a plan calling for the demolition of the city’s slums and forced relocation of thousands of slum dwellers to a segregated residential

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2 Ōsaka no buraku shi iinkai, ed. “Ōsaka-fu ga kotsujiki o torishimaru (30 May 1872).” Ōsaka no buraku
3 Ōsaka-fu, ed. Korera yobōshi. Osaka: Ōsaka-fu, 1924. During that ten-year period, cholera outbreaks occurred nearly every year, resulting in the death of more than 30,000 local residents.
4 Ibid.
compound outside the city. According to Ōura, an effective solution to the problem of urban epidemics could only be achieved through the permanent isolation of the urban poor and the reconstruction of the communities in which they lived.

In one sense, therefore, the mid-1880s appears to indicate a clear shift in the objectives of official policy towards the urban poor. However, the situation was more complex. Just as Ōura was calling for the demolition of the city’s slums and the permanent segregation of their impoverished residents, a parallel effort was underway to transform the attitudes and behavior of the urban poor through direct intervention into low-income residential neighborhoods. Through the creation of local governmental organizations, such as the neighborhood hygiene association (eisei kumiai), actors from both the public and private sector began working to teach the city’s slum dwellers “proper” techniques of personal hygiene, food storage, sterilization, cleaning, and waste disposal. By educating the poor rather than isolating them, these actors believed that they could help to limit the outbreak of urban epidemics and restrict their spread.

By the mid-1880s, an increasing number of government officials in Osaka had come to believe that slum dwellers’ ignorance of normative modes of behavior and basic everyday practices threatened to undermine Japan’s march towards “civilization and enlightenment.” Such officials argued that it was the obligation of the nation’s ruling class to cultivate in the poor the very qualities that would allow for their emergence as disciplined and productive urban subjects. Therefore, even at the height of the devastating wave of cholera epidemics that struck Japan in the late 1870s and 1880s,

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7 Ōura Kanetake. “Nipponbashisui 3-chō-me o hajime sūchōson jinmin iten no ken.” Minami kuyakushi gyōsei monjo (C-8, No. 53), 3 August 1886.
socio-economic integration remained a key objective of poverty management policy in Osaka.

Particularly in the early-twentieth century, official policies were designed to harness, multiply, and effectively exploit the productive capacities of the urban poor. Far from seeking their permanent exclusion from mainstream society, the authorities worked to encourage their sustained inclusion into the lower tiers of the urban socio-economic hierarchy through the hygienic remaking of the districts in which they lived and the reform of their beliefs and everyday practices. Consequently, many contemporary officials and social reformers rejected the notion that the poor should be fully isolated from the rest of urban society, arguing instead that they should be transformed in such a way that their existence no longer posed a threat to the dominant socio-economic order.

(A) Collective Resistance and Internal Stratification

This dissertation seeks to elucidate how the various communities targeted for reform responded to reform efforts in order to understand the social impact of the various poverty management policies and reform projects carried out in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Osaka. Government-led interventions into the slums were often met with fierce local opposition. Through the employment of creative strategies of resistance and the collective production of alternative social frameworks, groups of slum dwellers were often able to effectively subvert governmental attempts to manage or unilaterally remake their communities. Accordingly, the analysis carried out herein focuses on the various strategies of resistance employed by Osaka’s slum dwellers to counter official reform efforts. In particular, it highlights the specific tactics that impoverished urban dwellers utilized in order to protect their economic interests and ensure the continued
existence of their communities.¹⁰

Economic necessity ensured that there was a high level of cooperation within impoverished urban communities and it was largely on the basis of such cooperation that poor families were able to subsist during periods of economic distress and personal misfortune.¹¹ Due to the high level of cooperation that occurred in Osaka’s slums, it would be easy to focus on the horizontal nature of relations among the urban poor and romanticize slum dwellers as noble paupers who struggled as equals against poverty and the various oppressive forces that sought their domination and exploitation. Beyond merely representing a gross oversimplification of both the actual nature of relations among the urban poor and the motives of the actors that sought to transform urban slums and their denizens, such a portrayal would obscure the internal hierarchy of slum communities. As social scientist James Scott has asserted, “Among groups subject to a common form of domination, there frequently develops a tyranny as brutal and exploitative as anything their oppressor can devise.”¹² This was very much the case in the slums of modern Osaka. As I discuss in chapter three, forces of violence and intimidation were often just as instrumental as a sense of mutual responsibility in unifying the residents of slum districts. In fact, failure to observe communal practices could sometimes even result in violent retribution and social exclusion.

In much of the contemporary Japanese-language scholarship on urban poverty, particularly in research on urban slums, there is a tendency towards counterfactual and

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subjective romanticization of the poor and their in-group relations.\textsuperscript{13} Scholarship written from this perspective tends to emphasize the repressive and exclusionary nature of state power and to ignore the internal divisions, historical moments of intimidation and violence, and general complexity of social relations within economically disadvantaged social groups. As Scott has shown, even in situations in which relations among members of a subordinate group appear on the surface to be symmetrical and mutual, “power relations…are not necessarily conducted along democratic lines at all.”\textsuperscript{14} This asymmetry was a constant reality in lower-class communities and can be considered when attempting to assess the nature of internal relations among the urban poor.

(B) Popular Representations of Urban Poverty

This dissertation also attempts to trace the development of popular representations of urban poverty. The late-nineteenth century saw the appearance of a wide array of new and often discriminatory representations of the urban poor and the communities in which they lived. During the 1880s, impoverished urban districts, such as Osaka’s Nagamachi neighborhood, came to be referred to in both mass media and official reports as \textit{hinminkutsu}, or “slums.” During the period in question, \textit{hinminkutsu} were viewed as dangerous places, where crime and disease were rampant, and as points of curiosity, in which intrepid journalists and urban sightseers could observe a society fundamentally unlike their own. Representations of poverty and urban slums were disseminated through

\textsuperscript{13} Yoshimura Tomohiro. “Kindai toshi Ōsaka to Kamagasaki: 1900-1920 nendai no toshi kasô shakai.” \textit{Buraku kaihô kenkyû} 171 (2006): 34-51. Katô Masahiro. \textit{Ōsaka suramu to sakariba: kindai toshi to basho no keifu}. Osaka: Sôgensha, 2002. This tendency is most clearly expressed in the work of Yoshimura Tomohiro and Katô Masahiro on Osaka’s Kamagasaki and Nagamachi slums. For Yoshimura and Katô, the urban poor were uniquely despised social group, who were forced to struggle to defend their communities against a repressive state that sought their exclusion from the urban society.

a wide variety of print media, including newspapers, magazines, anthropological studies, investigative reports, and pulp novels. Works of popular non-fiction, such as Yokoyama Gennosuke’s *Nihon no kasō shakai* (1899) and Suzuki Umeshirō’s *Ōsaka Nagomachi hinminkutsu shisatsuki* (1888), came to serve as defacto guides for persons interested in visiting the nation’s most infamous urban slums.\(^{15}\)

Although I will be examining the major representations of urban poverty that emerged during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries in the individual chapters, I will briefly introduce two of the most common examples here. First, throughout the modern period, urban slums, such as Tokyo’s Yotsuya-samegahashi neighborhood and Osaka’s Nagamachi neighborhood, were represented as ambiguous, dark, and labyrinthine criminal havens impervious to police surveillance where criminals gathered and freely engaged in illegal and depraved acts.\(^{16}\) Ethnographic and investigative discourses frequently suggested that criminals escaped to and found safe haven in the dimly lit and overcrowded tenements and flophouses of the nation’s slums.\(^{17}\) Moreover, it was often charged that the residents of urban slums were suspicious of police and other outsiders, and commonly refused to comply with police investigations, making the apprehension of criminals extremely difficult.\(^{18}\) Journalists, social reformers, police officers, and public officials alike also claimed that children who grew up

\(^{15}\text{Yokoyama Gennosuke. }\text{*Nihon no kasō shakai*. }\text{Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1949 (1897). }\text{Suzuki Umeshirō. }\text{*Ōsaka Nagomachi hinminkutsu shisatsuki*. }\text{Osaka: Jiji Shinpō, 1888. }\text{Matsubara Iwagorō. *Saiankoku no Tōkyō*. }\text{Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1988 (1892). }\text{Books, such as Yokoyama’s, were part of broader genre of adventure journalism that emerged in the late-nineteenth century and remained popular for throughout the modern period. In some instances, journalists went so far as to disguise themselves in rags in an effort to blend in with the local population and achieve an insider’s perspective. In his 1892 text *Saiankoku no Tōkyō*, Matsubara Iwagorō referred to journalists and sightseers who visited the slums as *hinminkutsu tankensha*, or “slum explorers.”}

\(^{16}\text{Ōura Kanetake. “Nipponbashisujī 3-chō-me o hajime sūchōson jinmin iten no ken.” *Minami kuyakusho gyōsei monjo* (C-8, No. 53), 3 August 1886.}

\(^{17}\text{Ōsaka nippō. “Nagamachimonono no meiwaku,” 3 July 1886.}

\(^{18}\text{Suzuki Umeshirō. *Ōsaka Nagomachi hinminkutsu shisatsuki*. }\text{Osaka: Jiji Shinpō, 1888.}
surrounded by this criminal element and the depraved practices that it sponsored, such as
gambling and prostitution, were more likely than children growing up in more affluent
urban districts to pursue a life of crime.\(^{19}\)

Employing similar representations of the slums, police and local officials in
Osaka and other major cities began, in the early 1880s, to call for heavy crackdowns on
the urban poor and a constant and pervasive police presence in the nation’s slum
districts.\(^{20}\) Some went so far as to argue that the back-alley tenements and flophouses
found in urban slum districts should be razed and replaced by structures that were more
susceptible to surveillance.\(^{21}\) In Osaka, officials argued that the police would then be
able to accurately identify and apprehend criminal offenders seeking safe haven in slum
districts, thereby making the city safer.\(^{22}\)

Second, starting in the late 1870s, urban slums came to be widely characterized as
“hot beds of infectious disease” (\textit{densenbyō no onshō}) where modern concepts of hygiene
and public health had yet to implant themselves.\(^{23}\) As early as 1877, local newspapers in
Osaka began to report that outbreaks of cholera and typhoid were a product, on the one
hand, of the squalid living conditions found in the city’s slums and, on the other, of slum
dwellers’ ignorance and neglect of basic hygienic practices.\(^{24}\) Many late nineteenth and
early twentieth-century accounts of urban slums, such as Nagamachi, often describe them

\(^{19}\) Ōura Kanetake. “Nipponbashisuji 3-chō-me o hajime sūchōson jinmin iten no ken.” \textit{Minami kuyakusho gyōsei monjo} (C-8, No. 53), 3 August 1886.
\(^{22}\) Ōura Kanetake. “Nipponbashisuji 3-chō-me o hajime sūchōson jinmin iten no ken.” \textit{Minami kuyakusho gyōsei monjo} (C-8, No. 53), 3 August 1886.
\(^{23}\) \textit{Asahi shinbun}, “Nagamachi no densenbyō,” 16 April 1886.
as dark, cramped, lice-ridden, nocturnal parasite-infested dens, where “chamber pots filled with urine and feces sat unc..overed in the corners of rooms” and the streets and alleys “teemed with sewage, food scraps, and rotting animal carcasses.”

One of the most famous such accounts can be found in Matsubara Iwagorō’s *The Darkest Tokyo*. In 1892, Matsubara visited Tokyo’s so-called “three great slums” (*sandaihinminkutsu*) and stayed in a series of run-down flophouses. His book notes that the large, communal rooms in the flophouses were “squalid and swarming with insects.” On his first night in one, Matsubara wrote that he was so shocked by the filth of the men sleeping next to him, the mite and lice-ridden condition of the mats in his room, the sight of rotting food on the floor, and the pervasive smell of feces that he “tossed and turned all night, remaining sleepless until morning.”

A second relevant example comes from the work of the prominent early twentieth-century Christian missionary and social worker, Kagawa Toyohiko. Kagawa reported that conditions in Kobe’s slums were so filthy and unhygienic that while staying in a back-alley tenement in the Shinkawa neighborhood, he killed hundreds of nocturnal parasites (*nankin mushi*) around his pillow every night. He killed so many, in fact, that the newspaper with which he swatted the bugs “would turn red with crushed insect

27 Late nineteenth-century Tokyo’s “three great slums” were Shitaya mannenchō, Shiba shinmochō, and Yotsuya sameghashi tanimachi.
remains.”30 According to Kagawa’s 1915 study of the psychology of the urban poor, *Hinmin shinri no kenkyū*, a young female mill worker in Shinkawa was driven to suicide because her dwelling was so infested with mites, mosquitoes, and bedbugs.31

Many of the other accounts that appeared during this period cite the tremendous overcrowding and general squalor found in urban slum districts as the key cause of urban epidemic outbreaks and identify slum dwellers as the chief conduits or vessels through which disease was transmitted.32 As I describe in chapter two, police and officials in Osaka employed similar representations of urban slum districts when attempting to justify the city’s first large-scale slum clearance.

(C) The Historical Development of Urban Slums in Post-Restoration Osaka

In addition to the above themes, this dissertation also seeks to trace the complex historical development of Osaka’s modern slums. While some areas that came to be identified as slums in the post-Restoration era, such as Nagamachi, had also in the early modern period played host to large concentrations of urban poor, many others, including Osaka’s infamous Hachijūken-nagaya and Kamagasaki slums, emerged in the decades after 1868. By the 1890s, however, both newly emerging and long-established slums began to expand rapidly as impoverished migrants and their families poured into major urban centers from Japan’s hinterlands. Most migrants came to Osaka looking for work in the city’s expanding light industrial, service, and transportation sectors. In many cases, migrants settled in low-income communities on the city periphery already populated by

31 Ibid, 14.
members of the early modern urban underclass, including day laborers, beggars, rag pickers, religious itinerants, and street performers.\textsuperscript{33}

During the latter half of the Tokugawa period, Osaka experienced a marked decline in population as the locus of commercial and industrial growth shifted away from conventional centers to burgeoning trade and production centers in rural areas.\textsuperscript{34} However, by the late 1870s, commercial and industrial development was beginning to shift back to large cities, particularly those, such as Osaka, with established links to international trade.\textsuperscript{35} Yet, at least until the mid-1880s, migration outpaced demand for unskilled labor in those reinvigorated urban centers and scores of migrants ended up unemployed and penniless. Unable to secure steady employment, many eked out an existence on the margins of the urban economy, earning a living as “rubbish collectors (kuzu hiroi), clog menders (geta naoshi), pipe cleaners (rao shikae), and tinkers (burikiya).”\textsuperscript{36}

By the late-nineteenth century, population figures indicate that many urban slums were growing at a rapid pace.\textsuperscript{37} For example, Osaka’s Nagamachi slum saw its population balloon from less than 3,000 in the 1860s to over 10,000 by 1890.\textsuperscript{38} This population growth in the slums was triggered in large part by the rapid growth-at-all-costs economic strategy implemented in Japan during the early Meiji period. For many

\textsuperscript{34} Tsuda Hideo. Hōken keizai seisaku no tenkai to shijō kōzō. Tokyo: Ochanomizu shuppan, 1961.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.
urban dwellers, that strategy resulted in severe financial instability, destitution, and social dislocation, a fact that became particularly clear in the wake of finance minister Matsukata Miyoshi’s draconian economic retrenchment policies in the 1880s.39

The Meiji state’s late nineteenth-century economic strategy also led to the emergence of an industrial system in which both public and private enterprises, which were faced with a limited supply of technology, capital, and skilled engineers, and an overabundance of unskilled and relatively inefficient laborers, had to resort to measures, including a low-wage structure, that fostered financial and employment insecurity and ensured the continued growth of urban slum districts. As historian Andrew Gordon has pointed out, “With relatively less productive workers, the only way Japan’s economy could have been competitive was if the workers were relatively low paid. Indeed, they were. Comparatively puny wages for relatively unproductive workers was crucial to the strong performance of Japanese manufacturers in these decades.”40

Standing at the bottom of the urban economic order, slum dwellers often faced extreme wage and employment insecurity. Take, for example, the city’s match industry, which relied almost entirely on workers from the slums in Osaka’s Nipponbashi and Imamiya neighborhoods to meet its labor demands. According to a December 11, 1901

39 Harada Keiichi. “1900-nendai no toshi kasō shakai: kyōdō to kyōdai o megutte.” In Kindai Nihon no shakaishiteki bunseki: tennōseika no buraku mondai, edited by Buraku mondai kenkyūsho, 288. Kyoto: Buraku mondai kenkyūsho shuppanbu, 1989. Koyama Hitoshi and Shibamura Atsuki. Ōsaka-fu no hyakunen. Tokyo: Yamakawa shuppansha (1991), 43. While Matsukata’s policies helped in the long term to counter sharply rising inflation sparked by a massive increase in military expenditures during the 1877 Seinan War, they also triggered a steep decline in the value of major agricultural commodities. For example, in Osaka, the price of the region’s two major agricultural products—cotton and rice—fell precipitously. Whereas one koku (180.39 liters) of white rice traded for ten yen on the local market in 1881, by 1885, it was selling for less than five. This sharp downturn in the price of important regional commodities resulted in the widespread impoverishment of small farmers across the prefecture, whose livelihoods depended on income earned from commercial agriculture. Facing destitution, tenant farmers in agricultural communities across the region many were driven from the land and forced to seek a new life in Osaka and other large urban centers.
Osaka mainichi newspaper report, the city’s match producers employed a total of 8,987 factory hands in 1899. However, because of a precipitous decline in foreign demand for Japanese matches, they had only been able to provide employment to 4,119 individuals in 1900, resulting in lay-offs for well over half of the previous year’s workforce.\(^{41}\) Needless to say, even slum dwellers that were able to find work in Osaka’s burgeoning manufacturing sector had little job security in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. That lack of security no doubt contributed to the perpetuation of urban slums during the period in question. Perpetual wage and employment insecurity made it difficult for slum dwellers to accumulate the resources necessary to rent or purchase a dwelling elsewhere in the city.

Although Japanese manufacturers seeking to compete against more efficient foreign rivals, such as England, France, and the United States, required a vast pool of expendable low-wage labor power, the presence of scores of impoverished workers inside the nation’s major cities dramatically exacerbated problems of sanitation, malnutrition, and disease, led to extreme overcrowding in some slum districts, and placed new stresses on the urban housing supply, an issue that would emerge during World War I as one of Osaka’s most serious urban social problems. Also, the personal beliefs and practices of those impoverished workers, and the crowded, confused, and unhygienic conditions of the slums in which they lived, came to be seen by a wide range of groups across Japan, beginning in the early Meiji period, as a potential threat to domestic security and social stability, a source of national weakness and moral and physiological contagion, and a stark representation of Japan’s continuing inability to modernize. As such, the

socioeconomic framework required for the attainment of post-Restoration goals of national economic growth and rapid industrial development ironically threatened to undermine the important Meiji-era project of displaying to the world Japan’s increasing civilization and enlightenment.

(D) Historiography

There is a wealth of Japanese-language scholarship on the topic urban poverty in modern Japan. A comprehensive discussion of that scholarship is beyond the scope of this dissertation, but I would like to mention a handful of particularly relevant studies. First, it is essential to mention two studies that discuss the relationship between poverty, infectious disease, and urban governance: Harada Keiichi’s *Nihon kindai toshi-shi kenkyū* (1997) and Ambo Norio’s *Kindai nihon no shakaiteki sabetsu keisei-shi no kenkyū: minato kobe-korera pesuto suramu* (1989). Professor Harada’s research focuses on late nineteenth-century Osaka, while Professor Ambo’s work focuses on late nineteenth-century Kobe. Both studies examine the content and objectives of government-led slum clearance projects. Harada and Ambo argue that repeated cholera epidemics in the 1870s and 1880s gave rise to a range of new discriminatory representations of the urban poor, which in turn supported efforts to permanently segregate slum dwellers from the rest of the urban population. Both studies stress the oppressive nature of state power and describe the relationship between the urban poor and the public authorities solely in terms of repression and social exclusion.

Neither study, however, examines the internal composition of the slum districts in Osaka and Kobe that were targeted for reform, treating them instead as internally

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homogenous enclaves, which existed in isolation from the rest of urban society. Studies such as these tend to divide the urban population into two diametrically opposed categories: ryōmin, or “good citizens,” who were from the state’s perspective productive, disciplined, and rational; and hinmin, or “poor people,” whom the authorities viewed as crude, ignorant, and potentially dangerous. According to Ambo and Harada, during the late-nineteenth century, officials in Kobe and Osaka began to plot the permanent social exclusion of the urban poor through the employment of a range of repressive techniques, such as police coercion and forced evictions.

The analysis put forth herein challenges studies like those above that view the relationship between the state and the urban poor only in terms of repression and social exclusion. While there were certainly periods in which the authorities worked to isolate the urban poor from the rest of the urban population, there were also many instances in which they attempted to encourage the socio-economic integration of slum dwellers by reforming their everyday practices and beliefs. When attempting to understand the nature of relations between the state and the urban poor, it is essential to consider both moments of social exclusion and repression, as well as instances in which the authorities intervened in and attempted to exert a greater degree of control over the lives of slum dwellers.

While both of the above studies offer a detailed analysis of the philosophy underlying government-led slum clearance projects and the motives of the individuals that attempted to carry to them out, they fail to sufficiently consider how such projects affected the socio-economic structure of urban slum districts and ignore the diversity and agency of the city’s slum dwellers. As I describe in chapter two, residents of Osaka’s Nagamachi slum collectively opposed the government’s efforts to carry out a slum
clearance project there in the late 1880s. They did so in an effort to protect their economic interests and to preserve the network of communal relationships that they had established with their neighbors. In the end, the organized resistance of local residents played a major role in halting the project’s implementation.

Second, it is essential to mention the research of historian Shiraishi Masa’aki. Professor Shiraishi’s research examines the formation and development of Osaka’s police-administered “poor schools” (hinmin gakkō). As Shiraishi demonstrates, the city’s poor schools were founded amidst the growing wave of urban social unrest that followed the 1904-1905 Russo-Japanese War, in an effort to extend elementary education to child laborers who were unable to attend conventional elementary schools because they were forced to work during the day. As Shiraishi describes, thousands of child laborers from slum districts in southern Osaka’s Nipponbashi, Imamiya, and Kizu neighborhoods were excluded from the city’s public education system and the city authorities were unwilling to commit the resources necessary to enable such children to attend school and complete their mandatory educational requirements.

In an effort to make it possible for child laborers to enroll in school, a group of police officers and philanthropists led by Namba police chief Amano Tokisaburō established two private night schools on the city’s south end. According to Shiraishi, Amano was a progressive social reformer who was motivated by a beneficent desire to provide needy children with the same educational opportunities enjoyed by their peers in

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more affluent city neighborhoods. In his article, he contrasts the disinterest of the city authorities with Amano’s charity and concern for the poor.  

Shiraishi fails, however, to sufficiently consider the historical context within which the schools were founded and neglects to examine the actual functions that they performed in local society. In one sense, the opening of the city’s “poor schools” represents an attempt on the part of local police in one of Osaka’s poorest precincts to provide educational instruction to children from low-income communities who were unable to attend school during the day. At the same time, however, it is essential to view Osaka’s “poor schools” as one part of the nationwide Local Improvement Movement, a Home Ministry-directed community improvement and revitalization campaign initiated in the aftermath of the Russo-Japanese War. In part, that effort was designed to prevent incidents of urban social unrest and crime by the intensified regulation of the urban lower and working classes. It involved not only the deployment of enhanced techniques of violence and repression, but also the implementation of a range of police-administered social programs. Those programs were designed to facilitate the enhanced surveillance of the poor and promote long-term socio-economic stability in needy urban districts by “reforming” the attitudes and beliefs of local residents. Therefore, Osaka’s poor schools were intended as more than just educational institutions. They functioned as mechanisms of local governance and served as the locus of a range of police-administered relief


45 The Local Improvement Movement’s primary objectives included revitalizing rural and urban communities bankrupted by the increased taxation that accompanied the Russo-Japanese War, helping such communities establish a stable fiscal foundation, cultivating a talented pool of local leaders to head up community reform efforts, and encouraging national indoctrination. In part, the Movement was designed to prevent incidents of urban social unrest and crime by the intensified regulation of the urban lower and working classes.
projects, which were designed to foster long-term urban stability by raising the living standards of the city’s poor.

Third, it is essential to mention social historian Ōmori Minoru’s work on Osaka’s District Commissioner System (Hōmen iin seido), a government-directed neighborhood relief system established in October 1918.⁴⁶ Professor Ōmori’s research discusses the system’s formation and development in the context of the broader local governmental response to the 1918 Rice Riots. Jointly administered by local officials and members of the urban middle class, Ōmori argues that the system was a concrete manifestation of the rising political awareness of the urban middle class. According to Ōmori, after the Riots, members of the middle class increasingly came to see themselves rather the city’s ruling elite as “guardians of the public good” (kōeki no ninai te).⁴⁷ Following the District Commissioner System’s establishment, hundreds of middle class city residents were appointed to serve as local social workers known as hōmen iin, or district commissioners. In that capacity, Ōmori argues, they came to serve as “class mediators” (kaikyū chōteisha), whose primary function was to mitigate class strife and prevent conflict between Osaka’s wealthy upper class and the urban masses.

While Ōmori’s article is compelling and there is no doubt that the middle class played a major role in the District Commissioner System’s establishment and administration, his characterization of district commissioners as intermediaries who worked to prevent direct conflict between the ruling and lower classes fails to capture the complexity of the functions they performed in local society. This mischaracterization is due in large part to the fact Ōmori fails to examine the specific everyday duties that

⁴⁷ Ibid.
district commissioners actually performed. In contrast, this dissertation seeks to elucidate the character and function of Osaka’s District Commissioner System through an analysis of case records and journals maintained by the city’s commissioners. While it is true that Osaka’s district commissioners were called upon to intervene in a range of class-based disputes, including tenant strikes, their duties were actually far more complex. As I describe in chapter four, commissioners spent most of their time working to identify impoverished households in their district and attempting to provide those households with the resources and guidance they needed to achieve long-term economic self-sufficiency. In addition, they came to serve as the chief local executor of a range of governmental policies, including the national household registration and conscription systems. In that sense, commissioners functioned as both neighborhood caretakers, who worked to ensure the welfare of needy city households, and local representatives of the state, who helped to strengthen governmental control over impoverished and potentially restive urban districts.

Lastly, three important studies focus on the Substandard Housing District Reform Project (furyō jūtaku chiku kairyō jigyō), a Home Ministry-directed slum reform campaign initiated in 1927 in Japan’s six largest cities. First, it is essential to note the work of economic historian Kiso Junko.\(^48\) While Kiso only briefly discusses the Substandard Housing District Reform Project, her study provides a detailed analysis of the socio-economic structure of the residential districts in Osaka’s Nipponbashi neighborhood that were eventually targeted for reform. According to Kiso, substandard housing districts in Nipponbashi, including the infamous Hachijūken-nagaya slum,

played a crucial role in the urban economy, serving as a source of low-cost, unskilled labor power for a range of important local industries, including waste management, metal production, and match manufacturing. For Kiso, the reform projects carried out by the city authorities during the 1920s and 1930s had an unquestionably favorable impact. In her understanding, they helped to transform a number of Osaka’s most impoverished and squalid neighborhoods into clean, orderly residential districts, which low-income city residents were permitted to repopulate. However, Kiso fails to sufficiently elucidate the social consequences of the city government’s reform efforts. Specifically, she ignores the question of how government-led housing reform influenced or transformed the range of social relationships maintained by residents of the city’s substandard housing districts.

Analyzing the same historical period, political historian Miyano Yūichi examines the state of governmental housing policy during Seki Hajime’s term as Osaka mayor (1923-1935). Miyano’s research highlights the tension that existed between the central government’s housing policies and those advocated by Mayor Seki. According to Miyano, Seki was a progressive reformer, whose efforts to implement a comprehensive public housing policy that addressed the root causes of Osaka’s post-World War I housing shortage and included guarantees of livelihood protection for lower and working-class households, were thwarted by an overly conservative central government unwilling to expend the necessary financial resources.

Miyano’s examination offers a range of useful insights regarding the aims and philosophical underpinnings of the Home Ministry’s Substandard Housing District Reform Project, but it fails to consider sufficiently the internal socio-economic structure

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50 Ibid.
of the districts that were targeted for reform, the relationship of those districts to the broader urban socio-economic order, and the impact of housing reform on local residents. In order to understand the historical consequences of the city’s housing reform project, it is vital to consider what the areas targeted for reform were like before the project’s implementation. It is also essential to examine the relationship between housing reform and concurrent government-led efforts to intensify control over the urban poor and improve their living standards, attitudes, and behavior.

Urban geographer Mizuuchi Toshio’s research was the first to focus primarily on the Home Ministry’s Substandard Housing District Reform Project. To date, his 1984 article remains the most comprehensive treatment of the topic. As Mizuuchi describes, substandard housing reform projects were initiated simultaneously in Japan’s six largest cities. Rather than Osaka’s, Mizuuchi’s analysis focuses primarily on the cases of Nagoya and Kyoto. In addition to comparing how the project was implemented in both cities, he examines the manner in which local communities responded to government-led reform efforts. In the case of Kyoto, Mizuuchi uses a blend of city government records and newspaper coverage to describe the process whereby housing reform policy was enacted and the problems that the authorities faced when they tried to execute reform projects. According to his analysis, in the case of Kyoto, demands from local representatives of the “Outcast Liberation Movement” (buraku kaihō undō) played a crucial role in catalyzing and shaping government-led housing reform efforts. Unlike Osaka, where outcast districts were excluded from the list of areas selected for

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reconstruction, in Kyoto, housing reform assumed the character of a yūwa jigyō, or project designed to facilitate the socio-economic integration of outcast communities.

By focusing on the response of local communities to official reform efforts, Mizuuchi’s analysis provides us with a vital perspective from which to consider the historical significance of substandard housing reform in Osaka. However, like Miyano, he fails to consider both the internal social structure of the communities targeted for reform and the manner in which that structure changed as a result of governmental intervention.

In contrast, the analysis carried out herein seeks to understand how the socio-economic structure of one of the first districts targeted for reform—Osaka’s Hachijūken-nagaya slum—changed as a result of the Substandard Housing District Reform Project. In addition, it aims to elucidate how the residents of communities targeted for reform responded to the city government’s efforts. Although the authorities succeeded in executing a comprehensive tenement reform project in Hachijūken-nagaya, the project did not go uncontested. In fact, local opposition to government-led reform efforts shaped the contours of the project as it advanced. As I argue in chapter five, the housing reform project carried out in Hachijūken-nagaya was ultimately the product of two intersecting sets of negotiations, one between the city authorities and local residents and the other between private landowners and local residents. An analysis of relevant historical records reveals that city officials and landowners faced intense opposition from district residents, who fought to preserve the socio-economic relationships that they had developed with their neighbors and, in the process, prevented the authorities from moving forward with the project unilaterally.
Although there are few English-language studies that deal centrally with the themes of urban poverty and poverty management in modern Japan, there are a number of important studies that touch on both issues. I would like to mention several here. The first is Sheldon Garon’s 1987 study, *The State and Labor in Modern Japan*. Garon’s book examines national labor policy during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. In particular, he focuses on internal debates that took place among Japan’s political parties and within the national bureaucracy over how the nation’s various labor problems should be properly managed. As his analysis demonstrates, during the period in question, government officials were by no means unified on the question of labor and social policy. While a small number of officials and academics began in the late nineteenth-century to call for the establishment of a range of policies in order to protect the health and welfare of the nation’s laborers, many rejected the necessity of state intervention, arguing instead that traditional paternalistic bonds between employer and employee would prevent the sort of excesses and abuses seen in the industrialized nation-states of Europe and the United States. As Garon shows, early Meiji labor policies were actually designed to help producers secure the labor power that they required by restricting laborers’ freedom of movement. At the same time, the authorities actively worked to protect producers’ interests by prohibiting trade unions and severely punishing laborers who engaged in work stoppages and other activities that threatened industrial production. As a result, laborers found it difficult to advocate for improvements in their wages and working conditions. Poorly paid, they were forced to live in cramped and squalid company dorms, flophouses, and back-alley tenements.

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This situation persisted into the first decade of the twentieth century. However, as Garon shows, a group of muckraking journalists, academics, and reform-minded bureaucrats within the Home Ministry helped during the early 1900s to shed light on the dire conditions in which the nation’s industrial laborers lived and worked. By demonstrating the manner in which substandard living and working conditions adversely affected the health and productivity of the nation’s workers, social reformers such as Gotō Shimpei were able to prompt the passage of a series of social and labor protection policies, the first of which was the 1911 Factory Law. While Garon provides a detailed analysis of the complex debates over social and labor policy that took place within the central government, he does not examine how governmental policies were implemented on the local level and the manner in which they impacted the lives and communities of low-income urban laborers. In contrast, this dissertation attempts to describe not only the guiding philosophy behind the range of social policies implemented on the local level in twentieth-century Japan, but also the concrete ways in which those policies affected the everyday lives of impoverished urban workers and transformed the built environment and social structure of the neighborhoods in which they lived.

The second relevant English-language study is Sheldon Garon’s *Molding Japanese Minds: The State in Everyday Life.* In his book, Garon examines the various programs and institutions through which the Japanese state attempted to regulate the everyday lives of the citizenry and mobilize them in support of a range of state-directed projects. He argues that the state’s efforts cannot be explained in terms of Western theories of social control, which suggest the existence of a relatively weak state and “a

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rigid style of governance, in which the controllers demand a particular type of behavior from the people and systematically punish deviations.”

In attempting to explain the state’s efforts, Garon suggests the alternative concept of “social management,” which, in his definition, captures both the heavily centralized nature of the modern Japanese state and the collaborative role played by private activist groups and social reformers in state-led regulatory efforts. According to Garon, the concept of social management is also more appropriate because state-led interventions into the daily lives of the citizenry were designed not to suppress or prohibit popular activities, but to foster regulated frameworks within which they were permitted to take place. As Garon shows, within those frameworks, the authorities worked to transmit to the nation’s poor and working classes a range of normative habits and beliefs, and to cultivate in them a spirit of “self-management.”

Social management efforts were carried out on the local level primarily through what Garon calls campaigns of moral suasion. Generally directed by the Home Ministry, those campaigns served as a vital conduit linking the state with a broad range of social groups, including young women, destitute peasants, social workers, and the urban poor, and provided officials with direct access to local communities. Although early moral suasion campaigns, including the effort to transform Shintō into a state religion, failed due to a lack of unity of purpose on the part of state officials and an insufficiently developed network of local administrative mechanisms, during the twentieth century, the authorities utilized such campaigns to foster a spirit of national unity and to mobilize the

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55 Ibid, 7.
citizenry behind a range of national objectives, including public health, mass education, household savings, and military conscription.

In particular, Garon stresses the cooperative role that the middle classes played in government-led moral suasion programs. He argues that such programs emerged as a permanent feature of Japanese governance in the early twentieth-century largely because they were widely supported by the nation’s growing middle class. Notably, he highlights the role of middle-class professionals in efforts to alleviate poverty and encourage the moral reform of the poor. As Garon describes, throughout the period in question, there was widespread agreement that the state had a vital role to play in efforts to regulate and assist the poor. Within the central government, the key debates centered on how much control the state should exert over welfare policy and how the financial burden for poverty relief should be allocated to the private sector. According to Garon, national relief policies in the late-nineteenth century focused primarily on three groups: former samurai who had been stripped of their feudal privileges and stipends, disaster victims, and abandoned children. In contrast, limited attention was paid to the chronically poor because they posed no direct threat to the stability and security of the fledgling Meiji state.

According to Garon, the Meiji state’s first national relief measure was the 1874 Relief Regulations (Jukkyū kisoku), which were modeled largely on Tokugawa-era precedents. Those regulations stipulated that poverty relief should be based primarily on mutual assistance rather direct public aid. It also mandated that relief should be provided only to those who had no one to turn to and were physically incapable of self-sufficiency. In other words, it excluded able-bodied persons and individuals with family members
who could care for their needs. Importantly, the measure centralized the administration of previously diffuse relief measures. Once relief efforts had been brought under centralized control, the Meiji state worked to heavily restrict total expenditures on assistance for the poor, while at the same time attempting to encourage mutual assistance efforts on the local level.

As Garon describes, the Meiji state’s relief policy was influenced not only by Tokugawa-era precedents, but also new ideas that began to filter in from Western Europe. Influenced by the ideas of Robert Malthus and Henry Fawcett, a number of influential government officials, including Fukuzawa Yukichi, began to warn that the excessive provision of poverty relief had the dangerous potential to encourage widespread dependence on public largesse. Accordingly, the authorities attempted to utilize public assistance only as a last resort and attempted, whenever possible, to shift the burden for poverty relief to the family and local community.

According to Garon, state welfare policy entered a new phase in 1908, after the Home Ministry issued a directive encouraging local government agencies to begin morally instructing the poor. The chief advocate of this policy was Home Ministry official Inoue Tomoichi, who argued that poverty prevention had to begin with the general moral transformation of the nation’s poor. Echoing the ideas of Fabian socialists Sidney and Beatrice Webb, Inoue and others began to call for the implementation of a broad-based moral suasion program to reform the habits and beliefs of destitute citizens. As Garon describes, that effort came to be implemented across Japan under the auspices of the Local Improvement Movement, a Home Ministry-supervised relief campaign, which was initiated after the 1904-1905 Russo-Japanese War and aimed to organize
previously disparate community organizations into centrally-directed federations. In addition, the Home Ministry established relief funds in each prefecture in order to provide financial support to local philanthropic organizations. Garon argues that this helped to spur a major expansion of private social projects around the country.

Garon argues that the 1920s saw a marked expansion of governmental social programs and private social projects. The expansion was triggered by a dramatic intensification of social problems across Japan during and after World War I. As Garon notes, many of the national social policies implemented by the Home Ministry during the period in question were explicitly modeled on public welfare and labor programs from England, Weimar Germany, and the United States. The majority of those programs were supervised by the Home Ministry’s Bureau of Social Affairs, which was established in 1920 to plan and direct national social projects. The Bureau was staffed by a new generation of young, progressive social bureaucrats who believed that society as a whole bore a shared responsibility to care for the poor. Accordingly, they called for a much larger role for the state in the funding and administration of social welfare projects. Under their direction, the Japanese government implemented a wide range of new social programs, including the aforementioned District Commissioner System, and enacted a series of new welfare legislation, including the 1929 Relief Law (Kyūgohō), which replaced the 1874 Relief Regulations and significantly enlarged the scope of public assistance.

While Garon’s analysis traces the development of national welfare policy from the immediate aftermath of the Meiji Restoration to the Second World War and offers a detailed description of the guiding philosophy behind that policy, his analysis focuses
almost entirely on the efforts of the central government. Accordingly, he does not discuss how the various social groups targeted for reform viewed reform efforts and how their communities and daily lives were impacted by governmental intervention. Although he offers fragmentary regional examples, he does not address the complex range of local factors that influenced the content of social policy and limited its effectiveness. In contrast, the analysis carried out herein focuses on the development of poverty management policy in one urban area, Osaka. While it considers the content and philosophy of that policy, it also attempts to elucidate how the poor responded to government-led reform projects and the material ways in which those projects affected their communities. Such an analysis will enable us to elucidate the concrete historical legacy of the range of modern Japanese poverty management policy.

Third, it is essential to mention Jeff Hanes’ 2002 biography of Seki Hajime, *City as Subject: Seki Hajime and the Reinvention of Modern Osaka.* The book traces the philosophical development of Osaka’s reform-minded seventh mayor, Seki Hajime, from his childhood to his death in 1935. Trained as an economist, Seki worked for much of his life as a professor in the business school at Tokyo Commercial College. As Hanes describes, his thinking was shaped by an extended period of study in Western Europe. Under the direction of German political economist Wilhelm Roscher, Seki immersed himself in the state-centered national economics of Friedrich List. According to Hanes, Seki came to view the nation as “the central figure of modernity.” At the same time, however, he believed that the state should exist not “as a power- or wealth-hungry entity.” On the contrary, he argued that the national economy should serve the needs of

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the people and should function to bolster their security and prosperity. In that sense, he espoused the philosophy of social progressivism, which was gaining influence worldwide during the early decades of the twentieth century.

As Hanes demonstrates, these philosophical principles informed Seki’s policies after he arrived in Osaka in 1914 to take up the post of deputy mayor and after he assumed the post of mayor in 1923. Viewing the city as a dynamic social organism, Seki believed that the government had a vital role to play in addressing the ills that afflicted it and in protecting the welfare of its residents. According to Hanes, this stance brought Seki into direct conflict with urban landowners and state bureaucrats, who viewed the city as little more than an economic entity and cared little for the plight of the urban masses. Despite facing significant opposition, Seki was able to move forward with a broad range of urban reform projects, including the construction of public housing tracts, parks, and an urban subway system. As Hanes shows, these projects were all part of a broader effort to improve environmental conditions in Osaka and to make the city more livable for the millions who resided and labored there.

Ultimately, Hanes argues, landed capitalism, fiscal constraints, and bureaucratic opposition prevented Seki from fully implementing his plans for Osaka’s reform. Moreover, after his death, Seki’s well-intentioned vision was transformed into a segregationist program, which functioned to keep working-class families isolated from wealthy downtown neighborhoods and middle-class residential enclaves in the city’s suburbs. Although Hanes does an excellent job elucidating the content and philosophy of the various policies implemented by Seki during his time in Osaka, he does not sufficiently address their material impact on the social structure of the communities.
targeted for reform. He also does not consider how the city’s poor and working classes responded to the various reforms that Seki attempted to put in place. Despite Hanes’ claims that Seki was motivated largely by a benevolent desire to improve the lives of the urban masses, the analysis carried out in chapter five of this dissertation reveals that some city residents viewed Seki’s reform projects as highly invasive and destructive, and fiercely opposed them in an effort to protect their communities and preserve their economic interests. A singular focus on the official perspective limits Hanes’ ability to comprehensively assess the historical legacy of the range of the reforms implemented under Seki’s leadership.

(F) Chapter Outline

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. Each focuses on a specific historical encounter involving, on the one hand, members of Osaka’s urban underclass and, on the other, a specific segment from among the wide range of actors that engaged in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century efforts to regulate the urban poor.

Chapter one analyzes the relationships between urban poverty and local governance in Osaka in the 1870s and early 1880s. Beginning with the dismantling of early modern Osaka’s officially sanctioned beggar fraternity, the kaito nakama, it attempts to elucidate the basic institutional mechanisms through which the authorities in Osaka attempted to regulate the urban poor.

The majority of the poverty management policies introduced on the local level in Osaka in the aftermath of the Meiji Restoration were designed to encourage the socio-economic integration of the city’s poor, many of whom had survived since the seventeenth century primarily by begging for alms in specific city neighborhoods. Doing
so entailed not only breaking their dependence on the largesse of city residents, but also providing them with an alternative means of subsistence. That effort, in turn, required the creation of a range of new relief institutions designed to transmit to former beggars basic vocational skills and “proper” modes of behavior. Replacing the segregated beggar enclaves of the Tokugawa era, these institutions were created in an effort to regulate the urban poor, a social group that came increasingly after the Restoration to be seen as a source of crime and urban instability.

However, many of the publicly administered institutions founded during this period were poorly funded and, as a consequence, short-lived. As a result, during the 1880s, the prefectural authorities began to gradually shift the burden of poverty management to a series of privately administered workhouses and relief institutions. This chapter concludes by examining that shift and considering its historical consequences.

Chapter two analyzes efforts by the prefectural authorities to carry out Osaka’s first large-scale “slum clearance.” In particular, it focuses on the 1886 slum clearance proposal composed by Osaka Prefectural Police Chief Inspector Ōura Kanetake. Presented at the height of the deadliest cholera epidemic in Japanese history, the plan called for the immediate demolition of the city’s slums and the mass relocation to a walled residential compound southwest of the city of thousands of beggars and vagrants.

This chapter examines the manner in which perceptions about the relationship between poverty and infectious disease influenced official policies towards the urban poor by focusing on Ōura’s proposal and the complex administrative process that unfolded following its official presentation in September 1886. Frequent outbreaks of cholera during the 1870s and 1880s gave rise to new forms of discrimination against the
urban poor and prompted the establishment of an increasingly exclusionary regime of regional poverty management. Bolstered by a growing body of scientific data suggesting intimate links between poverty, squalor, and disease, that discourse supported, at least temporarily, the establishment of an exclusionary regime of public poverty management, which aimed not to promote the socio-economic integration of the poor, but to facilitate their long-term segregation from the rest of urban society. In that sense, the poverty management regime that developed in Osaka during the mid-1880s was fundamentally different than the one introduced in the aftermath of the Meiji Restoration. Now cast as “transmitters” (baikaisha) of infectious disease, beggars and vagrants, it was asserted, had to be expelled from the city in order to protect the general population from the threat of contagion.

Chapter three examines the history of Osaka’s police-administered “poor schools” (hinmin gakkō). Founded by the chief of Osaka’s Namba Police Precinct, Amano Tokisaburō, the schools were created in an effort to extend mandatory education to child laborers who were unable to attend school during the day because they were required to work in support of their families. The creation of Osaka’s “poor schools” represents a major turning point in the history of poverty management policies in Osaka. Specifically, their establishment marks a shift away from a system under which a select group of private institutions were contracted to execute the functions of poverty management to a hybrid system administered by the police and funded by private philanthropists.

More than educational institutions, the schools also served as community welfare centers and the locus of a range of police-administered relief projects, such as a trachoma eradication program, designed to foster long-term urban stability by raising the living
standards of the city’s poor. In addition, they functioned as disciplinary institutions, where needy children, whose parents were either absent or incapable of providing their offspring with the “appropriate” social influences, could receive both practical and moral instruction under the direction of officers from Namba Police Station. Unlike the poverty management policies examined in chapter two, which were intended to promote the exclusion of slum dwellers from urban society, the city’s “poor schools” were designed to encourage their reform and inclusion in the urban socio-economic order.

Chapter four examines the formation and development of Osaka’s District Commissioner System (Hōmen iin seido), a neighborhood-level poverty relief system established in the immediate aftermath of the 1918 Rice Riots. Founded by prefectural advisor and leading social policy expert, Ogawa Shigejirō, the System was intended as the centerpiece of a broader program of government-led social reform that included the creation of a vast network of publicly administered welfare, job-training, and medical institutions.

The analysis of the District Commissioner System’s character and function carried out in this chapter seeks to elucidate the logic, objectives, and historical impact of the long-term governmental response to the 1918 Rice Riots. The social reforms implemented in the aftermath of the Riots signaled the emergence of a fundamentally new system of poverty management, in which the state assumed a leading role in not only the funding, but also the planning and administration of urban social projects. Unlike foregoing relief policies, which sought only to address the symptoms of poverty, the reforms introduced after the Riots were designed to prevent poverty’s occurrence by simultaneously encouraging the rapid socio-economic inclusion of the urban poor and
mitigating the range of external forces, such as rapid inflation, usury, and unemployment, which served to promote economic instability.

Under the prevention-based regime of poverty management implemented after the Riots, the primary executor of urban social policy shifted from private philanthropists and local police to hundreds of officially appointed neighborhood-level social workers known as hōmen iin, or district commissioners. Standing at the center of a rapidly expanding network of government-administered social welfare institutions, Osaka’s commissioners were charged with a broad range of duties. Those included identifying impoverished persons and helping them to achieve long-term self-sufficiency by providing them with the resources necessary to survive without external assistance. By analyzing the activities of Osaka’s commissioners, this chapter seeks to understand the basic strategies through which they attempted to assist needy city residents and the social impact of their efforts.

Chapter five examines the historical trajectory of the Substandard Housing Reform Project, a publicly funded housing reform program initiated by the Osaka municipal government in the late 1920s. The program aimed primarily to reform the built environment of more than a dozen slum districts located on Osaka’s south end near the former Nagamachi slum. Unlike the slum clearances executed in Tokyo, Osaka, and Kobe during the cholera wave of the late nineteenth-century, which were designed to permanently segregate the poor from the rest of the urban population, the housing reform projects initiated in the late 1920s were intended to encourage their controlled inclusion into urban society through the hygienic reconstruction of the districts in which they lived. Accordingly, the city government’s plan stipulated that all residents of substandard
housing districts be allowed to return once reform projects were complete. From the outset, the municipal authorities wanted to ensure that substandard housing reform did not result in the permanent displacement of slum dwellers from the urban labor market.

By focusing on the first neighborhood targeted for reconstruction, Hachijūken-nagaya, chapter five elucidates the content and objectives of Osaka’s Substandard Housing District Reform Project. The analysis of relevant legislation, municipal government records, and contemporary media coverage reveals the local social impact of housing reform and the manner in which it transformed the relationship between the city authorities and the urban poor.

(G) A Brief Note on Sources

As the above description indicates, this dissertation makes use of a wide array of archival sources, including government surveys, official proclamations, local governmental reports, newspaper articles, and private journals. The majority of the sources utilized in this dissertation are not written from the perspective of the city’s poor. Although the voice of the urban poor appears in a fragmentary manner in certain newspaper articles and reports, the sources used primarily reflect the perspective of officials, academics, and journalists. This is due in large part to heavy restrictions on the handling of private information in Osaka prefecture. Although the regulations governing the use of historical materials containing personal data were eased in April 2012, I was prohibited from using a wide array of documents currently contained in Osaka’s prefectural and municipal archives.
CHAPTER TWO. POVERTY RELIEF AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC INTEGRATION IN LATE-NINETEENTH CENTURY OSAKA

(I) Introduction

This chapter examines the relationship between urban poverty and local governance in Osaka during the final three decades of the nineteenth century. Beginning with the dismantling of early-modern Osaka’s officially-sanctioned beggar fraternity, the kaito nakama, it attempts to elucidate the basic policies and institutional mechanisms through which the Osaka prefectural authorities worked to manage urban poverty. In addition, it seeks to identify and understand the objectives of the range of actors from both the public and private sector that were involved in efforts to regulate the urban poor.

The majority of the poverty management policies introduced on the local level in Osaka during the late nineteenth century were designed to encourage the socio-economic integration of the city’s poor, many of whom had survived since the seventeenth century primarily by begging for alms in specific city neighborhoods. This entailed not only breaking their dependence on the largesse of city residents, but also providing them with an alternative means of subsistence. This, in turn, required the creation of a range of new relief institutions designed to transmit to the poor basic vocational skills and “proper” modes of behavior. Replacing the segregated beggar enclaves of the Tokugawa era, these institutions were created in an effort to define and regulate the urban poor, a social group that came increasingly after the 1868 Meiji Restoration to be seen as a source of crime and urban instability.

This chapter begins with an analysis of the basic institutions through which the authorities in Osaka attempted to manage urban poverty during the early-modern period. It then describes the process whereby those institutions were dismantled in the aftermath of the Meiji Restoration and concludes by examining the strategies and mechanisms through which the authorities in Osaka attempted to govern the city’s poor during the late nineteenth century. Although the Osaka prefectural government attempted during the late 1860s and 1870s to regulate impoverished urban dwellers directly through the employment of publicly administered workhouses and relief institutions, many such efforts were poorly funded and quickly collapsed. As a result, during the 1880s, the prefectural authorities began to gradually shift the burden of poverty management to a series of privately administered institutions. This chapter elucidates that shift and its historical consequences.

(II) Urban Poverty in Tokugawa-Era Osaka

During the Tokugawa era (1603-1867), Japanese society was organized into a composite network of self-regulating status groups (*mibun shūdan*).\(^{59}\) While the boundaries between individual groups were often porous and flexible, most status groups possessed a body of internal regulations and a distinct hierarchical structure. The members of each group controlled a specific set of collective status rights and were required to perform a variety of official duties, or *goyō*.\(^{60}\) Osaka’s beggar fraternity was no exception. From the seventeenth century, licensed fraternity members and their subordinates maintained the official right to gather alms in specific city neighborhoods.

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In exchange, they were required to perform a range of police duties under the direction of officials from the Osaka City Magistrate’s Office (machi bugyōsho).

However, during the decade immediately following the 1868 Meiji Restoration, the newly established Meiji state progressively dismantled these status groups, stripping group members of their long-held status rights and official functions. Abandoning long-standing status divisions, the central government initiated a broad-based state building project designed, at least in part, to foster an internally cohesive national populous unconstrained by official status restrictions and capable of collectively contributing to the advancement of the fledgling state’s economic, political, and military objectives.  

This chapter considers the historical significance of the dismantling of the Tokugawa-era status system from the perspective of Osaka’s poor. In order to properly grasp how that process affected the daily lives of the urban poor, it is essential to have a basic understanding of how they lived and how they were governed while the system was still in place. The following analysis attempts to provide the information necessary to achieve such an understanding.

During the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries, the authorities in Osaka organized the city’s beggars (hinin) into a fraternal organization known as the kaito nakama. While fraternity members were officially prohibited from residing inside of the city of Osaka, they were permitted to live in four walled residential enclaves known as kaito located just outside the city. Although the fraternity continued to expand during the decades following its establishment, by the end of the seventeenth century it

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63 The four enclaves were known as the Tenma kaito, Tobita kaito, Dōtonbori kaito, and Tennōji kaito.
had become a relatively closed organization with a fixed group of core members, who performed a range of official duties under the direction of the city magistrate’s office and survived primarily by begging for alms inside the city.\textsuperscript{64}

During the seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries, the members of Osaka’s beggar fraternity developed “client relationships” (\textit{deiri kankei}) with the residents of specific city neighborhoods.\textsuperscript{65} Fraternity members who entered client relationships were granted exclusive begging rights. In exchange for the right to beg in a specific neighborhood, they were required to dispatch their subordinates to that neighborhood to act as local watchmen (\textit{hininban}) and to police all forms of unsanctioned begging.

During the Tokugawa era, a leadership body known as the \textit{onchū} (“honorable brotherhood”) governed each of the city’s four beggar enclaves. The \textit{onchū} was comprised of a single chief, or \textit{chōri}, and a small number of sub-chiefes, or \textit{kogashira}. Although the number of sub-chiefs varied depending on the enclave and historical period, between 1804 and 1818, for example, there were seven in the Tennōji, Tobita, and Dōtonbori enclaves and six in the Tenma enclave.\textsuperscript{66} Also, while scholars have conventionally asserted that the sub-chiefs were positioned below the chiefs in the fraternity’s hierarchy, historian Tsukada Takashi has shown that both groups were effectively equal in status and authority and administered enclave affairs as a collective.\textsuperscript{67}

The duties of each \textit{onchū} included maintaining enclave population records, enforcing Bakufu pronouncements, regulations issued by the city magistrate, and internal

\textsuperscript{64} Uchida Kusuo. “Kinsei hininron.” \textit{Burakushi no kenkyū zenkaidaihen}. Kyoto: Buraku mondai kenkyūsho (1979), 224-225.
\textsuperscript{65} Tsukada Takashi. \textit{Toshi Ōsaka to hinin}. Tokyo: Yamakawa shuppan (2001), 11-12.
\textsuperscript{67} Tsukada Takashi. \textit{Toshi Ōsaka to hinin}. Tokyo: Yamakawa shuppan (2001), 37-45.
regulations and agreements, and mediating disputes involving enclave members. In addition, an overarching administrative body comprised of the chiefs and sub-chiefs from each of the four enclaves was established to handle problems that concerned the beggar fraternity as a whole or could not be resolved within a single enclave.

As a rule, the positions of chief and sub-chief were hereditary. Generally, both chiefs and sub-chiefs received annual salaries, which were funded using alms gathered in the city by fraternity members. In addition, both groups performed a range of police duties under the direction of deputies affiliated with the city magistrate’s office. Those duties included regulating unlicensed beggars, investigating crimes, conducting police patrols, and tracking and arresting criminal offenders.

Below this top stratum, there was a larger group of persons known as wakakimono, or “youngsters.” The number of youngsters varied depending on the specific enclave from several dozen to one hundred. Within each enclave, youngsters were subdivided into several equal-sized groups. Each group was then placed under the authority of an individual sub-chief. Collectively, the chief, sub-chiefs, and youngsters comprised the core membership of Osaka’s hinin fraternity. The members of all three groups performed official duties under the direction of officials from the city magistrate’s office and owned dwellings inside one of the city’s four beggar enclaves. Although the specific nature of the duties that the members of each group performed was different, all three groups engaged in activities related to the policing of the city.

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69 In addition to regulating unlicensed begging, members of Osaka’s beggar fraternity patrolled the city, investigated crimes, monitored criminal suspects, and apprehended criminal offenders.
Most beggar chiefs, sub-chiefs, and youngsters retained subordinates known as deshi.\textsuperscript{70} Fraternity members were charged with the duty of caring for the welfare of their subordinates. In exchange, subordinates were required to serve the fraternity member with whom they were associated. Although they were also part of the hinin status group, deshi existed on the margins of the beggar fraternity and did not maintain the rights and responsibilities held by core members. In many cases, beggar subordinates were dispatched to city neighborhoods and wealthy merchant houses to serve as watchmen, or kaitoban.\textsuperscript{71} Unlike the chiefs, sub-chiefs, and youngsters, they did not perform official duties under the direction of officials from the city magistrate’s office or own a hut inside one of Osaka’s four beggar enclaves.

During the early-seventeenth century, the members of Osaka’s beggar fraternity were alienated from all forms of ownership. Lacking both a dwelling and stable employment, they were similar in character to the modern-day homeless.\textsuperscript{72} Most were from outside of Osaka and migrated to the city during the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries. Many core members, including the first chief of the Dōtonbori beggar enclave, were former Christians who were forced to renounce their faith at the beginning of the Tokugawa period.\textsuperscript{73}

Over time, however, the mode of existence of beggar fraternity members changed dramatically. As noted above, fraternity members gradually obtained a series of official rights and duties. In addition, they secured ownership of their own residential enclaves

\textsuperscript{70} Tsukada Takashi. \textit{Toshi Ōsaka to hinin}. Tokyo: Yamakawa shuppan (2001), 5.
\textsuperscript{71} Tsukada Takashi. \textit{Kinsei Ōsaka no hinin to mibunteki shūen}. Kyoto: Buraku mondai kenkyūsho (2007), 163-191.
\textsuperscript{72} Tsukada Takashi. \textit{Toshi Ōsaka to hinin}. Tokyo: Yamakawa shuppan (2001), 2.
and dwellings. In that sense, they were distinct from the unlicensed beggars (nohinin or shinhinin) and unregistered vagrants that continued to appear in the city following the fraternity’s formation. In fact, the members of Osaka’s beggar fraternity were charged with the duty of policing and providing relief to unlicensed beggars and vagrants. For example, during the Kyōhō famine (1732), hundreds of starving vagrants flooded into the city in search of food. Rather than assuming direct responsibility for relieving those vagrants, the city magistrate entrusted their care and regulation to the city’s beggar chiefs. Fraternity members were instructed to provide emergency relief to individuals who were too weak or sick to walk. At the same time, they were advised to drive out any able-bodied beggars from outside of Osaka who came to the city in search of food.

While members of the beggar fraternity survived by gathering alms in specific neighborhoods inside the city, they were not allowed to gather alms whenever and wherever they liked. Rather, begging was carried out according to an established set of guidelines, which all members of the fraternity were required to observe. Generally, the members of Osaka’s beggar fraternity engaged in two types of begging: “formalized begging” (jōshiki kanjin), which took place across the city during fixed periods each year, such as the new-year’s festival season, and “occasion-based begging” (kikkyō kanjin), which took place in specific neighborhoods at the time of auspicious and inauspicious occasions, such as weddings, births, and funerals.

In most cases, the right to beg in an individual neighborhood was limited to a single fraternity member and his subordinates. However, within the fraternity, members

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bought, sold, and leased the begging rights to specific neighborhoods. Therefore, it was not uncommon for a single licensed beggar to own the begging rights to multiple neighborhoods at the same time. Directly and indirectly, those rights supported the livelihoods of hundreds of licensed beggars and thousands of their subordinates throughout the early modern period. In that sense, they served as the basis of an officially sanctioned poverty management system, under which the survival of thousands of poor urban dwellers was entrusted to the largesse of private citizens. Therefore, rather than assuming direct responsibility for the welfare of the city’s beggars, the city magistrate made it possible for them to subsist through the creation and maintenance of a citywide almsgiving network. That network remained in place in the immediate aftermath of the Meiji Restoration. However, during the early 1870s, the Osaka prefectural government moved to dismantle the city’s beggar fraternity and dissolve the client relationships that members of the fraternity had established with specific city neighborhoods.

(III) The Dismantling of Osaka’s Beggar Fraternity

Osaka’s licensed beggar fraternity was progressively dismantled through a series of reforms introduced by the Osaka prefectural authorities between 1868 and 1872. As it had long served as the core component in Osaka’s system of poverty management, the fraternity’s dissolution had far reaching social implications. Members of the city’s beggar fraternity and their subordinates were stripped of the special rights and duties that they had maintained under the Tokugawa-era status system. In addition, the prefectural authorities dismantled the city’s four designated beggar enclaves, sold the land on which

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the enclaves stood to private buyers, forcefully relocated thousands of licensed beggars to Osaka’s impoverished Nagamachi district, and issued an official ban on the practice of almsgiving.

Throughout the Tokugawa period, the members of Osaka’s beggar fraternity survived primarily by collecting alms from specific city neighborhoods with which they developed “client relationships.” In addition to dissolving those relationships, the ban on almsgiving officially deprived thousands of the city’s most impoverished residents of their primary source of subsistence. In the paragraphs that follow, I will analyze the fraternity’s dismantling and its historical impact. While fraternity members were stripped of both their begging rights and longstanding police duties, 100 former members of the city’s beggar fraternity were almost immediately hired to serve as low-ranking police functionaries. Therefore, former members of early modern Osaka’s beggar fraternity continued to perform police duties even after the fraternity was formally dismantled.

Osaka’s beggar fraternity was dismantled incrementally through a series of government-led reforms issued between 1868 and 1872. The first notable reform was implemented in March 1868 in response to a request from representatives of the beggar fraternity, who were seeking confirmation from the newly established Osaka Administrative Office of their long-held status rights and duties. While the authorities did not immediately abolish those rights and duties, they were unwilling to continue with

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the arrangement that had existed before the Meiji Restoration between the fraternity and the Osaka city magistrate.

First, despite requests from the fraternity’s four chiefs to retain the title of chōri, which they had held since the early seventeenth century, the Osaka Administrative Office (Osaka saibansho) announced that they would now officially be referred to as hinin koyagashira.\(^\text{81}\) This change in title was connected to a concrete shift in the nature of the duties performed by members of the fraternity. During much of the Tokugawa period, fraternity chiefs and sub-chiefs were able to execute their duties with a significant level of independence.\(^\text{82}\) For example, they were permitted to track and detain criminal offenders, regardless of status, without first securing the permission of police officials from the city magistrate’s office. However, the reform issued in March 1868 explicitly prohibited members of the city’s beggar fraternity from acting “on their own.” Upon observing a criminal offender or incident, fraternity members were now required to first “file a report” to city police officials and “receive instructions.” Only then were they permitted to move forward with an arrest.

The 1868 reform also established unprecedented restrictions on the collection of alms. Namely, while the authorities continued to allow members of the city’s beggar fraternity and their subordinates to subsist by gathering alms, members were no longer allowed to go from house to house begging at the time of weddings, funerals, and other neighborhood occasions. From now on, alms that would have been dispensed on such

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\(^{81}\) Harada Tomohiko, Watanabe Toru, and Akisada Yoshikazu, eds. “Chōri no meishō shokusho nado ni tsuite kaitei o tsutatsu, 19 March 1868.” Kindai burakushi shiryo shusei dai-ikkan: ‘kaihōrei’ no seiritsu. Tokyo: San’ichi shobō (1984), 268. In a contemporary context, the term saibansho is best translated as court. However, the saibansho established in Osaka after the Meiji Restoration performed a range of administrative functions. It was established to replace the Osaka City Magistrate’s Office.

\(^{82}\) Tsukada Takashi. Toshi Ōsaka to hinin. Tokyo: Yamakawa shuppan (2001), 64.
occasions by individual households were to be collected by neighborhood officials and provided in one lump sum to the fraternity. Once provided to the fraternity, the alms were then divided up and distributed to relevant fraternity members. Furthermore, in order to prevent disruptive and aggressive begging in individual city neighborhoods, the authorities ordered the city’s beggar chiefs to strictly police fraternity members.

While this reform did not result in the dissolution of the long-standing client relationships that individual members of the fraternity maintained with specific city neighborhoods, it did mark a major shift in the methods whereby occasion-based alms were collected. As noted in the previous section, at the time of “auspicious and inauspicious occasions” (kikkyō), members of the beggar fraternity and their subordinates were traditionally permitted to seek alms from households in the neighborhoods with which they maintained client relationships. As a result of this reform, however, members of the beggar fraternity were no longer able to go directly to households where special occasions were taking place to gather alms. Rather than interacting directly with individual households, relations between fraternity members and local households would now be mediated by neighborhood officials.

However, this reform applied only to occasion-based begging. As noted above, the members of Osaka’s beggar fraternity also engaged in seasonal begging during specially designated periods each year. In a separate proclamation issued in March 1868, the Osaka Administrative Office announced that seasonal begging could continue as before under terms set independently by the residents of each of the city’s more than 600
Therefore, in the case of seasonal begging, it was still possible for some members of the beggar fraternity to go from house to house gathering alms.

The second major reform came just four months later. In July 1868, the recently established Osaka Prefectural Office (Osaka fuchō) issued a pronouncement changing the official title of the city’s four beggar chiefs from hinin koyagashira to shikasho toshiyori (elders of the four places). While this change in title had little material impact, it signaled a desire on the part of the prefectural authorities to extend to the city’s beggar enclaves the standardized administrative structure found in each chō, which was overseen by officials known as toshiyori.

This arrangement persisted without alteration until 1870. However, in July of that year, the prefectural government distributed licenses (kifuda) to all beggars who came from communities located inside the prefecture. This included all of the members of the city’s beggar fraternity and their thousands of designated subordinates. Beggars and vagrants found wandering the prefecture who lacked a license were to be immediately expelled from the prefecture.

On the same day, the prefectural authorities issued a second proclamation stipulating that diseased beggars and vagrants found wandering the city should be sent immediately to the prefectural Relief Center (kyūjutsujō) in southeastern Osaka’s

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83 Harada Tomohiko, Watanabe Toru, and Akisada Yoshikazu, eds. “Shikasho hinin no moraimono nado ni tsuite shiji, March 1868.” Kindai burakushi shiryō shūsei dai-ikkan: ‘kaihorei’ no seiritsu. March 1868. Tokyo: San’ichi shobō (1984), 268-269. During the early modern and early-Meiji periods, the city was divided into more than 620 local administrative units known as chō.


Fudanotsujichō neighborhood. “Seriously ill beggars” (jūbyō no hinin) found collapsed inside the city and under bridges” were now to receive publicly funded relief until they had completely recovered. When an ill beggar was discovered, city residents were instructed to immediately file a report with the nearest hinin watchman. The watchman was then to escort the individual to the prefectural Relief Center, where he or she would receive food, shelter, and, when necessary, medical treatment.

The next major shift came in early 1871. In a March proclamation, the prefectural government took the unprecedented step of banning the provision of alms (hodokoshimono aiataesōro gi keshite ainarazu sōro) to “unlicensed beggars” (musatsu no hinin). Throughout the early modern period, the city magistrate’s office required that beggars unaffiliated with the Osaka’s officially sanctioned beggar fraternity be immediately removed from the city. However, city officials never took the step of officially banning city residents from providing such individuals with alms. Under guidelines established in the above proclamation, unlicensed beggars were defined as persons who were originally from outside of the prefecture and lacked a prefecturally-issued begging license. The March 1871 proclamation was intended to intensify the regulation of unlicensed beggars, who had continued to appear in the city following the distribution of prefectural licenses. For many prefectural officials, unlicensed beggars continued to flock to Osaka in part because residents were willing to provide them with

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86 Ōsaka-shi shiryō hensansho, ed. “Jūbyō no hinin o nayashita hinin o tsujite kyūjutsuba ni shūyō, 6 October 1870.” Ōsaka hennenshi (98), Unpublished.
87 Nayashita hinin were beggars who were permitted until the early 1870s to live in huts under the city’s raised riverside storehouses (naya) and, in exchange, were required to police unlicensed beggars and vagrants found wandering the city.
alms. If the prospect of receiving offerings of money or food disappeared, it was hoped
that such persons would no longer seek subsistence in the city.

In an effort to prevent unlicensed beggars from obtaining shelter inside the city,
the authorities issued a second proclamation just four days later prohibiting them from
seeking shelter in specially licensed flophouses (kichinyado) located in Osaka’s
Nagamachi neighborhood.89 During the Tokugawa era, Nagamachi’s flophouse
proprietors were specially permitted to arrange housing and employment for a range of
social groups, including unregistered vagrants (museki karaninbetsu) and “wild beggars”
(nohinin), who were otherwise prohibited from residing in the city. This proclamation
banned persons lacking the appropriate certification from seeking shelter in any of
Nagamachi’s 39 licensed flophouses. Under the newly established regulations,
individuals lacking either a “work permit” (kasegi tegata) or begging license were to be
immediately reported by flophouse proprietors to the local authorities.

Despite the above changes, members of the city’s beggar fraternity continued, as
they had since the early seventeenth century, to live in four officially sanctioned enclaves
just outside the city limits and retained the right to collect alms from the residents of
specific neighborhoods across Osaka. However, the authorities began to dramatically
overhaul this arrangement in the spring of 1871.90 In an April proclamation, the
prefectural government noted that while “city residents” had “willingly provided alms” to
members of the beggar fraternity who carried out official policing duties for the city
magistrate’s office, the practice of almsgiving had over time given rise to a range of

(1971), 314.
90 Harada Tomohiko, Watanabe Toru, and Akisada Yoshikazu, eds. “Shikasho chōri e no kyūryō no shikyu
hōhō o kaitei, 19 April 1871.” Kindai burakushi shiryō shūsei dai-ikkan: ‘kaihōrei’ no seiritsu. Tokyo:
San’ichi shobō (1984), 301-302.
corrupt practices (*heishū*). For example, during seasonal begging periods, such as the New Year’s holiday, members of the beggar fraternity used their authority as officially appointed police functionaries to demand monetary offerings from city residents. This, in turn, caused “significant trouble and annoyance for individuals throughout the city.”

However, as members of the beggar fraternity “were employed to police the city,” it was essential “that city residents contributed money” to pay them for their efforts. Therefore, it was necessary to find a way to provide them with compensation while preventing coercive and disruptive begging practices. According to the authorities, the key problem was that fraternity members “went themselves to collect alms.” In order to resolve this issue, the above proclamation abolished the practice of direct alms collection. At the same time, it introduced a new annual tax that every household in the city and surrounding counties, including both homeowners (*iemochi*) and renters (*kashiyanin*), was required to pay. Although fees were assessed annually, they were to be paid in two semi-annual installments. Rates varied depending on the size and location of the household. Households inside the city limits were required to pay an annual fee of 48 mon per *tsubo* (3.3 square meters). In contrast, households in Nishinari and Higashinari Counties were required to pay 24 mon per *tsubo*. When there were rental dwellings on the premises, part of the burden was to be shifted to tenants.

The revenue that the authorities collected was to be used to pay the salaries of the beggar fraternity members who performed official police duties. Notably, the

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92 Ibid.
93 Under newly established prefectural guidelines, fees were to be paid in the sixth month and the eleventh month.
proclamation amounted to a ban on both seasonal begging and the direct exchange of alms between city residents and members of the beggar fraternity. From now on, when a member of the beggar fraternity was observed in the city seeking alms, they were to be “promptly reported” to the local authorities. At this point, however, the fraternity remained in place and its members and their subordinates continued to reside in four tax-exempt enclaves just outside the city limits.

The beggar fraternity was officially disbanded on October 19, 1871, shortly after the promulgation of the senshō haishirei, or Edict Abolishing Outcast Statuses. In addition to formally abolishing the eta and hinin status groups, it mandated that the members of both groups would now, in terms of both “status and occupation,” be treated as “commoners” (heimin). In addition, separate population registers would no longer be kept for persons of eta and hinin status. Rather, they would now be officially registered as commoners. Importantly, the proclamation also abolished land tax exemptions and other specialized regulations for members of both groups.

This had serious implications for the members of Osaka’s beggar fraternity. As members of the hinin status group, they had been permitted since the seventeenth century

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95 Ōsaka-fu, ed. “Eta hinin no shō haishi, 19 October 1871.” OFFS (1). Osaka: Ōsaka-fu (1971), 388. The edict was issued by the central government’s Council of State (Dajōkan) October 11, 1871. It was then officially announced in Osaka a week later. Directly translated, the first passage of the edict reads, “The names eta, hinin, etc. are hereby abolished. Henceforth in their status and occupation [former outcasts] shall be treated as commoners.”
96 The terms eta and hinin refer to two distinct early modern status groups. Although both were considered “outcast statuses” (senmin), they performed disparate social functions and possessed separate organizational structures. While both groups were internally diverse, it is possible to characterize them in the following manner. Hinin were persons who subsisted by begging for alms. In contrast, eta, or kawata, were persons who performed occupations that were considered unclean or impure. In the case of Osaka, eta engaged in a range of activities related to the production of leather and leather goods. At the same time, they handled the slaughtering of animals, the disposal of animal carcasses, and the collection of night soil.
to reside in dwellings built on four tax-exempt parcels of land just beyond the city limits. However, with the promulgation of the “Edict Abolishing Outcast Statutes,” Osaka’s licensed beggars were required to forfeit their dwellings and the tracts of land upon which they stood.

The fraternity’s dissolution was formally announced in Osaka on November 25, 1871.97 In addition to disbanding the city’s beggar enclaves, the prefecture also officially abolished the longstanding relationships that had existed between official members of the fraternity and their subordinates (deshi). While the authorities did not move to formally ban the practice of begging, they stripped fraternity members of their official police duties. Immediately thereafter, however, the prefectural authorities announced that 100 former fraternity members, including all former beggar chiefs and sub-chiefs, would be employed as police constables (torishimari bansotsu). Under newly implemented regulations, constables’ salaries were to be funded using a portion of the annual fees collected from Osaka residents and paid to the beggar fraternity. Notably, despite the fraternity’s formal dismantling, the authorities continued to gather money from local residents in order to support the livelihoods of fraternity members, including the 100 individuals that continued to perform police duties.

In order to enable former members of the now defunct beggar fraternity to subsist, the authorities continued to provide them with direct financial assistance into the spring of 1872. However, on May 17 of that year, the prefectural authorities issued a proclamation abolishing all payments to former members of the fraternity, including

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special fees provided to former licensed beggars who performed police duties. At the same time, however, the authorities announced that those individuals would continue to serve as police constables and receive financial compensation. However, they would no longer be paid using funds secured through the assessment of a specialized annual fee on Osaka-area households. Instead, they would now be paid a fixed “monthly salary of 49 sen 3 rin.” Fees would now be collected on the sub-district (kumi) level. According to newly established regulations, all fees had to be collected in each district and paid “by the 20th of each month” to the relevant district (ōgumi) administrative office. From now on, constables would receive payment not from the prefectural government, but directly from the authorities in the specific district that they served.

Once Osaka’s four beggar enclaves had been dismantled, the land upon which the enclaves stood was sold off to private citizens. While it is unclear who purchased the land for the Tennōji, Tobita, and Dōtonbori enclaves, a single record, currently preserved in the archives of Osaka’s Tenmangu Shrine, indicates that the tract of land upon which the Tenna enclave stood was transferred in late 1872 from shrine control to an individual named Yoshioka Matsutarō. That enclave was located just north of the city in Nishinari County’s Kawasaki Village. Totaling approximately 1,700 square meters in area, the new owner was required to pay an annual land tax of 56.1 liters of rice. As

99 Shinshū Ōsaka-shishi hensaninkai, ed. Shinshū Ōsaka-shishi, dai-gokan. Osaka: Osaka-shi (1991), 153-162. At the time that this reform was issued, the city of Osaka was divided into four districts (ōgumi). Each ward contained a varying number of sub-districts (kumi). As of May 1872, there were a total of 100 Harada Tomohiko, Watanabe Toru, and Akisada Yoshikazu, eds. “Moto hinin yashikichi o nyūsatsu haraisage shobun, 17 May 1872.” Kindai burakushi shiryou shūsei dai-nikan: ‘kaihōrei’ hantai ikki. Tokyo: San’ichi shobō (1984), 279.
101 According to records preserved in the Tenmangu Shrine archive, the tract measured exactly 1 tan 7 se 12 bu (1,695.01 square meters).
this fact reflects, by the time that the tract was transferred to Yoshioka, its legal status had changed from tax-exempt land (jōchi) to taxable land.102

The final and arguably most important step in the dismantling of Osaka’s Tokugawa-era beggar fraternity came several months earlier in May 1872. In a proclamation issued on May 30, the prefectural authorities issued an official ban on the practice of almsgiving.103 The proclamation itself is notable for several reasons. First, it signaled the rise of a fundamentally new regime of poverty management, which rejected almsgiving as a legitimate means of supporting the urban poor. Second, it marked the official presentation of a new governmental stance vis-à-vis begging, which characterized the practice as corrupt and socially deleterious and beggars as idlers who shunned hard work in favor of idleness and dependence. While the authorities in Osaka had long worked to control the process of begging and thereby limit its socially disruptive potential, they had never before issued an outright ban on the practice.

Issued by the prefectural government, the 1872 proclamation began by reiterating established procedures for the handling of vagrants that came to Osaka without first securing the necessary certification. According to the proclamation’s text, when such persons were found inside the prefecture, they were to be immediately “returned to their place their of origin” and put to work in a “suitable occupation.” When an individual had

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102 During the Tokugawa land was divided into three official classifications: nenguchi, jōchi, and shuinchi. Nenguchi was taxable land. The owners of such land were required to pay an annual tax known as nengu. Throughout the Tokugawa per, nengu was paid not in cash, but in rice. In contrast, lands categorized as jōchi were exempt from taxation. Between 1594 and the 1620s, the Osaka city magistrate provided the members of the city’s beggar fraternity with four tracts of jōchi located just outside the city limits. Lastly, the term shuinchi refers primarily to lands granted to shrines and temples by the shogun.

to be sent back to their place of origin, transportation costs were to be paid using government funding.

Importantly, this rule also applied to “persons traditionally known as hinin or beggars.” Even when a beggar’s community of origin was located “hundreds of leagues” from the prefecture, they were to be immediately returned home “at public expense” and put to work performing a suitable occupation. By providing beggars with an alternative “means of subsistence,” the authorities hoped to dissuade them from engaging in alms collecting. Furthermore, if beggars “worked diligently” and secured a stable livelihood, they would “no longer cause trouble or annoyance” for Osaka residents.

At the same time, the proclamation established a different set of procedures for handling “individuals who repeatedly absconded from their homes and became transients.” According to the prefectural authorities, such individuals engaged in a range of socially disruptive practices, including “the theft of other people’s money and property” and “aggressive begging for alms in front of the dwellings” of wealthy city residents. Noting that such behavior was “ultimately the personal responsibility” of beggars themselves, prefectural officials maintained that the “corrupt practice of almsgiving” nonetheless encouraged dependence, idleness, and crime. According to the proclamation, the “mistaken belief” that providing offerings of food and money to the poor was actually an act of “benevolence and compassion” served to blind the citizenry to the negative consequences that resulted from the practice of almsgiving.

According to the authorities, most of the individuals in the prefecture who survived by collecting alms did so not out of desperation, but out of laziness. In fact, the proclamation went so far as to assert that “only ten percent” of the prefecture’s beggars
“engaged in the practice of begging because they were disabled and had no other choice.”

In reality, the vast majority of Osaka’s beggars were “physically capable” of working and earning a living. According to prefectural officials, most beggars chose to collect alms because “they despised work” and preferred instead live a life of “debauchery and immoderation.” Some, the proclamation maintained, “became beggars because they disobeyed the teachings of their parents and elder siblings and absconded from their homes.” Others still were born into a life of begging. Born to impoverished parents, who “birthed large numbers of children,” such individuals “grew up begging” in order to survive. Therefore, they knew no other way of life.

For the authorities, many such beggars lacked a basic understanding of the notion of “shame” and did not view alms collecting as “a lowly practice.” Lacking an “appropriate” moral sensibility, many willingly engaged in theft and other sorts of criminal activities. According to the proclamation, “eighty or to ninety percent of all of the individuals arrested and prosecuted for theft in the prefecture” were “in fact able-bodied beggars.” For that reason, the government asserted, “assisting a beggar” by providing him or her with alms was equivalent to “raising a thief.”

In order to put a stop to the practice of begging, the authorities advised a multi-faceted approach designed to encourage the reform and socio-economic integration of former beggar. First, beggars from outside of the prefecture were to be immediately turned in to the authorities and escorted back to their place of origins. Second, beggars who were disabled and lacked a guardian who could care for them appropriately should be taken care of by residents of the neighborhood or village from which they originated. However, for both approaches to work, the authorities asserted, the ban on almsgiving
had to be strictly enforced. This, they hoped, would have the dual effect of discouraging beggars from coming to the city and compelling a higher degree of familial and community participation in the relief and regulation of the urban poor.

In order to halt the practice of almsgiving in Osaka, the prefectural authorities instructed local officials that they should conduct frequent patrols in order to identify both beggars and almsgivers. Under regulations established in the above proclamation, all beggars found wandering around inside of the prefecture were to be promptly driven out. If a local official decided to take a more lenient approach and was observed allowing a beggar to collect alms in his jurisdiction, regulations mandated that the official was to take responsibility for the beggar’s welfare and officially register them as a resident of that jurisdiction. When such an arrangement proved unsustainable, local officials were required to use community funds to send the beggar back to his or her place of origin.

The 1872 ban on almsgiving marked a fundamental shift in the government’s approach to poverty management. Whereas the authorities in Osaka had permitted the city’s poor to survive since the early seventeenth century by collecting alms, they had increasingly come to see the practice of begging as a dangerous practice, which served to promote dependency. At the same time, the authorities recognized that they had to provide the poor with an alternate means of subsistence. Accordingly, they worked to establish an alternative system of poverty management, which was designed to help the poor achieve financial self-sufficiency and encourage their integration into the urban labor market. In the following section, I will attempt to elucidate the formation and basic features of that system.
(IV) Poverty Management and Public Relief

In addition to dismantling Osaka’s beggar fraternity and its four designated beggar enclaves, the prefectural authorities adopted a fundamentally different approach to the problem of poverty management. No longer willing to allow the able-bodied poor to subsist on the basis of exclusive almsgiving relationships with specific city neighborhoods, the authorities instead began to actively promote their economic self-sufficiency and controlled integration into local urban society. In order to advance those aims, the prefectural authorities established a series of public relief institutions where the poor would be trained in a vocation and provided with basic educational instruction. By teaching needy urban dwellers a trade, the authorities hoped to provide them with an alternative means of subsistence, while discouraging them from engaging in the practice of begging.

Between 1868 and 1885, the prefectural government established a series of publicly administered relief centers. Those facilities were designed to perform a dual function. First, they were intended as welfare institutions where the sick, infirm and disabled, could obtain basic material assistance. Second, they also served disciplinary facilities within which “deviant” members of the urban population, including vagrants and unlicensed prostitutes, could be confined for a fixed period, provided with moral and vocational instruction and reformed for the purpose of reintegration into the local socio-economic order. At the beginning of the Meiji period, these institutions were funded entirely by the cash-strapped prefectural authorities. While many were short-lived, they played a vital role in caring for persons who were unable to survive without external assistance.
The first of publicly administered relief institution established after the Meiji Restoration was the Osaka Prefectural Relief Center (Kyūjutsujō). Opened in the eleventh month of 1868, the facility was located in Osaka’s Shimizudani neighborhood, just northeast of the city’s largest nineteenth-century slum district, Nagamachi. It was intended primarily as a place where destitute persons who were unable to care for themselves because of sickness, disability, or infirmity and lacked a guardian who could look after them could receive vital material assistance. Like subsequent public relief institutions, persons seeking assistance were required to file a petition and only admitted to the Relief Center following a thorough inquiry into their situation. Once it was determined that the individual was indeed incapable of caring for themselves and lacked a family member who could care for them, they were allowed to enter the facility. The funding necessary for their relief was provided entirely by the prefectural government.

Persons admitted to the facility who were physically capable of performing labor were provided with tools and raw materials. They were then put to work producing and selling a range of items, including rope and straw mats. Part of what each person earned was then used to pay off the original cost of the materials furnished by the Relief Center. The rest of what each individual earned was placed into savings until they left the facility. It was then to be used as start-up capital for a small-scale business venture.

Like many of the public relief institutions established in Osaka during the late nineteenth century, abandoned children and children from destitute households were a primary focus of the Relief Center’s activities. In addition to performing some sort of

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labor, children were also provided with vocational training and a basic education in reading, writing, and arithmetic.

This institution remained open until the eleventh month of 1869. During its approximately yearlong existence, the facility “provided relief to more than 90 individuals.”106 When the Relief Center closed, the dozens of individuals that had been under its care were returned to their place of origin, where they were left in the care of a local guardian.107 The prefectural authorities did, however, continue to provide extremely needy persons residing in the prefecture with stipends of relief rice. Adult males were provided with .90 liters of unpolished rice per day, adult females were provided with .72 liters of unpolished rice, and children under the age of 10 were provided with .50 liters of unpolished rice.

In the first month of 1870, however, the prefectural government limited the number of households to which it would provide rice stipends. While persons too “elderly, young, diseased, or infirm” to take care of themselves continued to receive subsidized rice, needy adults of working age and condition were denied a stipend.

The Relief Center remained closed until the spring of 1870, when a rapid spike in the retail price of rice led to a dramatic increase in the number of beggars in the city.108 The situation grew so dire that “significant numbers of people were dying of starvation and sickness on the streets.”109 The prefectural authorities responded first by requesting financial assistance from the central government just as the crisis began to intensify in the

107 Ibid.
third month of 1870. The authorities then moved in the fifth month of 1870 to reopen the prefectural Relief Center. Using the Relief Center as a base, prefectural officials worked to provide emergency relief and medical treatment to people found sick and starving in the streets. Once they had been nursed back to health, those that received care at the Relief Center were then returned to their home communities where they were placed in the care of a guardian. By the fourth month of 1871, the prefectural authorities had returned each individual that received care at the prefectural Relief Center to their place of origin. The Center was then closed permanently.

The next major publicly administered relief institution was the Osaka Poorhouse. Opened in the spring of 1871 shortly before the promulgation of the Emancipation Edict (senmin kaihōrei) and the dissolution of early modern Osaka’s four designated beggar communities (kaito), the facility was intended as both a welfare institution and a regulatory mechanism. The Osaka Poorhouse’s aims included both the provision of vital relief to the city’s poor and the regulation and reform of persons, such as beggars and prostitutes (hamadachime), who the prefectural authorities considered a threat to local security and social stability. While the Relief Center had focused primarily on relief for persons lacking the capacity to achieve self-sufficiency, the Poorhouse emphasized the provision of vocational training and employment to impoverished children and adults “physically capable of performing labor.”

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Located on the former site of the Osaka Relief Center, the Osaka Poorhouse was opened with the mission of assisting the “widowed, orphaned, diseased, and destitute.” Unlike its predecessor, however, the focus of the Poorhouse’s activities expanded beyond persons who were physically incapable of supporting themselves. A prefectural notice issued in advance of its opening outlined the facility’s basic functions. First, it noted that persons physically capable of performing labor were to be given training and put to work in a “suitable occupation” (sōō no hataraki). In order to ensure that individuals who entered the facility never again “revert[ed] to begging or suffer[ed] the hardship of starvation and cold,” the authorities sought to set each on a path to economic self-sufficiency. To ensure that persons admitted to the facility learned a useful trade and adopted the “right” attitude towards work, each individual would receive vocational training and “be made to labor as diligently as possible.”

The facility focused a great deal of attention on the cultivation and moral reform of young girls. The aforementioned 1871 proclamation, for example, asserted that girls from poor families were prone to “licentiousness” and “sexual impropriety” because they lacked a suitable education and marketable occupational skill. Most devoted themselves “from a young age” to “learning the shamisen and lute,” which obstructed their development, causing them to remain “immature and capricious” even as adults. This immaturity and caprice, in turn, became “the basis” for subsequent acts of immorality and sexual impropriety. Without an “occupational skill” and lacking the appropriate moral sensibility, “girls from poor households,” the proclamation claimed, would likely “become kept women” or “prostitutes.” In such cases, not only would the girl be

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“unable to remain chaste,” but she would also be unable to “have a husband and raise a child” of her own. It was, therefore, necessary, the proclamation asserted, to make young women “abandon the shamisen and lute” and instead teach them a useful occupational skill, such as “weaving or spinning” and provide them with proper moral instruction to ensure that they never engaged in acts of depravity or sexual immorality.

The Osaka Poorhouse also engaged in efforts to regulate and reform unlicensed prostitutes. Known as hamadachime because they gathered along the city’s riversides (hama) and solicited customers by “yanking on the sleeves of passersby,” unlicensed prostitutes were condemned by the local authorities as a threat to public morality. In 1871, for example, the authorities characterized street prostitution as a “despicable way of life” (asamashiki tosei) and “strictly prohibited” it because “it was deeply injurious to public morality.” The prefectural authorities recognized, however, that many young women who worked as street prostitutes did so only because they had “fallen into poverty” and had no other way to support themselves. To ensure that former prostitutes who entered the facility did not fall back into prostitution, they were taught a trade and “made to work diligently at it.” This, the authorities asserted, would set them on the path to self-sufficiency by providing them with a skill that they could sell in exchange for a wage.

The prefectural authorities cautioned, however, that those admitted had to be sincerely committed not only to changing their profession, but also to reforming their

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113 Saga Ashita. *Kindai ōsaka no toshi shakai kōzō.* Tokyo: Nihon keizai hyōronsha (2007), 53-55. Prostitution was officially permitted within a fixed number of licensed quarters. In the aftermath of the Meiji Restoration, brothels and brothel-like establishments known as teahouses (chaya) operated in the Matsushima and Shinmachi Pleasure Quarter and 23 teahouse districts, including Dōtonbori, Sonezaki, and Shinbori. Although the trade was heavily regulated, individuals possessing prefecturally issued licenses were legally permitted to engage in prostitution. In contrast, women who operated outside the city’s officially-sanctioned pleasure quarters and teahouse districts without a license were classified as clandestine prostitutes (kakushi baita). *Hamadachime* represent one type of clandestine prostitute.
attitudes and behavior. While sincere individuals would be provided with assistance, the 1871 proclamation warned that those who continued to “lead a life of debauchery” and engaged in prostitution would be prohibited from entering the poorhouse and receiving assistance. The prefectural authorities pledged, however, that those who firmly committed themselves to personal reform would be taught a skill and put to work in a “legitimate trade” (seiro no shōbai). The proclamation also warned that “persons who secretly engaged in prostitution after leaving the facility” would be “severely punished.”

In an effort to secure employment for persons of working age and condition, the prefectural authorities worked to attract the interest of local employers. An official announcement issued on August 18, 1871, for example, urged employers across the city interested in teaching inmates a trade and hiring them as employees to file a request at the Poorhouse. The prefecture also created financial incentives to encourage employers to secure the labor power they needed from the Poorhouse. For instance, the August 18th announcement stated that contractors seeking laborers for road construction and other types of projects could hire workers from the Poorhouse for “half the wage of an ordinary day laborer.” It also mentioned that the lunch for each of the workers hired from the Poorhouse would be provided at the institution’s expense. Lastly, in an effort to boost employer confidence, the announcement also claimed that employer “would have no difficulty” securing the amount of laborers they needed regardless of the number.

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115 Ibid.
117 Ibid.
In addition to providing housing and vocational training, then, the Osaka Poorhouse functioned as an intermediary linking the urban poor with prospective local employers. Judging from the fact that efforts were made to advertise workers under the care of the Poorhouse as a comparatively inexpensive source of labor power, it is clear that by the early 1870s a systematic effort was underway to harness the labor of the urban poor and make it available to local employers in Osaka. The prefectural authorities no doubt believed that such an arrangement would be beneficial to all three parties involved. First, the poor would obtain secure employment and skills that would allow them to support themselves in the future. Second, private employers would gain access to a pool of cheap labor, which, in turn, they could exploit for profit. Third, the prefectural authorities would benefit from a reduction in the number of public dependents. This arrangement also allowed the local authorities to exert greater control over the place of the poor in urban society and to involve actors from the private sector in the regulation of “deviant” and “dangerous” social groups.

However, as noted above, many of the public welfare institutions created during this period were poorly funded and, as a consequence, short lived. Less than a year after the Osaka Poorhouse was constructed, it was closed down and broken into two smaller facilities. While the Poorhouse had provided aid to both persons possessing the physical capability to work and those that lacked the ability to do so because of infirmity, disease, and disability, beginning in the winter of 1872, the authorities began to send the two groups to separate institutions. In other words, they moved to decouple the two primary functions performed by the Osaka Poorhouse.

The first step in this decoupling process occurred in February 1872. On February 27, the prefectural authorities announced the establishment of a new relief facility known as the Osaka Workhouse (Ōsaka jusanjo) on the former site of the Poorhouse.\textsuperscript{119} Surrounded by a large wall, the workhouse was intended to serve as both a relief center and disciplinary institution for able-bodied beggars and vagrants captured by police constables inside the city.\textsuperscript{120} While under the workhouse’s care, they were required to perform labor each day and were prohibited from freely entering and exiting the facility. Like the Osaka Poorhouse, the facility’s ultimate aim was to encourage the integration of needy urban dwellers into the local socio-economic order. In order to advance that objective, inmates were required to save a portion of the income that they earned from the labors they performed while inside the facility. That money was placed under the care of workhouse administrators and returned to inmates when they exited the facility. They were then encouraged to use the money that they had earned to fund some sort of income-generating activity. Many used the money to purchase tools or a specific commodity to sell.

According to a prefectural pronouncement from June 1872, the workhouse was intended to help the poor overcome “the feelings sloth and idleness” that inhibited many from achieving self-sufficiency.\textsuperscript{121} As those feelings served to “rob the poor of their strength,” it was essential not only to teach them a trade, but also to reform their attitudes regarding work. This was particularly important for poor young women, who lacked basic occupational skills and were forced to spend their lives working as “entertainers

\textsuperscript{121} Ibid.
and prostitutes.” For that purpose, the workhouse initiated a program to train poor women to “spin textiles.” Poor women from inside the prefecture wishing to learn to make textiles were encouraged to visit the workhouse and file a request.\footnote{Osaka-fu, ed. “Hinin no kaishō, 27 February 1872.” OFFS (1). Osaka: Ōsaka-fu (1971), 428.} If the applicant was judged to be sufficiently needy, they were granted admittance to the workhouse. Upon entry into the facility, they spent their days learning to weave thread and cotton fabrics. Once they had mastered the trade, they were permitted to leave the workhouse and seek work in one of Osaka’s spinning mills.

Less than three months later, the authorities moved to establish a separate facility known as the Osaka Relief House (Kyūjoba) for needy persons lacking the physical capability to work and generate income. In most cases, the individuals sent to the facility were classified as diseased and disabled persons, or haishitsusha.\footnote{Osaka-fu kangyōka. Kyūjoba ni kansuru negai ukagai todoke no ken (1-69), 1872-1876. This document is currently stored in the basement archive at the Osaka Historical Archive in Osaka’s Nishi Ward. I would like to thank archivist Matsuoka Hiroyuki for permitting me to use it.} As a consequence, the Relief House’s intended function was distinct from that of the Workhouse. It was designed to provide food, clothes, and shelter to individuals who were unable to care for themselves. As records from the Relief House indicate, the institution often functioned as a transitional facility. In other words, it was a place where disabled and diseased beggars and vagrants found inside the city could be sent for temporary care while the authorities attempted to locate a relative or guardian to care for them.\footnote{Ibid.} Generally, the work of finding a needy individual’s relatives was left to officials from the prefectural government’s Municipal Affairs Bureau (shimuka).\footnote{Osaka-fu shimukaka, Kyūjoba ni kansuru negai ukagai todoke no ken (1-19), 1 August 1872.} Once an aid recipient’s relative or
guardian had been found, Relief House administrators worked as quickly as possible to discharge the individual and turn them over the relevant authorities.

Like the public relief facilities that preceded it, the Relief House was paid for using public funds. The necessary funding was secured by taxing the salaries of prefectural officials. Under regulations established at the time of the Relief House’s founding, “every month,” all prefectural officials, including the governor, were required to contribute “one percent of their salaries” to fund the facility.\footnote{Osaka shiryōhensansho, ed. Meiji jidai no Ōsaka (1): Koda Shigetomo-hen ‘Ōsaka-shishi Meiji jidai miteikō’ (Ōsaka-shishi shiryō dai-nanashū). Osaka: Ōsaka shiryōhensansho (1982), 58.} In addition, the authorities secured additional funding by placing a 5 percent tax on all the profits earned during the first month of the year every fourth year by the city’s theatres and playhouses.

However, this funding scheme soon proved insufficient. As a consequence, the prefectural government was compelled to “appeal to private philanthropists” for financial assistance. A large number of private donors soon came forward. In addition to a “600 ryō” donation from the wealthy Mitsui Corporation, the Relief House received small donations of money and goods from dozens of concerned city residents.\footnote{Ibid.} Despite assistance from private benefactors, the Osaka Workhouse proved short lived. The Workhouse was officially abolished on August 12, 1873. Inmates who were unable to care for themselves and lacked a stable guardian were sent to the Relief House, which remained open. In addition, inmates who were able-bodied, but failed to display a sufficient desire to work and achieve financial independence were sent to the city jail in Matsuyamachi.

On the same day, an institution known as the Osaka Industrial Promotion Center, or \textit{kangyōba}, was established to replace the Workhouse. According to a prefectural
pronouncement issued at the time of the institution’s opening, the Promotion Center was intended to provide vocational training “to both men and women” in a range of useful trades, including “silk floss making, silk floss refining, needlework, brick making, filter paper making, and silkworm production.”¹²⁸ However, like the workhouse facility that preceded it, the Industrial Promotion Center failed to achieve its stated objectives. Despite an urgent desire on the part of the authorities to provide poor city dwellers with vocational training in a number of economically important trades, the facility soon collapsed due to “severe funding constraints.”¹²⁹ Lacking public resources and unable to secure sufficient funding from the private sector, the prefectural authorities had no choice but to close the facility after less than two months of operation. In October 1873, the facility and attached equipment and fixtures were sold off to Tsuji Sadabē, an entrepreneur from Osaka’s Higashi Ward. While it is unclear how Tsuji intended to use the facility, prefectural records indicate that he failed to pay the agreed amount and that the facility was repossessed. The government then put the facility up for public auction and sold it off for a loss of “more than 7,100 yen.”¹³⁰

A second publicly funded workhouse facility had been established approximately a year earlier in southern Osaka’s Namba-shinchi district. Smaller in scale than the Industrial Promotion Center, the facility continued to operate even after the Center closed down. The authorities then moved to redirect a portion of the funding previously intended for the Industrial Encouragement to the facility in Namba. Using that funding, workhouse administrators began to provide training in two basic trades: brick making and

ceramics. Once they had learned the basic techniques, workhouse inmates were employed to produce items. For their labors, they were paid a “suitable wage.” According to Kondō Bunji, the authorities selected to teach inmates brick making because bricks were in high demand at the time and there were “few brick makers present in the city.” Furthermore, the small number of individuals that knew how to manufacture bricks attempted to take advantage of consumers by unfairly raising prices. The authorities, therefore, judged it necessary to promote the brick making trade. Through the mechanism of the workhouse, they attempted to teach needy urban dwellers lacking an alternative means of subsistence the technology of brick making. On the basis of that arrangement, they worked to address two problems simultaneously. First, they attempted to foster increased supply of bricks on the local market in Osaka and thereby eradicate the problems associated with the trade. Second, they attempted to address the problem of urban poverty, by providing dozens of needy urban dwellers with a skill that they could then sell in exchange for a wage.

Unlike the Industrial Promotion Center, this workhouse proved highly successful. The brick that inmates manufactured each day were sold for a profit. A portion of that profit was then used to pay workhouse’s monthly operating costs. The workhouse in Namba shinchi continued to operate as a publicly funded relief center until 1878. At that time, however, it was sold off to Fujita Denzaburō, a wealthy financier and industrialist from Osaka’s Higashi Ward. He then turned the workhouse into a brick factory. As a consequence, it lost the character of a relief institution and was instead transformed into a

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for-profit enterprise. It is essential to note that the Namba shinchi-area workhouse represents something of an anomaly. Unlike the facilities that preceded it, the workhouse was able to remain in operation despite public funding constraints. By supplying a commodity that was in high demand in Osaka, the workhouse was able to generate enough money to sustain itself and thrive. In fact, after the Namba shinchi-area workhouse was transferred to Fujita, the authorities temporarily abandoned efforts to provide relief to the “able-bodied” poor. Thereafter, they began to focus solely on relief projects for individuals who were physically incapable of performing labor.

One of the longest running such projects was the aforementioned Osaka Relief House. It was arguably the most successful of all of the relief institutions established by the prefecture during this period. Established in 1872, the facility remained open until 1881. Located in Osaka’s Kokawachō neighborhood, it was founded primarily to provide assistance to “diseased and disabled persons” found inside the prefecture. During its nine-year existence, the Relief House provided assistance to 1,201 needy men and women. Although the facility was established using prefectural funds, after the national Relief Regulations were promulgated in 1874, the Relief House began to receive direct assistance from the central government in the form of stipends of relief rice. Using the rice provided by the state, the facility’s administrators were able to feed more than 50 percent of the aid recipients who entered the facility between 1872 and 1881. This helped to limit the funding burden on the prefecture and enabled the facility to remain in operation. Like its predecessor, however, financial constraints eventually resulted in the

collapse of the prefectural Relief House, as well. When it closed, there were 137 individuals receiving care at the facility.\(^\text{134}\)

Lacking the funds to remain in operation, the authorities were forced to turn over most of those individuals to local officials in the communities from which they came. However, it was impossible to do so for more than 50 aid recipients. Notably, the remainder was transferred to the care of an individual named Kobayashi Sahē. At the time, Kobayashi operated a small workhouse at his home in Osaka’s Kita Ward. He was a well-known figure in Osaka’s underworld with ties to gambling, prostitution, and the Dōtonbori amusement quarter, which was “home” to the city’s largest kabuki playhouses, including the Asahi-za, Naniwa-za, and Benten-za.\(^\text{135}\) In addition, during the 1870s and 1880s, he served as one of Osaka’s prefecturally appointed “fire foremen” (shobō tōdori). In that capacity, he was charged with the duty of orchestrating firefighting activities and carrying out a range of public maintenance functions in Osaka’s Kita Ward. In the late 1880s, when the prefectural government closed the last of its publicly funded relief centers, the Prefectural Aid Center (Furitsu kyūikō), he assumed many of the functions previously performed by prefecturally funded facilities.\(^\text{136}\) In other words, rather than assuming direct responsibility for the care of the city’s poor, the authorities began to shift the burden to Kobayashi and a number of other specially selected private citizens.

Between 1881 and March 1885, there were no permanent publicly funded aid centers anywhere in the prefecture. However, rapidly increasing numbers of vagrants inside the city following the massive 1885 Yodo River flood prompted the prefectural


\(^\text{136}\) Ōsaka nippō, “Shiritsu jusanjō,” 3 April 1888.
authorities to establish a new facility on the former site of the prefectural Relief House in Higashi Ward’s Kokawachō neighborhood. According to figures compiled by the Osaka city police, as of December 1884, there were “at least 300 able-bodied vagrants” wandering the streets of the city each day that “came from within the prefecture and lacked fixed occupations.” Concerned about the potential impact on law and order in the city, police officials urged the authorities to establish some sort of permanent relief institution to provide such individuals with food, shelter, and an occupation. The authorities responded by opening the Prefectural Aid Center in March 1885. Entry into the facility was restricted to “unemployed vagrants from inside of Osaka prefecture.” Vagrants and beggars that were determined to have come from “outside of Osaka” were to be immediately “driven out of the prefecture.”

After the Prefectural Aid Center opened, the city police launched a coordinated campaign to round up beggars and vagrants wandering the streets of the city. In total, “more than 200 individuals” were captured and sent to the facility. However, according to an April 1885 report from the Nihon rikken seitō shinbun newspaper, dozens of beggars heard rumors of the police roundup and left the city for Kyoto in order to avoid being sent to the Prefectural Aid Center. Notably, all of the individuals who entered the facility possessed the capacity to work. After entering the Prefectural Aid Center, inmates were required to labor each day under the supervision of on-site foremen. The majority spent their days fashioning “match boxes, envelopes, and cotton thread.”

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137 *Asahi shinbun*, “Hinmin kyūjoba,” 26 March 1885.
138 Ibid.
139 *Asahi shinbun*, “Meshi no ue no hae,” 10 May 1885.
140 *Nihon rikken seitō shinbun*, “Kojiki, Kyōto ni hashiru,” 19 April 1885.
smaller number worked as day laborers. They were supplied to private employers in the local community in Osaka.

Like the Osaka Poorhouse, therefore, the Prefectural Aid Center mediated between the vagrants that entered the facility and local employers. Whenever possible, the facility’s administrators worked to provide the individuals that entered the facility with a stable source of income. In some instances, that meant helping inmates secure full-time employment in the private sector. Once an inmate secured a livelihood, they were promptly compelled to leave the facility. Therefore, the Prefectural Aid Center’s ultimate objective was to facilitate the prompt integration of able-bodied vagrants into the labor force in Osaka. In an effort to entice private employers to hire inmates, the prefectural government created a number of financial inducements. According to an 1886 article from the Ōsaka nippō newspaper, inmates could be hired “for six sen per day,” a rate “far below the wages paid to most day laborers.” In addition, when an inmate was hired to work outside of the facility, the prefectural authorities agreed to pay for the inmate’s lunch. Moreover, inmates could be employed to perform a range of tasks, including “dredge drainage ditches, cut grass, disinfect dwellings where outbreaks of infectious disease have occurred, and work as movers.” Contemporary newspaper reports indicate that the prefecture’s inducements were extremely effective. By March 1886, “large numbers of local employers” were hiring inmates from the Prefectural Aid Center to perform a range of unskilled occupations.

As in the case of earlier public aid facilities, the individuals that entered the Prefectural Aid Center were required to save the wages that they earned while under the

143 Ōsaka nippō, “Hinmin kyūkujo no keikyō,” 30 April 1887.
Center’s care. Individuals were permitted to leave only after they saved enough money to “pay rent for six months” and food and other costs “for a month.” Until the individual accumulated the required amount or found full-time employment, they were required to remain inside the center and work. Even when an inmate left the facility, the money that they saved while inside was not handed to them directly. Rather, it was entrusted to the local headman (kochō) in the community in which they planned to live. In that way, the facility’s administrators worked to ensure that the money was used “responsibly.” Importantly, the facility received sizable donations from leading members of the business community in Osaka, including both Sumitomo Kichizaemon and Konoike Zen’emon, who provided respective donations of 1,000 yen.¹⁴⁴

According to a newspaper report from 1887, demand for space in the Prefectural Relief Center varied depending on the season. During the winter of that year, the number of inmates “rose to more than 350,” as beggars and vagrants across the prefecture sought to escape the cold.¹⁴⁵ However, as temperatures began to rise, the number of individuals inside the center began to fall. By April 1887, the total number of inmates had reached “approximately 282.” Notably, only 72 were women. The majority of inmates spent most of their time “manufacturing match boxes and sandal thongs.” Those that worked outside the facility were employed as day laborers or public maintenance workers. Generally, maintenance workers were employed to clean bridges, city streets, and roadside toilets and latrines. In addition, as the local match industry began to expand in the late 1880s, an increasing number of inmates began commuting each day to local match factories, where they worked fashioning matchsticks. Lastly, beginning in 1886,

the prefectural government began employing inmates from the Aid Center rather than “inmates from the city jail” to “clean public buildings.”

The Prefectural Aid Center continued operating as a publicly administered institution until the spring of 1888. However, on April 1 of that year, the prefecture entrusted the facility’s administration to Kobayashi Sahē. Kobayashi already operated a large private workhouse on the city’s northern edge. During the mid-1880s, he began to play an increasingly important role in the regulation of the city’s vast and internally complex underclass. By the late 1880s, it was common practice for the police to send to Kobayashi’s workhouse beggars, street children, and unlicensed prostitutes captured in the city.

The transfer of the Prefectural Relief Center to Kobayashi’s control marks the final step in a process that began in mid-1880s, whereby the primary functions of poverty management were shifted from a group of publicly administered relief institutions to a select group of private citizens. During the period following the dismantling of Osaka’s early modern beggar fraternity, the prefectural authorities attempted to regulate the city’s poor directly through the creation of a series of relief institutions and workhouses, such as the Osaka Poorhouse and Prefectural Relief Center. This arrangement began to break down in the mid-1880s, as the authorities began to shift the functions of poverty management to the private sector.

(V) Private-Sector Poverty Relief

In the late 1870s, private citizens in Osaka also began to establish independently operated relief institutions for the poor. Initially, these private institutions existed

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147 Ōsaka nippō, “Shiritsu jusanjō,” 3 April 1888.
alongside prefecturally administered facilities, such as those mentioned above. During the mid-1880s, however, the authorities began to entrust the regulation of vagrants, abandoned children, and unlicensed prostitutes to a growing number of privately administered facilities. In exchange, the authorities provided the operators of such facilities with a range of financial incentives. In some cases, those incentives came in the form of direct financial assistance. Generally, however, they came in the form of privileged access to lucrative maintenance and public works contracts.\textsuperscript{148}

Consequently, many of the individuals that operated private relief institutions were motivated to do so by more than just compassion for the poor or a spirit of beneficence. Many were no doubt also motivated by personal financial interest. Namely, in addition to providing the needy with critical material assistance, many were also interested in harnessing and exploiting the labor power of Osaka’s poor for profit. In fact, a number of the private facilities established during this period were only relief institutions in name. In reality, they were for-profit enterprises, in which all of the income generated from ostensibly charitable activities went directly into the pockets of their proprietors.\textsuperscript{149}

This section examines the character and function of two privately administered relief institutions, including the Kobayashi Workhouse. That examination attempts to elucidate the role that privately administered relief institutions played in poverty management efforts in Osaka during the final two decades of the nineteenth century. This section argues that the mid-1880s saw a shift away from a system of poverty relief dominated by publicly administered relief institutions to one in which the primary

\textsuperscript{149} \textit{Osaka mainichi shinbun}, “Saikin no jizen dantai (1),” 29 May 1909.
functions of poverty management were entrusted to a specially designated group of private citizens. Beginning in late 1885, privately administered institutions, such as the Kobayashi Workhouse, were called upon to provide relief to abandoned and destitute children and engage in the regulation of vagrants (*furōsha*), diseased prisoners (*byōshū*), and unlicensed prostitutes (*inbaifu*). As such, many functioned as more than just relief centers where needy city residents could receive essential material assistance. They also served as reformatory institutions, where the members of “deviant” social groups could be confined and disciplined for extended periods of time. In the case of Kobayashi’s workhouse, the institution’s disciplinary character was particularly pronounced. Workhouse regulations indicate that special provisions were taken to prevent inmates from absconding while they were under the workhouse’s supervision.

Many of the private relief institutions established during this period were intended as transitional facilities, where impoverished individuals could be temporarily held until arrangements could be made to facilitate their reintroduction into local society. As a consequence, many functioned as intermediary mechanisms linking destitute urban dwellers with the local socio-economic order. Distinct among the facilities founded during this period, Kobayashi Sahē’s workhouse also served as a halfway house where recently released prison? inmates with nowhere to go could be temporarily held until suitable arrangements could be made for their reintroduction into local society.

**(VI) A Private Work School for the Poor**

The effort to establish private relief institutions began on the local level in Osaka in the late 1870s. The first proposal for a large-scale facility was presented in April 1879 by a group of 11 leading local businessmen and financiers, including Fujita Baron
Denzaburō, the head of the powerful Fujita Conglomerate. They aimed to establish a “work-school” (jusan gakkō) for children from the city’s largest slum, Nagamachi. Initially, the group planned to “rent a suitable dwelling” in Nagamachi and house the facility there. Once sufficient funding had been obtained from private donors, they then intended to purchase an unoccupied tract of land in the vicinity of Nagamachi and construct a school, workhouse, and residential facility there.

In order to fund the project, the proposal’s architects planned to sell 3,000 one-yen shares in the school to private donors. Under the proposal, individuals who purchased shares would be required to pay off the share price “incrementally over a period of 36 months.” They hoped that wealthy city merchants and financiers would purchase multiple shares and less affluent residents would pool their resources in order to purchase a single share. Once the necessary amount of capital had been raised, the group intended to establish a trust fund at a local bank. In addition, they planned to entrust the fund’s administration to the prefectural authorities. Monthly expenses incurred at the facility were to be paid for using interest earned on the fund.

According to article two of the school’s charter, children who entered the facility were to receive basic instruction in “reading, writing, and arithmetic.” At the same time, they were also to be “taught a practical vocation or skill.” In order to ensure that students received “suitable” educational and employment training, the school’s administrators planned to hire “proper instructors.” While both boys and girls would be required to study the same subjects, the school’s charter stipulated that the two groups were to receive different types of vocational training. Specifically, boys were to be trained as

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150 Osaka nippō, “Kyōiku jusanjo,” 24 April 1879. Based in Western Japan’s Kansai region, the Fujita Conglomerate was involved in a range of industries, including finance, real estate development, civil contracting, railroad construction, and textile spinning.
“carpenters, bucket makers, blacksmiths, stone masons, and paper makers,” while girls were to be prepared for work in a range of “gender appropriate” occupations, including spinning, weaving, and factory labor. The ultimate aim of the school’s efforts, therefore, was not to prepare poor students for secondary education. Rather, it was to provide them with a basic understanding of rudimentary educational concepts, while preparing them for integration into the bottom tiers of the urban labor force.

The school planned to provide instruction to “children between the ages of 8 and 17.” While receiving instruction and laboring at the facility, pupils were to be prohibited from “freely entering and exiting.” In order to keep track of enrollees, each was to be provided with an identification tag. According to article four of the facility’s proposed charter, pupils would be required to carry that tag with them at all times.

Although little else is known about the facility, contemporary newspaper coverage indicates that it was in fact opened in the fall of 1879. While it is unclear how long the facility remained in operation, it is one of the earliest examples in Osaka of a private institution designed exclusively to provide relief to the city’s poor. At the time that the school was established, the local system of poverty management in Osaka was still dominated by prefecturally administered institutions. However, that situation began to change in the mid-1880s, with the establishment of Kobayashi Sahē’s workhouse and a number of similar institutions.

(VII) Kobayashi Sahē’s ‘Poor People’s Workhouse’

In November 1885, Kita Ward fire foreman and influential underworld figure, or kyōkaku, Kobayashi Sahē, established a privately operated “poor people’s workhouse”

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151 Asahi shinbun, “Uemachi no hinmin gakkō,” 24 October 1879.
(hinmin jusanjo) just north of the city in Kitano Village. Initially, he planned to provide assistance to poor children from households in villages surrounding the workhouse. While he was no doubt concerned about the welfare of the individuals who entered his facility, his motivations were far more complex. Kobayashi was also driven by a desire to burnish his public reputation and advance his financial interests by exploiting for personal profit the labor of needy adults and children. After briefly outlining the series of events leading up to the establishment of Kobayashi’s workhouse, this section seeks to elucidate the facility’s internal structure and intended functions.

In addition, it attempts to understand the workhouse’s historical trajectory in relation to broader changes in the prefectural government’s poverty management policy. While the prefectural authorities attempted during the late 1860s and 1870s to regulate vagrants, beggars, unlicensed prostitutes, and street children primarily through the deployment of publicly run relief institutions, by the mid-1880s, they began to shift to a subcontracting system in which “suitable” private institutions were given official sanction and assigned a range of heretofore public functions. In exchange for their efforts, the operators of those institutions were provided with a range of financial incentives, including monetary assistance and the right to organize and exploit the labor of poor urban dwellers with little external interference. It should also be noted that the above shift occurred just as an increasing number of local manufacturers began to turn to the city’s slums to supply their growing demand for cheap labor. Eager to undercut their competitors by cutting labor and production costs, local match exporters, in particular,

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began to relocate their manufacturing operations to slum districts, such as Nagamachi, in order to exploit the large pool of surplus unskilled labor there.

In May 1885, local newspapers began to report that Kobayashi Sahē was planning to establish a private workhouse on a vacant tract of farmland in Kitano Village. According to contemporary newspaper coverage, he became interested in establishing a relief institution after inspecting economic conditions in several villages near his home along the city’s northern border. Reportedly shocked at the widespread destitution that he observed, he immediately contacted the prefectural office and initiated efforts to establish a private workhouse.\(^{153}\)

In mid-May, Kobayashi presented a proposal to provide relief to “destitute children” (gokuhin no kodomo) between the ages of six and thirteen from needy communities along the city’s northern periphery. In its May 20 edition, the *Asahi shinbun* newspaper reported that he was planning to “lease a parcel of land on the outskirts of Kitano Village.”\(^{154}\) On that parcel, he intended to construct both a workhouse and residential quarters to house the individuals that entered the facility. He then called upon officials in surrounding communities to identify local children most in need of assistance. Once the workhouse opened, those children were to be rounded up and granted immediate admission. Although the actual number proved much higher, Kobayashi initially planned to limit the total number of inmates to “approximately 100 boys and girls.”\(^{155}\)

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\(^{153}\) *Nihon rikken seito shinbun*, “Kyūjo no tedate,” 20 May 1885.

\(^{154}\) *Asahi shinbun*, “Hinmin kyūjohō,” 20 May 1885.

\(^{155}\) Ibid.
All of those admitted to the facility were to be provided with food, clothes, shelter, and medical care. Once inside, inmates were to spend a majority of their time performing piecework and peddling “assorted sweets and matchbooks.” Although Kobayashi’s original plan stipulated that all children admitted to the facility would receive rudimentary instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic, education was ultimately a secondary concern.

As word of Kobayashi’s plan spread, a diverse group of actors from the various social groups with which he was affiliated came forward to offer donations. A group of merchants from the Dōjima Rice Exchange, for example, donated hundreds of yen for construction materials and rice. In order to publicize his efforts and praise the generosity of his donors, Kobayashi published a series of announcements in major local newspapers describing the workhouse and listing the names of each donor and the amount they donated. With an expanding financial base and a clear plan in place, newspapers reported on May 20, 1885 that Kobayashi would soon be petitioning the authorities in order to secure the necessary authorizations.

After several months of delay, Kobayashi’s plan finally began to move forward in the fall of 1885. On November 2, he successfully concluded the purchase of “a 2,000 square meter tract of land” just north of Osaka city in the Komatsubara district of Kitano Village. In order to raise money for the workhouse, Kobayashi organized a charity-wrestling tournament on the site where the facility was to be constructed. Using his influence in local sumo wrestling circles, he enlisted the assistance of the city’s top

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156 Nihon rikken seito shinbun, “Kyūjo no tedate,” 20 May 1885.
157 Ibid.
159 Osaka nippō, “Jinarashi sumō,” 27 November 1885.
wrestlers and stable managers. All of the wrestlers agreed to participate for free and all proceeds generated during the event were to be used to pay construction costs.

After securing the agreement of several dozen local wrestlers, a ring was quickly prepared at the workhouse site. Matches were held throughout the day on November 28th and 29th.160 The city’s leading wrestlers, including Hachijin, Nekomata, Kumanishiki, Shingari, Matsu-no-oto, Tsurugahama, Kumozuru, Kagabayashi, and Komagaishi, all participated and, by all accounts, the matches were well attended. While it is unclear precisely how much money the event generated, it appears to have provided Kobayashi with sufficient resources to complete the workhouse. Construction began shortly after the conclusion of the two-day tournament and was finished in less than two months.161

Kobayashi also received massive donations from the city’s theatre operators and leading actors. For example, a group of five theatre operators from Osaka’s Dōtonbori amusement quarter donated all of the proceeds earned from ticket sales on February 24, 1886 to the workhouse.162 Similarly, a leading group of actors, including Ichikawa Udanji, Jitsukawa Yaozō, and Nakamura Fukusuke held a charity performance in late February 1886 to raise money for the workhouse.163 All of the revenue that the performance generated was promptly handed over to Kobayashi.

Kobayashi’s workhouse opened in January 1886 after receiving official approval from the prefectural government.164 From the outset, authorities on both the prefectural level were extremely supportive of Kobayashi’s efforts. With little financial support from

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162 Osaka nippō, “Kifu shibai,” 23 February 1886.
163 Ibid.
the central government and limited resources to fund public relief projects, prefectural officials no doubt welcomed Kobayashi’s offer to shoulder part of the burden of providing relief to the city’s poor. Within months of the facility’s opening, the authorities began to call upon Kobayashi to take over functions previously performed by publicly administered institutions. For example, during the late 1880s, he was increasingly called upon to engage in the regulation of vagrants and panhandlers rounded up in the city by police.\footnote{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{Osaka nippō}}, “Shiritsu hinmin jusanjo,” 10 February 1886. \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{Osaka mainichi shinbun}}}}, “Kojiki no karitate,” 17 September 1890. \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{Osaka mainichi shinbun}}}}, “Kojikigari,” 9 November 1890.}}}} Rather than sending such persons to publicly administered institutions, the police began increasingly sending them to Kobayashi’s workhouse. In fact, by the time that the last of Osaka’s major nineteenth-century relief institutions closed permanently in 1888, the prefecture had shifted the burden of day-to-day poverty relief entirely to private institutions, such as Kobayashi’s workhouse.\footnote{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{Osaka nippō}}, “Shiritsu jusanjō,” 3 April 1888.}} In so doing, the prefecture was able to completely extricate itself as the primary provider of relief to Osaka’s poor.

Beginning in the late 1880s, the prefectural government instead assumed the role of regulator. In order to ensure that private institutions operated in accordance with prefectural regulations, the Osaka prefectural government moved to create a subcontracting system, whereby the duties of poverty relief were assigned to officially licensed facilities.\footnote{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{Osaka mainichi shinbun}}, “Saikin no jizen dantai (1),” 29 May 1909.}} As the chief administrator of that system, the prefecture assumed the responsibility of not only certifying, but also monitoring, and, in some cases, ordering the closure of privately run institutions. This basic arrangement persisted until the period immediately following the 1918 Rice Riots, at which time the prefectural and municipal
governments once again assumed a direct role in the planning and execution of a wide range of social programs for Osaka’s poor.

Initially, workhouse relief projects focused solely on children from poor households in Kita Ward and villages along the city’s northern periphery. Over time, however, the facility’s focus expanded, as it assumed a range of functions previously performed by publicly administered relief institutions. Specifically, taking over for prefectural institutions, such as the Osaka Poverty Relief Center, Kobayashi’s workhouse began to engage in the regulation of members of social groups on the margins of urban society, including beggars, vagrants, ex-convicts, and unlicensed prostitutes. Whereas the prefectural authorities had attempted to regulate Osaka’s urban underclasses through the use of publicly funded and administered institutions, during the mid-1880s they began to shift much of the burden for the regulation of such groups to privately operated institutions. In the specific case of Kobayashi, an arrangement emerged whereby the prefectural authorities subcontracted the duty of regulation of “dangerous” and “deviant” social groups to one of the city’s most influential underworld bosses. In exchange, Kobayashi received a range of lucrative public works and maintenance contracts.

In order to understand why the authorities chose to entrust these duties to Kobayashi, it is essential to understand who he was and the role he played in urban society. Kobayashi Sahē was a leading figure in Osaka’s underworld. By the late the nineteenth century, he controlled one the city’s largest organized criminal syndicates. A person of tremendous local influence, he also served until the early 1890s as the “fire

foreman” (shōbō tōdori) for Osaka’s Kita Ward. As foremen, he was charged with
supervising ward-level firefighting activities and controlled a gang of “more than 300
firefighters.” In accordance with the dominant fire control techniques of the day, his
gang included a large number of “carpenters, construction laborers, and plasterers.”
Skilled with tools and well versed in construction techniques, the members of those gangs
were well suited to contemporary fire fighting procedures, which focused on the
containment of conflagration through the rapid demolition of buildings in the vicinity of a
fire. According to historian Iida Naoki, Kobayashi’s gang also functioned as a “violent
organization” (bōryoku sochi). While members of Kobayashi’s organization no doubt
earned a “legitimate” living as construction workers, many also engaged in extortion,
racketeering, and other organized criminal activities.

In order to fund his fire brigade, Kobayashi received significant financial
compensation from the Kita Ward Office. Initially, that compensation came in the form
of exclusive access to night soil from all roadside toilets within Kita Ward. Night soil
continued throughout the Meiji period to be widely used across Japan as agricultural
fertilizer. As a consequence, it remained a valuable commodity that could be
exchanged for money or goods. According to Koda Shigetomo, during the first decade of
the Meiji period, night soil collected from all of the roadside latrines in just one of the

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171 Iida Naoki. “Meiji zenki Osaka ni okeru shōbō tōdori to toshi minshū sekai: shōbō tōdori no chusai to
iū kōi ni chūmokushite.” In Nenpo toshi shi (2): jōkamachi no ruikei, edited by Toshishi kenkyūkai, 86-98.
172 Ibid.
173 Ibid.
175 Ōsaka-shi shihensansho, ed. Meiji jidai no Ōsaka (2): Koda Shigetomo-hen ‘Ōsaka-shishi Meiji jidai
176 Aratake Kenichirō. “Meiji ishinki Ōsaka ni okeru shimokuso torihiki.” Ōsaka no rekishi 61 (2003), 33-
58.
city’s four large districts was worth between 950 and 960 yen, a significant sum at the
time. In the 1880s, growing demand for night soil led to a rapid spike in its market value.
As a result, the annual profit generated from the sale of night soil collected from roadside
Toilet in one of the city’s four wards rose to more than 1,500 yen. Therefore, the right
to dispose of feces from public latrines guaranteed its possessor a large, stable revenue
stream.

Kobayashi continued to collect the proceeds generated from the disposal of feces
until March 1888, when the prefectural authorities abolished the position of fire foreman
and moved to create a publicly run system of fire protection. At the time, new techniques
of fire fighting centering on the use of water pumps were beginning to take hold in the
city. Rather than working to contain the spread of conflagration by tearing down
buildings and creating fire breaks, fire fighters instead began to work to extinguish fires
through the organized use of water pumps transported around the city by boat. As
awareness of the efficacy of pumps spread, prefectural officials increasingly came to
view older techniques centering on the rapid demolition of buildings as an excessively
destructive and outdated practice. Therefore, by the late 1880s, it was no longer
necessary to employ large gangs of construction laborers and carpenters. As a result of
this shift, Kobayashi and the city’s other fire foremen lost their official rank in urban
society.

While still serving as fire foremen, however, Kobayashi was called on to perform
a range of “social maintenance functions” (shakaiteki iji kinō).

of an independent city government in Osaka in the late 1880s and the development of city-run maintenance services, the city’s fire foremen were contracted to perform a range of public duties, including road and bridge cleaning, waste management, roadside toilet management, and street lamp maintenance. For example, in December 1876, Governor Watanabe Noboru ordered Kobayashi to supervise the “cleaning roadside garbage dumps” and disposal of garbage in the ward for which they were responsible.\(^{181}\) In many cases, the city’s fire foremen mobilized beggars and vagrants rounded in the city’s slums to carry out these duties.\(^{182}\) From Kobayashi’s perspective, this arrangement was beneficial, because it allowed him to cut labor costs by employing impoverished slum dwellers. From the perspective of the authorities, it was beneficial because it ensured that scores of vagrants and panhandlers, who were widely considered a “threat” to urban stability, were put to work in a productive capacity and strictly regulated.

Kobayashi also exerted significant influence in the city’s entertainment districts and sumo wrestling circles. First, local theatre and playhouse operators hired him to provide security and maintain order during popular performances.\(^{183}\) With hundreds of underlings under his control, he was no doubt well suited to both tasks. Second, Kobayashi was directly involved in the promotion and production of a wide range of theatrical presentations and vaudeville-style tent shows. In the late 1880s, he helped to bring the popular Italian stunt horse rider, Ciarini, and his circus troupe to Osaka.\(^{184}\) During Ciarini’s stay in Osaka, Kobayashi arranged well-attended performances in the

Kitashinchi and Sennichimae amusement quarters. Third, Kobayashi maintained close ties with the city’s leading sumo wrestlers and managers. Throughout the late nineteenth century, he was involved in the arrangement and promotion of sumo-wrestling matches in the city. In the fall of 1888, for example, he took the lead in organizing a weeklong tournament at Tenmangu Shrine in Osaka’s Kita Ward. In addition to providing security during the weeklong event, he also acted as the tournament’s official promoter (kanjinmoto). Mediating between the shrine and local sumo wrestling organizations (sumo tosei shūdan), he helped to secure the site necessary for the tournament and determine how the proceeds generated during the event would be divided. Although the exact amount he received is unclear, in his capacity as promoter, Kobayashi was also guaranteed a certain percentage of the proceeds.

As a person of influence in sumo wrestling and entertainment circles, he was able to periodically call on the members of both for monetary assistance. When Kobayashi opened his first privately operated workhouse in 1885, he used his authority to secure sizable donations from a number of the city’s leading actors and theatre operators.

In summary, by the time that Kobayashi opened his first workhouse in 1885, he was already a person of significant local influence in Osaka. In 1873, he was appointed to the powerful official post of fire foreman. In that role, he supervised firefighting activities in Kita Ward and was employed to perform a range of public maintenance functions. As fire foreman, he was also required to constantly maintain a large fire brigade, comprised of carpenters and construction laborers. That fire brigade doubled as “a violent organization” and provided him with significant coercive capabilities.

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185 *Osaka nippô*, “Charini kyokuba,” 29 March 1887.
186 *Osaka nippô*, “Ōzumo,” 1 November 1887.
At the same time, he maintained close ties to the city’s entertainment districts and sumo wrestling organizations. When he was working to establish his workhouse in the fall of 1885, he was able to call on sumo wrestlers, actors, and theatre owners to provide large donations to finance his private workhouse. While a number of early twentieth century sources advance the claim that Kobayashi funded the workhouse entirely out of his own pocket, his facility actually depended on support from a diverse range of social sectors. In fact, it is not an overstatement to say that Kobayashi’s workhouse was a product of the social relationships of which he was part.

Furthermore, in exchange for agreeing to engage in the regulation of street children, beggars, and unlicensed prostitutes, Kobayashi received lucrative public maintenance contracts from the prefectural authorities. He was contracted by the prefectural government to clean public administrative buildings, including the prefectural office, city streets, bridges, garbage dumps, and roadside latrines. In addition to annual payments from the prefecture, he also maintained the right to sell the night soil that workhouse inmates collected each day from the city’s roadside latrines. Together with the revenue generated each day by the inmates who entered Kobayashi’s workhouse, the income that he earned from the above activities likely enabled him to fund the facility without significant difficulty. In fact, anecdotal evidence indicates that, at least for a time, the workhouse itself served to enrich Kobayashi. He employed hundreds of beggars, vagrants, and street children each day to produce a variety of commodities. Much of the money earned from the sale of those commodities went directly into Kobayashi’s pocket.

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188 Ibid.
Life in Kobayashi’s workhouse was, at least in theory, strictly regimented. While inside, inmates were obligated to observe a strict disciplinary code and “constantly obey the commands of workhouse foremen.” They were strictly prohibited from leaving the facility without permission and required to “work diligently from sunrise to sunset.”

Rules dictated that all inmates were to wake up at 5:00 AM and go to sleep at 9:00 PM every day between the months of April and October. During the winter, wake up time was moved back an hour to 6:00 AM, while bedtime was moved up an hour to 8:00 PM. All inmates were to rise at the sound of “the first bell” and immediately begin cleaning their rooms. At the sound of “the second bell,” all inmates were to leave their rooms, move to on-site washing facilities, and wash their faces and hands. At the sound of the third bell, they were to line up in an orderly fashion at the workhouse cafeteria.

Workhouse foremen were to then carry out an inspection to determine that all inmates were clean, properly dressed, and in attendance. Once the inspection was completed, inmates were allowed to receive and eat their morning meal. Similar procedures were followed at both lunch and dinner. In addition, inmates were to be provided with a 15-minute meal break and on sunny days they were to be allowed outside into the workhouse yard to exercise at least once per day.

Workhouse regulations also mandated that inmates always remain on their best behavior and strictly prohibited them from “fighting, arguing, and singing loudly.”

When government officials and other dignitaries visited the facility, all inmates were required to bow and show appropriate deference. Inmates were also required to keep

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their rooms clean and occasionally place their bedding outside to “dry it in the sunlight.” In order to ensure that inmates remained in constant compliance with these regulations, workhouse foremen were to oversee cleaning activities and conduct thorough room inspections each morning. Rules also stipulated that meal times be strictly regulated. A set of regulations from November 1885 required that “children and elderly inmates” eat first. The “able-bodied inmates” were only allowed to eat once children and elderly inmates had finished. In order to ensure that these regulations were properly observed and there were no fights or disturbances, foremen were required to stand guard during meal times.

Workhouse regulations also required that male and female inmates sleep in separate quarters and that sick male and female inmates be kept in separate rooms. These two rules were intended, no doubt, to prevent inmates from engaging in sexual relationships and foster a “sound” moral climate inside the institution. The regulations also required that “ex-convicts and discharged prisoners” be segregated from the rest of the inmate population. Here again, the intent was to isolate inmates without a history of criminal activity from potentially deleterious influences.

Workhouse regulations extended to matters of health and hygiene. Foremen were required to caution inmates about such matters and workhouse facilities were to be kept clean and sterile at all times. In addition, inmates were required to bathe regularly in the workhouse’s on-site bathing facilities. Regulations stipulated that inmates were to bathe at least twice a week during the warmer spring and summer months and at least three times per week during the colder months of the fall and winter. Each inmate was,

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however, to bathe for “no more than 15 minutes.” Inmates were also required to have their hair cut each month and “made to wash their faces, feet, and hands” after finishing work each day.

Workhouse regulations also mandated that the workhouse provide inmates with new sets of clothes twice each year. This clothing was not, however, provided for free. Rather, the necessary amount was deducted from each inmate’s savings. In order to ensure that inmates’ clothing remained clean and free of lice, fleas, and other insects, “female inmates” were to be “periodically selected and made to launder” them. The workhouse also provided inmates with footwear. They were provided with either “straw sandals” or simple “wooden clogs.” When working conditions required it, inmates were also provided with higher quality footwear. In an effort to protect inmates from injury, they were strictly prohibited from wandering about without sandals.

Inmates were required to eat three meals. Under a revised set of workhouse regulations established in 1910, the food selected for each student was to be selected “in accordance with their physical condition and occupation.” In general, meals were extremely austere. Most inmates received a single bowl of “white rice gruel for breakfast” and “rice mixed with wheat for lunch and dinner.” Workhouse regulations stipulated that when preparing the mixture, the cook was to use six parts rice and four parts wheat. In addition, at breakfast and dinner, inmates were to receive “pickled vegetables” on the side and at lunch they were to receive vegetables and a boiled soup. Periodically, they were also to be fed meat or fish.

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Although its origins are unclear, the aforementioned 1910 regulations also mention that an inmate ranking system was established to encourage good behavior and hard work.\(^{195}\) Under the system, inmates were divided into three ranks, with first rank being the highest and third the lowest. All inmates started as third rank, but could progress to a higher rank if they “strictly obeyed workhouse rules and other commands and worked diligently at their jobs.”

A higher rank won inmates a number of material benefits. Workhouse regulations indicate that inmates of the third rank were to be provided with “standard clothing and bedding” and no special privileges. Those inmates that advanced to second rank, however, were provided with clean, unsoiled clothes and bedding. They were also given the privilege of bathing second after the first-rank inmates and provided with special meal items once per week. Inmates that advanced to the first rank were to be provided with new clothes and bedding. In addition, they were allowed to bathe first and were provided with special meals twice a week.

Inmates that violated workhouse rules were to be “punished by the on-site foreman without lenience.”\(^{196}\) Although the identities of the workhouse foremen are unknown, it is likely that many were subordinate members of Kobayashi’s criminal organization.\(^{197}\) Foremen were given the authority to determine and execute summary punishments. However, they were required to use restraint and avoid causing excessive bodily harm. Article twelve of the 1885 workhouse regulations ordered that they should refrain from methods that caused “bodily irregularities” and obstructed inmates from


\(^{196}\) Ibid.

performing physical labor.\textsuperscript{198} Once a punishment had been carried out, the supervising foreman was then required to file a report to the chief administrator detailing the inmates’ offense and the steps taken to address it. These reports were then kept on file at the workhouse and over time a detailed record of information about each inmate’s character and conduct was compiled. This record, in turn, influenced the manner in which workhouse staff dealt with each inmate and the type of duties for which they were selected.

The 1910 regulations also offer more detailed information about methods of punishment employed at the facility.\textsuperscript{199} According to chapter seven, article 33 of those regulations, inmates who “escaped, attempted to escape, or indicated that they were planning to escape,” inmates who “assaulted other inmates or stole money or goods from other inmates,” and inmates who committed any other serious offenses were to have the amount of food they received each day “reduced for a period of one to 14 days.” Persons who committed less severe offenses, including carelessly handling or damaging one’s clothing and bedding, engaging in verbal arguments, and being careless with fire were to be punished with a reduction in rank and privileges.

At the same time, foremen were also encouraged to “constantly observe” inmates in order to identify individuals whose “behavior was good.” When private employers contacted the workhouse seeking laborers, foremen were to select “the most suitable” of these well-behaved inmates and take steps to prepare them for employment. Conversely, inmates who committed infractions were denied such opportunities. Therefore, a system


developed in which obedient, well-behaved inmates were granted privileges, whereas refractory inmates were excluded from such privileges.

Workhouse foremen and administrators, therefore, relied on a blend of positive inducements and strict discipline in seeking to direct inmate’s behavior. Those that complied with workhouse rules and labored diligently were granted special privileges and access to opportunities that were denied less well behaved inmates. At the same time, inmates that disobeyed regulations and shirked the commands of workhouse foremen were punished, sometimes violently, and denied access to privileges granted to more compliant inmates. In extreme cases, inmates that consistently failed to comply with facility rules were forced to leave the workhouse and turned over to police custody.

Workhouse administrators also worked to involve inmates in the surveillance and regulation of their peers. Regulations required that foremen select one inmate from each of the workhouse’s common sleeping rooms to serve as room leader. Only well-behaved inmates were to be selected for this post and they were to serve as a “model” for their peers. Room leaders were charged with the task of supervising the other inmates in their room and were required to monitor their behavior and caution them against misconduct. They were, however, prohibited from violently punishing or abusing inmates that committed infractions. Rather, their duty was to inform workhouse administrators of such behavior. It was the foremen, then, who would carry out the punishment of the offending inmate. In addition, when an inmate was too sick to work, they were required to inform the room leader at wake up time. It was the responsibility of the room leader to then report the matter to the workhouse foremen. In the case of a

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sudden outbreak of illness, the same procedures were to be followed. The 1910 regulations also mandated that room leaders were to serve as night watchmen. They were posted outside of inmates’ rooms and along the periphery of the facility. When they found an inmate trying to escape or committing some other infraction, it was their duty to immediately inform workhouse administrators.

Workhouse administrators also tried to engage inmates in the regulation of their peers through the provision of positive inducements, including cash rewards. Inmates, for example, who captured an attempted escapee, informed administrators about a planned escape, or maintained a level-one rank because of good behavior for more than a year were to be provided with a reward of “no more than one yen.”

How did someone become a workhouse inmate and what were the procedures required for admittance? While some inmates no doubt proactively sought to enter the workhouse, the majority did not go there of their own volition. Rather, most inmates were forced to enter the facility following capture by the police, release from prison, or the filing of a request by an official or private citizen. Private citizens seeking to have a person admitted to the workhouse were required to submit a petition together with a copy of the prospective inmate’s family register directly to the workhouse. Public officials seeking to have a person admitted were not, however, required to complete these application procedures.

In cases in which persons were “sent to the workhouse by police or other authorities,” they were granted entry to the facility following the completion of a

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thorough inquiry into their background. Inquiries were conducted jointly by the “chief administrator, secretary, and workhouse foremen” in order to ascertain the prospective inmate’s “age, disposition, and background.” Personnel conducting the inquiry were also required to determine whether or not the individual had a registered address, criminal record, and a living relative who could care for them. In cases in which the prospective inmate provided a registered address and workhouse administrators determined that it was indeed correct, the prospective inmate was immediately sent back to that address. In contrast, the names of persons granted entry to the workhouse were entered into an inmate register, which was kept permanently on file.

Initially, the majority of those admitted to Kobayashi’s workhouse were children from poor families living in the vicinity of the workhouse. According to a May 1890 record from the Nishinari County Office, the workhouse was established to provide relief primarily to “impoverished children—both boys and girls—between the ages of six and twelve from Osaka prefecture.” The record notes that one of the facility’s primary objectives was to “relieve poor children” by “providing them with food and clothes” and “teaching them an appropriate skill,” which they could then sell in exchange for a wage after leaving the facility. While living in the workhouse, all children were also to be taught reading “reading, writing, and arithmetic.”

Poor children remained the primary focus of workhouse activities into the late 1890s. When, for example, noted Meiji-era journalist Yokoyama Gennosuke visited the facility in 1897, he found that fifty of the workhouse’s 82 inmates were boys and girls

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under the age of 15. The remaining 32 inmates, in contrast, were at least 15 years old. The most senior inmate was 55 years old.

Workhouse projects also had a pronounced moral component. According to the 1890 record, workhouse administrators were extremely concerned about children from poor households who grew up without the proper parental guidance and care. Watching their parents “from a young age,” the children learned “corrupt habits” (akuhei), which tainted their character and served to keep them in poverty. As a result, the record asserted, many poor children grew up to become “criminals.”

Kobayashi’s workhouse, however, was designed to shield poor children against such influences. Through a blend of moral instruction and practical education, workhouse instructors worked to discipline young inmates in an effort to facilitate their transformation into rational, industrious young adults, capable of supporting themselves.

In order to encourage the “proper” moral development of inmates, workhouse administrators employed a range of techniques. They mandated, for example, that inmates attend lectures on the first and sixteenth of each month on a range of topics, including ethics, self-improvement, benevolence, and the state of contemporary society. The aims of Kobayashi’s workhouse, therefore, extended beyond “caring for the immediate needs” of poor children. Workhouse projects were premised on the notion that poverty was ultimately the product of defects that existed within the poor themselves. However, those defects were considered neither inevitable nor immutable. Rather, they were viewed as a product of parental neglect and a childhood surrounded by poverty and

206 Ibid.
deviance. By placing children from poor households in the strictly regulated environment of the workhouse, Kobayashi aimed to disabuse them of any “defects” they may have picked up from their surroundings, while at the same time transmitting to them the attitudes and skills necessary for eventual self-sufficiency.

During their time in the workhouse, all children were also required to perform some form of labor. Initially, many were put to work producing “matchboxes, straw ware and hair ties.”\(^{207}\) In addition, older boys were paired up with younger boys and sent into the city to “peddle matches, paper scraps \((kami kuzu)\) and produce.” While most of what each juvenile inmate earned went directly into Kobayashi’s pocket, part of each child’s daily income “was deposited into savings.” The total amount saved was then given to the children when they left the facility at age 15.\(^{208}\) Children exiting the workhouse were to use this money to fund some sort of income-generating activity. This venture, it was hoped, would provide them with a steady income and help to keep them out of poverty.

Within a year of the workhouse’s opening, Kobayashi had expanded his operation to include the production of flannel fabrics.\(^{209}\) According to a February 1886 newspaper report, in an effort to begin producing flannel at the workhouse, Kobayashi began “buying up machinery and hiring factory hands.”\(^{210}\) Contemporary sources indicate that Kobayashi also sought to obtain revenue for the workhouse and provide employment for inmates by collaborating with private sector manufacturers. His efforts to collaborate were well received. As noted above, beginning in the 1880s, local manufacturers in

\(^{207}\) *Osaka nippō*, “Shiritsu hinmin jusanjo,” 10 February 1886.

\(^{208}\) *Asahi shinbun*, “Hinmin kyūjōhō,” 20 May 1885.

\(^{209}\) *Osaka nippō*, “Shiritsu hinmin jusanjo,” 10 February 1886.

\(^{210}\) Ibid.
Osaka began attempting to employ gangs of unskilled and impoverished urban dwellers to perform dangerous, low-paid, and physically taxing jobs in a range of industries, including match, glass, and umbrella manufacturing. Exploiting this trend, Kobayashi concluded a series of contracts with local manufacturers in which workhouse inmates were sub-contracted to perform part of the production process. Shortly after the workhouse’s opening, for example, Kobayashi secured a lucrative contract to sort matches for the Kitano Village-based Kōyōkan Match Company. This contract proved to be one of the primary sources of employment for workhouse inmates into the late 1890s. When well-known Meiji-era journalist Yokoyama Gennosuke visited the facility in 1897, 55 of the workhouse’s 82 inmates, the majority of them children, were employed in jobs provided on the basis of this contract.

Although it is unclear exactly how much Kobayashi earned from this arrangement, it is likely that he profited. As noted above, during the late nineteenth century Kobayashi secured exclusive rights to perform a range of public maintenance duties in the city of Osaka. At the same time, he continued to gradually expand on-site production activities through collaboration with private manufacturers. The workhouse grew so rapidly that by 1894 Kobayashi had to move it to a larger facility in Kita Ward’s Ushimaruchō neighborhood. There were also a number of occasions when Kobayashi was hired on a short-term basis to perform a specific duty for the local authorities. For example, during the Fifth National Industrial Exposition, which was held in Osaka’s Tennōji Park in 1903,

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[212] Ibid.
the city government paid him 1,000 yen to temporarily house hundreds of street children, vagrants, and hoodlums found wandering the streets.\textsuperscript{213}

It is clear that Kobayashi’s facility proved much more stable than earlier public institutions. Unlike the Osaka Poorhouse and the Osaka Relief Center, which closed after just a few years, Kobayashi’s workhouse continued to operate for nearly three decades. It only closed in 1912 when it was sold to the Kosaikai, a major non-profit welfare foundation in Osaka.\textsuperscript{214}

Kobayashi’s workhouse can also be seen as part of a broader system for regulating a range of social groups on the margins of urban society in Osaka at the end of the nineteenth century. Included among the primary objectives of the workhouse was “the reform and improvement of recalcitrant and lawless men and women” through the provision to such persons of both vocational instruction and “a legitimate means of self-sufficiency” (jikatsu no seigyō).\textsuperscript{215} While under the supervision of the workhouse, inmates were required to labor each day from sunrise to sunset. By compelling inmates to work constantly and diligently, workhouse personnel hoped to reform their behavior, while teaching them a vital vocational skill and “appropriate” attitudes towards work.

During the second half of the 1880s, Kobayashi’s workhouse quickly emerged as the primary destination for “beggars” and “unlicensed prostitutes” apprehended inside the city.\textsuperscript{216} In September 1890, for example, 63 beggars rounded up by police in the vicinity of the Nagamachi neighborhood were “immediately sent as a group to Kobayashi’s

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{Funabashi Hazaburō. \textit{Kobayashi Sahē-den}. Tokyo: Kobayashi Sahē beiju shūgakai (1917), 185-192.}
\footnote{Kawabata Naomata, ed. \textit{Kōsaiin rokujūnen no ayumi}. Osaka: Ōsaka shiritsu kōsaiin (1973), 43.}
\footnote{Iida Naoki. “Nichiro sengo ni okeru doboku kenchiku ukeoigyōsha.” \textit{Rekishigaku kenkyū} 749 (2001), 52-53.}
\end{footnotes}
workhouse” (tadachi ni issoku ni shite kobayashi jusanjo e okurikomitari). This remained the case during the early twentieth century, as well. For instance, between July 2 and 8, 1907, “43 vagrants and unlicensed prostitutes” captured by the police in Osaka’s Minami and Tennōji precincts sent to the facility and placed under the direct supervision of Kobayashi’s underlings. Once inside the walled confines of the workhouse, they were required to strictly observe workhouse rules and perform some sort of income-generating labor each day from sunrise to sunset. In exchange, they were provided with food, shelter, and the opportunity to earn a daily income.

By the final decade of the nineteenth century, Kobayashi’s workhouse had taken over two functions previously performed by publicly funded relief institutions: the regulation and relief of beggars, street prostitutes, and other “social deviants.” In this way, the mid-1880s saw a shift away from efforts to regulate the city’s poor via a network of publicly administered relief institutions and the rise of an arrangement in which part of the burden for managing such persons was shifted to officially-licensed private operators. This model remained in place until the aftermath of the 1918 Rice Riots. While the police began to take a more prominent role in the planning and administration of poverty management efforts after the 1904-1905 Russo-Japanese War it was not until the dramatic shock of the Rice Riots that authorities began to fund and directly administer institutions, such as workhouses for the poor. Until then, the relief and regulation of the poor continued to be entrusted to institutions such as Kobayashi Sahē’s workhouse. While this arrangement enabled the authorities to shift much of the burden of poverty management to privately administered institutions, it also inhibited

217 Ōsaka mainichi shinbun, “Kōjiki no karitate,” 17 September 1890.
efforts to properly regulate those institutions and created a space within which abuses could occur, such as the following.

Entering the late 1890s, Kobayashi Sahē’s workhouse began to face severe media criticism over workhouse conditions and its treatment of the children in its charge. After visiting the workhouse in 1897, prominent Meiji-era journalist Yokoyama Gennosuke wrote that the facility was filthy and insect-ridden. This, he noted, ran directly counter to claims made by the facility’s owner, Kobayashi Sahē, who asserted that his facility was clean and hygienic. Entering the on-site workhouse, Gennosuke found it in disarray, with “matchsticks and other items strewn across the floor.” Then, after standing in place for a moment, his leg began to itch. Leaning down to slowly catch whatever was biting him, he noticed it was a flea. Standing back up, Yokohama noticed that his back had also started to itch.

He then headed to “the matchstick workshop.”219 Reaching the entrance, he “encountered an indescribable stench.” Observing the children working there, he did not see a single “child with a healthy appearance.”220 Most were gaunt and “had pale faces.” There were also many with “crimson-colored eyelids” and “heads covered with eczema.”221 Yokoyama attributed the condition of juvenile inmates to neglect and malnourishment. He also noted that many of the children were forced to work long hours with little rest.

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220 Ibid.
221 Ibid.
The above description paints a very different image of Kobayashi Sahē’s workhouse than those seen in most contemporary portrayals.\textsuperscript{222} Despite claims that Kobayashi was motivated by a deep sense of compassion and sacrificed valuable personal resources to help the poor, clearly the situation was more complex. The squalid conditions inside the workhouse and the malnourished state of juvenile inmates suggest that Kobayashi may have also been motivated by a desire to exploit the labor of the individuals who entered the facility for personal profit. Unfortunately, financial records from the facility are unavailable so it is impossible to determine whether or not Kobayashi in fact profited from activities carried out at the workhouse. However, claims that he was motivated purely by benevolence and charity should be treated with skepticism.

\textbf{(IX) Conclusion}

This chapter has examined the basic mechanisms of poverty management employed in Osaka during the late nineteenth century. In the immediate aftermath of the Meiji Restoration, the Osaka prefectural government continued to permit thousands of beggars residing on the city periphery to subsist, as they had since the seventeenth century, by gathering alms from city residents. However, the practice of begging was carefully regulated and unlicensed beggars were strictly prohibited from gathering alms inside the prefecture. Under this arrangement, the welfare of Osaka’s poorest residents was entrusted to the collective largesse of the urban population.

However, during the early 1870s, the authorities began working to break the dependence of the urban poor on alms provided by more affluent city residents. In an

effort to discourage begging, they moved to prohibit the practice of almsgiving. At the same time, the authorities established a series of public relief institutions, which were designed to promote the self-sufficiency and socio-economic integration of former beggars by “reforming” their everyday practices and teaching them a marketable vocation. Accordingly the vast majority of the relief institutions established in the 1870s were intended as transitional facilities. Former beggars would enter, undergo a process of “reform,” and then be reintegrated into local society and the urban labor market. Yet, many of those institutions were insufficiently funded and, as a result, soon failed. As a result, the prefectural government experienced limited success in its efforts.

Lacking sufficient financial resources and political will and commitment, the prefectural government began to entrust the relief and regulation of the urban poor to a series of privately administered institutions, most importantly Kobayashi Sahē’s workhouse. In exchange, the prefectural authorities granted the operators of those institutions official sanction and preferential access to lucrative public maintenance contracts. This arrangement enabled the authorities to shift the financial burden poverty regulation and relief to the private sector. At the same time, it provided individuals, such as Kobayashi Sahē, with the opportunity to exploit the labor of large groups of impoverished persons for personal profit. Inevitably, the desire to profit through the exploitation of the poor gave rise to a range of abuses, such as those mentioned in the final section.

Notably, this arrangement persisted until the 1918 Rice Riots. The scale and intensity of the Rice Riots shocked many public officials in Osaka and prompted the authorities to assume a leading role in the funding, planning, and execution of local
poverty relief and prevention projects. Until then, however, the burden of poverty management continued to fall to private philanthropists and small-scale relief institutions, including Kobayashi Sahē’s workhouse.
CHAPTER 3. CHOLERA 1886: POVERTY, DISEASE, AND URBAN GOVERNANCE IN MEIJI OSAKA

(I) Introduction

On August 3, 1886, at the height of the deadliest cholera epidemic in Japanese history, Osaka Prefectural Police Chief Inspector Ōura Kanetake issued an urgent memo to the heads of Osaka’s four city wards and the commissioner of neighboring Nishinari County (Map 2). Citing the immediate threat to public health and security posed by the city’s rapidly expanding “slums” (hinminkutsu), the memo outlined a plan for Osaka’s first large-scale “slum clearance.” Characterizing the city’s slum districts as “dens of poverty, crime and infectious disease,” the plan called for their immediate demolition and the mass relocation of thousands of poor urban dwellers to a walled residential compound southwest of the city.

Ōura’s proposal represents a significant shift in objectives and strategy on the part of the Osaka prefectural authorities towards the urban poor. While the dominant aim of official poverty management policies during the late 1860s and 1870s had been the controlled integration of beggars and vagrants into the local socio-economic order, Ōura’s proposal was designed to achieve just the opposite. In seeking to eradicate what he perceived to be the root cause of epidemic outbreaks, Ōura advocated the demolition of the city’s slums and permanent segregation of thousands of beggars, vagrants, and rubbish collectors from the rest of the city’s population. Ōura maintained that a massive

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223 Yamamoto Shunichi. *Nihon korerashi*. Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai (1982), 69-70. Although the total number of reported infections in 1886 (155,923) was slightly lower than in 1879, the death toll and national mortality rate were the highest in Japanese history (108,405). On August 5, 1886, the *Asahi shinbun* newspaper reported that the cholera epidemic of 1886 was one of “unprecedented intensity.”


225 Ōura Kanetake. “Nipponbashisuji 3-chō-me o hajime sūchōson jinmin iten no ken.” *Minami kuyakusho gyōsei monjo* (C-8, No. 53), 3 August 1886.
slum clearance would help to significantly bolster public health and security, while improving the city’s appearance. Contemporary news coverage of Ōura’s proposal indicates that by the mid-1880s local officials in Osaka and members of the media had begun to grow concerned about the how the city would appear to foreign visitors once they were permitted to live outside of designated foreign concessions, or (kyoryūchi). Officials worried that foreigners would catch a glimpse of slum districts, such as Nagamachi, and that it would negatively influence their view of the city, and more broadly, the Japanese state.

This shift in the objectives and strategy of official poverty management policy was precipitated by two key factors. The first was the devastating wave of cholera epidemics that struck the Japanese archipelago between 1877 and 1886. Epidemics were particularly virulent in Osaka, where high population density and extreme squalor fueled long, intense outbreaks. For example, during the devastating 1886 epidemic, Osaka prefecture reported a total of 20,421 cases of cholera infection and 15,968 deaths. In addition to the tremendous human cost, cholera epidemics also severely disrupted commercial activity and industrial production. For instance, figures compiled by the Osaka Chamber of Commerce and prefectural Department of Agriculture and

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226 Although foreign residents of Japan were prohibited in the 1880s from residing outside designated foreign concessions (kyoryūchi), many believed that the era of “naichī zakkyō” (mixed residence) was on the immediate horizon.


229 Osaka-fu, ed. Korera yobōshi. Osaka: Osaka-fu, 1924. The 1886 cholera epidemic, for example, lasted for more than eleven months and produced mortality rates of more than 80 percent for the infected.

230 Osaka-fu, ed. Meiji jūkyūnen Osaka-fu kannai korerabyo ryukō kiji. Osaka: Osaka-fu, 1887. At the time of the epidemic, the prefecture’s population was 361,694 and the rate of infection was .13 percent.
Commerce indicate that the cholera epidemic of 1886 was responsible for losses of nearly 2,000,000 yen to the local economy.\footnote{Osaka shōkō kaigisho. “Korerabyō ni yoru dageki, 1886.” In Meiji Taishō Ōsaka-shishi, shiryō-hen, edited by , 613-620. Osaka: Seibundō shuppankai, 1933.} As a result, epidemic eradication emerged during the 1870s and 1880s as a primary concern of leading actors from the public and private sectors.

The second factor was the appearance of a body of scientific data linking disease outbreaks with the city’s poorest neighborhoods and the linked emergence of a discourse identifying Osaka’s slums and their impoverished residents as the primary source of citywide epidemics.\footnote{Asahi shinbun, “Nagamachi no densenbyō,” 16 April 1886. Asahi shinbun, “Nagamachi jinko iten no kekkō,” 14 August 1886.} According to figures compiled by the Osaka prefectural government, during the 1885 epidemic, nearly half of the 1,071 cases of infection reported in Osaka occurred in the city’s largest slum district, Nagamachi (Map 3).\footnote{Ōsaka-fu keisatsubu eiseika, ed. Ōsaka-fu densenbyō ryukō shiyō. Osaka: Ōsaka-fu (1919), 10.} The appearance and dissemination of such statistics prompted a dramatic shift in both official and popular attitudes regarding urban slums. An analysis of contemporary media reports and official documents reveals that by the mid-1880s government officials, public health experts, and members of the mass media alike had come to view such districts as “hotbeds of infectious disease” (densenbyō no onshō). Citing public health statistics, a range of influential actors from both the public and private sector began to call for the immediate reform of the city’s slum districts.\footnote{Katō Masahiro. Ōsaka suramu to sakariba: kindai toshi to basho no keifu. Osaka: Sōgensha (2002), 55-60.}

It was against this backdrop of recurring epidemic outbreaks and growing concern about the threat posed by Osaka’s slum districts that Chief Inspector Ōura first presented his slum clearance plan. Casting the city’s slums as a key threat to public health and
security, he called for the immediate execution of a citywide slum clearance and the permanent segregation of thousands of slum dwellers. By isolating thousands of impoverished city dwellers from the rest of the urban population and fundamentally remaking the built environment of the city’s slum districts, he asserted that the authorities could at last move beyond an ineffective and financially burdensome policy of epidemic containment and begin addressing the root causes of contagion. By the mid-1880s, therefore, executive members of the prefectural government had come to believe that the eradication of infectious disease required a broader effort focusing on the elimination of the environmental factors that promoted the outbreak and transmission of cholera epidemics. Ōura’s 1886 slum clearance proposal can be viewed as part of that effort, which also included sanitary infrastructure construction projects, water quality control programs, and policies designed to raise awareness among the urban masses about hygiene and epidemic prevention.

Focusing on Ōura’s proposal and the complex administrative process that unfolded following its official presentation in September 1886, this chapter examines the manner in which perceptions about the relationship between poverty and infectious disease influenced official policies towards the urban poor. Frequent outbreaks of cholera during the 1870s and 1880s gave rise to new forms of discrimination against the urban poor and prompted the establishment of an increasingly exclusionary regime of

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235 Ōura Kanetake. “Nipponbashisuji 3-chō-me o hajime sūchōson jinmin iten no ken.” Minami kuyakusho gyōsei monjo (C-8, No. 53), 3 August 1886.
236 Ibid.
238 Ōsaka-fū, ed. Ōsaka-fū kannai korerabyō ryūkō kiji. Osaka: Ōsaka-fū (1887), 87-209.
regional poverty management.\textsuperscript{239} In addition, a shift in popular attitudes about the relationship between urban poverty and disease supported efforts by leading prefectural officials to segregate the poor and establish an orderly, hygienic and secure urban core in Osaka exclusively populated by “middle and upper class persons.”\textsuperscript{240}

Notably, the authorities in Osaka began to seek the exclusion of the poor only after outbreaks of cholera had come to be seen as a problem intimately associated with the city’s slums. Whereas poverty management policies during the decade-and-a-half immediately following the Restoration had focused primarily on the rapid integration of destitute urban dwellers into the local socio-economic order, the disastrous wave of cholera epidemics that struck Osaka between 1877 and 1886 propelled a fundamental shift in official objectives towards the residents of impoverished urban districts. Now cast as transmitters of infectious disease, slum dwellers, it was asserted, had to be expelled from the city in order to protect the general population from the “threat” of contagion.

Although Ōura’s proposal was eventually rejected due to fierce local opposition in the communities that would be directly affected by the slum clearance, it triggered a five-year debate about how to effectively address the perceived threat to public health and security posed by the city’s slum districts, culminating in the execution of a large-scale housing reform project in Osaka’s largest slum, Nagamachi, in the spring of 1891. As a result of that project, hundreds of back-alley tenements were razed and thousands of slum dwellers were driven from their homes to villages in neighboring Nishinari and

\textsuperscript{240} \textit{Ōsaka nippō}, “Shiku ichigun rengō chōsonkai,” 19 August 1886.
While the authorities succeeded in dismantling many of Nagamachi’s back-alley tenements, their efforts led to the dispersion of thousands of slum dwellers across the city’s periphery, setting the stage for the emergence of several of twentieth century Osaka’s largest slum districts, including the massive Kamagasaki day laborer district.

(II) Cholera and Eradication Efforts

In order to properly assess the character and objectives of Ōura Kanetake’s slum clearance proposal, this section describes the social context within which it was composed. The plan was presented in August 1886 (Meiji 19), at the peak of a devastating cholera epidemic. During the 346-day 1886 outbreak, 155,923 individuals in 43 of the nation’s 47 prefectures were stricken with cholera and 108,405 died. Mortality rates exceeded 70 percent in many regions of the country, making death a near certainty for the majority of those who contracted the disease. Occurring as part of the fifth global cholera pandemic, the 1886 epidemic was emblematic of the Janus-faced character of the dramatic and often jarring transformation that took place on the Japanese archipelago during the decades that followed the nation’s “opening” to the world in the 1850s. While that transformation facilitated the rapid transmission into Japan of an extensive range of new ideas and technologies, many of which eventually served to improve the health and extend the lives of the nation’s citizens, it also promoted the unprecedented spread of acute infectious disease from abroad, resulting in an intensive,
multi-decade period of destructive epidemics and a protracted nationwide battle against infectious disease during which hundreds of thousands of Japanese perished.\textsuperscript{245}

Waged on the local level, that battle had far-reaching social consequences. It entailed both the mobilization of the Japanese population behind the shared goal of epidemic eradication and sweeping changes in the everyday attitudes and practices of individual citizens.\textsuperscript{246} The latter issue was a particularly critical one, as it was widely believed at the time that the actions of “ignorant citizens” \textit{(muchi no jinmin)}, who cared little about matters of health and hygiene, obstructed epidemic prevention efforts and facilitated the outbreak and spread of infection.\textsuperscript{247} In working to eradicate infectious disease, the Meiji authorities sought to facilitate the organized participation of every sector of Japanese society, including urban slum dwellers, via a range of local public health organs, such as the neighborhood hygiene association \textit{(eisei kumiai)}. While such organizations were designed to protect the general populace from the threat of infectious disease, they also facilitated enhanced governmental control over individual citizens and supported the broad-based mobilization of the general population behind the broader goal of epidemic eradication.

Amidst the fight against infectious disease, a discourse emerged identifying one specific sector of the Japanese population, the urban poor, as a primary cause of cholera.


\textsuperscript{246} Ōsaka-fu. Ōsaka-fu kannai korerabyō ryūkō kiji. Osaka: Ōsaka-fu (1887), 3. During the 1870s and 1880s, official epidemic prevention measures targeted a wide range of everyday practices, including the procurement of drinking water, disposal of human waste, and washing of clothing, dishes, and other household effects.

\textsuperscript{247} Ibid, 3-4.
and other infectious diseases. By the mid-1880s, public health officials, medical experts, and members of the mass media had come to assert that unhygienic conditions in the crowded slums of the nation’s cities were largely a product of the attitudes and behavior of destitute urban dwellers and that efforts to effectively combat disease would have to include intensified regulation of the poor and fundamental reform of their everyday practices. As a result, impoverished urban citizens and the slums in which they lived became a key focus of the Meiji government’s campaign against infectious disease. In the particular case of Osaka, the city’s slums emerged during the epidemics of 1885 and 1886 as a key battleground in the broader governmental struggle to control the spread of cholera and other infectious diseases. That struggle was paralleled by the emergence of a place-centered discourse identifying the city’s largest slum, Nagamachi, as a primary source of urban infection.

During each of the major epidemics that occurred between 1877 and 1886, Osaka was among the worst affected regions of the country. Overcrowding, squalor, and the lack of public water and sewer systems made it difficult to eradicate outbreaks once they entered the city. For example, during the massive 1886 cholera epidemic, lingering pockets of bacteria from the previous year fueled sporadic outbreaks throughout the

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248 By the 1870s, cholera, in particular, had come to be characterized in the popular media as a “poor peoples’ disease” (hinminbyō). An editorial from the September 28, 1877 edition of the Asano Newspaper, for example, stressed that “ignorant commoners” (shishitaru shōmin), rather than “persons from the middle and upper classes” (chuto ijō no shakai ni aru mono), were to blame for cholera outbreaks because they were totally unaware of “methods of health preservation and care” (yoseihō). Asano shinbun, “Korera yobōsaku ni tsuite,” 28 September 1877.


250 Yamamoto Shunichi. Nihon korerashi. Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai (1982), 69. Together with Tokyo and Toyama Prefectures, Osaka was one of only three prefectures in the country to see more than 10,000 cases of cholera infection in 1886. As one of the nation’s leading centers of commerce and industry, Osaka was a major transit point for goods arriving from abroad and other parts of the Japanese archipelago.
winter and early spring. In the late spring, strains of cholera infection already present in Osaka mixed with new strains of the disease arriving to the archipelago via trading vessels from infected regions of East and Southeast Asia, eventually intensifying into a prolonged, citywide epidemic that raged into the final days of the year, leaving thousands infected and dead in its wake.

Although cases of infection were evenly spread across Osaka’s four wards, official figures from each of the major cholera epidemics of the 1880s indicate that the city’s slum districts, in particular Nagamachi, saw significantly higher rates of infection and mortality than more affluent city neighborhoods. For example, during the epidemics of 1885 and 1886, the Nagamachi slum reported rates of infection more than triple those seen anywhere else in the city. As news of that fact spread, the neighborhood’s built environment and its impoverished residents simultaneously emerged as an explicit focus of government-led epidemic control efforts. During the period in question, those efforts were carried out primarily through the execution of three techniques: quarantining, disinfection, and water quality control. All three techniques are apparent in the prefectural government’s response to each of the major cholera epidemics of the late 1870s and 1880s.

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251 The first two cases of cholera in 1886 both occurred on January 2, 1886. One was reported in the Shinmachi neighborhood of Osaka’s Nishi Ward and the other was reported in Sakai, a town just south of Osaka.

252 Yamamoto Shunichi. Nihon korerashi. Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai (1982), 69-71. Although the cholera epidemic of 1886 continued for most of the year, it developed into a “full-blown, nationwide outbreak” in May and reached peak intensity in late August. Entering the fall, the epidemic gradually weakened and reported cases of infection decreased commensurately. The outbreak was totally eradicated in December as temperatures cooled and the climactic conditions that facilitate the outbreak and spread of epidemics disappeared. Osaka-fu, ed. Korera yobōshi. Osaka: Osaka-fu (1924), 395-396.

253 Ōsaka nippō, “Nagamachimono no meiwaku,” 3 July 1886.


Under regulations first outlined in the 1877 Cholera Prevention Regulations, at the time of an epidemic outbreak, the prefectural authorities were required to construct quarantine hospitals (hibyōin). Persons who contracted cholera or displayed “cholera-like symptoms” would be confined in those for the duration of their illness. While residents of large unattached dwellings who contracted cholera were occasionally permitted to receive treatment in the home, the majority of those who contracted the disease, in particular impoverished urban dwellers “residing in back-alley tenements,” were legally required to enter publicly administered quarantine hospitals. By promptly placing infected persons in quarantine facilities, the authorities hoped to “prevent the transmission of disease” (byōdoku no denpan o fusegu) to the general population.

As the legally appointed executor of local epidemic control policy, the Osaka police were permitted to enter the home of individuals who failed to comply with official quarantine orders and force them into confinement.

The earliest quarantine hospitals were intended as temporary institutions and demolished immediately after the conclusion of individual epidemics. For example, during the first post-Restoration cholera outbreak in 1877, the prefectural authorities established four quarantine hospitals immediately outside the city limits in the villages of Namba, Noda, and Minami Nagara, and on the Ishioka shinden. In accordance with

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prefectural regulations, all four institutions were incinerated in late December 1877 immediately following the epidemic’s formal conclusion.\(^{259}\)

However, as the battle against infectious disease dragged on, the prefectural authorities began to construct permanent, large-scale quarantine facilities, such as the Momoyama Quarantine Hospital. Opened during the 1885 cholera epidemic, the hospital was constructed on an isolated hilltop just south of the city in Tennōji Village. Surrounded by a wall and a ditch, the facility was located on a 20,790 square meter plot in an abandoned peach orchard.\(^{260}\) According to contemporary newspaper reports, the site was selected because it was “salubrious,” “the well water [was] clean,” and “the air circulation [was] excellent.”\(^{261}\) Located at the center of the site, the hospital building itself was explicitly modeled on British colonial prisons found in Hong Kong and Singapore.\(^{262}\) In the middle of the main hospital building, there was “a tall, hexagonal observation tower.” From the observation tower, it was possible to “see into the patient rooms lining the six wings that branched out from the tower in the shape of a snow crystal.”\(^{263}\) The facility’s design allowed for constant patient observation without extended periods of direct contact.

Each wing was linked to the central tower by “a narrow walkway.” Sealed patient rooms with large observation windows were located on either side of the walkway.

Looking through the windows, doctors and nursing staff were able to assess the condition


\(^{260}\) Asahi shinbun, “Momoyama hibyōin,” 21 October 1885.

\(^{261}\) Ibid.


\(^{263}\) Asahi shinbun, “Momoyama hibyōin,” 21 October 1885.
of individual patients without actually entering the room. Each room was linked to the walkway via both a door and a small compartment, which could be opened from either side. The excrement produced by each patient was gathered in a moveable receptacle, which was stored in the compartment. The receptacle could be emptied from the walkway, allowing cleaning staff to dispose of infected waste without interacting directly with individual patients. Once collected, human waste was transported to an on-site furnace, where it was immediately incinerated. In addition, when a patient died inside the facility, the individual’s body was cremated on the premises and their clothing, towels, and bedding was burned.

In order to prevent infection from escaping the facility, movement in and out was strictly regulated. During epidemic outbreaks, armed police officers were posted at both the front and rear entrance to the hospital and entry was limited to patients and staff. In addition to preventing patients from absconding, officers were charged with the duty of keeping out unauthorized persons, including patients’ families and friends. While staff members were permitted to use both entrances, patients were prohibited from entering or exiting the facility via the front gate. In order to exit the facility, they were required to pass through “a police checkpoint,” which was located between the hospital and rear entrance.\(^{264}\) After undergoing an initial inspection, they were then permitted to advance to the gate, where they were checked for a second time and released.

While newspaper reports published at the time of Momoyama Hospital’s opening claim that the facility was “meticulously designed” in order to ensure the “health and happiness” of patients, official records indicate that city residents feared being sent to

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quarantine hospitals and went to great lengths to avoid being quarantined.265 During the 1886 cholera epidemic, one resident of Osaka’s Minami Ward attempted to hide his ailing wife from visiting police inspectors by cramming her into the narrow space “above the ceiling” of his single-room dwelling.266 Although the man’s wife was eventually discovered and transported to Momoyama, the incident clearly illustrates the fear that city residents felt regarding Osaka’s quarantine hospitals. Due in large part to the high mortality rates associated with cholera, many Osaka residents viewed quarantine hospitals as places where the sick went to die rather than receive treatment.267

In some instances, local physicians conspired with city residents to conceal cholera diagnoses. Regulations introduced in 1877 mandated that all cases of cholera infection had to be immediately reported to “the local headman” and “the nearest police station.”268 After receiving a report, officers were required by law to promptly quarantine the infected individual and isolate the dwelling where the outbreak took place. In order to shield patients from the social stigma associated with cholera infection and enable them to remain with their families for the duration of their illness, some local physicians went so far as to intentionally falsify medical examination reports and death certificates.269 By the late 1870s, the practice had become so widespread that the

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268 Ibid.
269 Ōsaka-fu. “Korera kanja no toriatsukai kore, 26 October 1877.” OFFS (2). Osaka: Ōsaka-fu (1971), 581. According to a prefectural pronouncement issued on October 26, 1877, physicians who falsified examination certificates frequently claimed that patients were suffering from non-communicable diseases, such as beriberi.
prefectural authorities were prompted to issue an explicit ban and enact “strict punitive sanctions” for physicians that knowingly subverted prefectural regulations.270

Importantly, the practice of compulsory quarantining extended beyond the confines of the quarantine hospital. As I noted above, in addition to confining persons who contracted cholera in a quarantine facility, the police were also required to temporarily quarantine infected dwellings.271 In order to dissuade unauthorized persons from entering an infected dwelling during the quarantine period, police posted large yellow placards bearing the phrase “cholera infection” (korera densen) in large black characters on the front gate. When the scope of an infected area extended beyond a single dwelling, local police erected “bamboo fencing” around the area’s outer edge and posted officers along the perimeter to keep residents in and visitors out. In the 1879 Infectious Disease Prevention Regulations, the practice of quarantining infected dwellings with fencing is referred to as kōtsū shadan, or traffic suspension.272 According to article 15 of the 1879 regulations, the practice of kōtsū shadan was designed to temporarily “cut off all traffic” to and from infected dwellings, thereby preventing the “transmission of contagion to neighboring areas.” At its core, therefore, kōtsū shadan was a containment measure, intended not to eradicate the root causes of epidemic outbreaks, but to limit their spread by identifying and isolating infected spaces and potential transmitters of contagion.

During the 1885 cholera epidemic, city police and public health officials carried out a neighborhood-wide traffic suspension in Minami Ward’s Nagamachi slum.

271 Ōsaka nippō, “Korera yobōhō,” 2 October 1877.
Contemporary newspaper coverage indicates that the Nagamachi area was specifically targeted because “the fiercest outbreaks in the city” were taking place in the neighborhood’s “cramped and squalid back-alley tenements.” In a period of less than two months, more than 500 of the neighborhood’s approximately 7,000 residents contracted cholera and nearly 81 percent of the infected perished. In an effort to contain the outbreak, officers from Minami Police Station and local officials worked quickly to isolate infected back-alley tenement tracts. Rather than segregating dwellings individually, officers quarantined them in groups of six. In addition to the units located immediately to the left and right of an infected dwelling, officers also fenced off the three units located directly across from it. They did so in an attempt to block the spread of contagion to neighboring areas.

During the five-day quarantine period, which began on October 15, all traffic in and out of Nagamachi’s back-alleys was completely suspended. Local residents who contracted cholera while the quarantine was in place were immediately removed from the area and taken to nearby Momoyama Quarantine Hospital. In order to ensure that the disease did not spread beyond Nagamachi, all local residents who had not yet contracted the disease were forced to remain in their dwellings until the quarantine had been lifted. In order to ensure the survival of persons who remained in the area while the traffic suspension was in effect, officials from the neighborhood office provided them with daily servings of rice gruel.

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273 Asahi shinbun, “Kōtsū shadan,” 21 October 1885.
275 Ibid.
Once an infected tenement tract had been completely sealed off, the authorities then initiated “disinfection procedures,” known alternatively as shodokuhō or seiketsuhō. In May 1886, the prefectural authorities launched a month-long quarantine and disinfection effort targeting “squalid back-alley tenements” in Nagamachi.276 In an effort to stamp out cholera infection in the neighborhood, the prefectural authorities “hired a gang of 150 day laborers to sterilize the dwellings of local cholera victims.” “Sterilization procedures” were initiated on May 12 under the direction of officers from Minami Police Station and carried out for more than a month.277 In accordance with prefectural regulations, laborers removed “18.2 centimeters of dirt from underneath the flooring” of all dwellings where cases of infection had occurred and “at least 9.1 centimeters of earth from the space between an infected dwelling and the one next to it.” Once out of the ground, the contaminated earth was transported to an abandoned slaughterhouse located immediately to the southwest of Nagamachi, where it was buried.278 In order to replace the dirt they had removed, the gang of laborers then dredged sand from the bed of a nearby river and transported it back to Nagamachi.

Once the aforementioned procedures had been completed, laborers then entered each infected dwelling and collected all contaminated materials, including straw tatami mats, clothes, and bedding. They then transported the materials to a vacant lot on the neighborhood’s south end and incinerated them. In order to kill any lingering bacteria, carbolic acid (sekitansan) was then dispersed in and around each of the disinfected dwellings.

277 Ibid.
278 Ibid.
In addition to disinfection and quarantine procedures, official epidemic control efforts also included attempts to regulate the quality of drinking water.\(^{279}\) Even before the cholera bacillus was discovered, health experts in Japan, as in other parts of the world, were already aware that cholera was transmitted via tainted drinking water.\(^{280}\) Accordingly, during each of Meiji-era cholera epidemic, officials around Japan worked to strictly regulate wells, rivers, and other water sources. Beginning in the late 1870s, the authorities executed a series of water quality improvement campaigns in specific high-risk city neighborhoods.\(^{281}\) For instance, in March 1886, prefectural officials launched a drinking water improvement project in Minami Ward’s Nagamachi neighborhood.\(^{282}\) First, officials from the prefectural Department of Hygiene visited the area with officers from the Minami Police Station to assess the state of local water sources. After ascertaining that the majority of local residents primarily consumed well water, technicians from the prefectural Drinking Water Testing Center (Insui shikensho) were dispatched to the neighborhood to test the quality of water from local wells. In total, they “collected water samples from more than 300 wells” in and around the Nagamachi neighborhood. They then transported the samples back to the Drinking Water Testing Center for analysis. Following several weeks of testing, the authorities determined that water from more than 280 of the wells they tested was “severely contaminated with feces and other waste materials,” making it unfit for consumption. At the same time, officials found that only 13 of the wells currently in use contained water safe for drinking.


\(^{282}\) Asahi shinbun, “Nagomachi no idomizu,” 25 March 1886.
After informing local residents of the results of the Drinking Water Testing Center’s analysis, the neighborhood headman “issued a ban on the collection of drinking water” from any of the tainted wells. In addition, ward officials coordinated with local police to secure a safe supply of drinking water from the northern reaches of the Yodo River to thousands of tenement dwellers. Paid for with funding from the Minami Ward Office, the drinking water was provided to neighborhood residents at no charge for the remainder of the 1886 epidemic.

Notably, disinfection, quarantine, and water quality control projects were accompanied by a parallel effort to eradicate the “corrupt customs” (heishū) of the urban poor, whose “ignorance” and “neglect” of basic hygienic practices were blamed for the outbreak and transmission of disease.283 That effort entailed a more direct and thoroughgoing engagement with the poor via a range of governmental and quasi-governmental organizations, including the neighborhood hygiene association and the Great Japanese Private Hygiene Association (Dai-Nippon shiritsu eiseikai).284

In the case of Osaka, efforts to instruct the urban poor about public health and hygiene began in earnest in the early 1880s.285 In October 1883, executive members of the prefectural government and local medical experts founded the Osaka branch of the Tokyo-based Great Japanese Private Hygiene Association. Included among the Association’s primary functions was the propagation of basic information about public health and disease prevention to the urban poor in order to “foster social order and

Members of the association visited the slums and gave public lectures in an effort to teach the residents of the city’s back-alley tenements basic methods of epidemic prevention, disinfection, food and water storage, human waste disposal, and household cleaning and disinfection.

Also, the local authorities in Osaka established neighborhood-level public health organizations called hygiene associations (eisei kumiai) in order to ensure that households across the city strictly observed public health and disease prevention regulations. Initially established on the ward-level in 1884, these associations were comprised of between 10 and 30 households and were intended to function as mechanisms of policing and mutual surveillance. Each member household was required to obey a standardized set of organizational guidelines and members who failed to do so faced a fine. Members were encouraged to monitor the activities of their neighbors to make sure that they strictly observed both organizational regulations and emergency proclamations from the local public health authorities.

Association members were also required to appoint a director who was charged with a range of tasks, including transmitting public health directives from the Home Ministry and prefectural authorities, and ensuring that there were no “misunderstandings” or “violations” of those directives. In addition, Association directors were required to constantly monitor the state of public health in their neighborhoods, instruct members about prevention techniques, and formulate methods for improving hygienic conditions and eradicating disease in conjunction with the local headman and Hygiene

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Commissioner (Eisei iin). When an association member required medical treatment, but could not afford to see a doctor, the association director was required to immediately report that fact to the local headman and formulate a method of relief. In short, the hygiene commissioner was the local representative of the state public health apparatus and “the person with the responsibility of ensuring that no harm was sustained as a result of infection.”

In that position, hygiene association directors were granted significant authority to regulate poor urban dwellers. For example, article nine of the prefectural regulations for local hygiene associations notes that association directors were to work with member households to halt the transmission of disease outbreaks by preventing from wandering the city beggars, who the authorities claimed “mediated the spread of infection” (byōdoku denpan no baikai o nasu).

It should also be noted that hygiene association directors were expected to constantly monitor conditions in their neighborhood and the activities of member households during non-epidemic periods, as well. When, for example, they discovered “a person violating association rules,” they had the authority to order the individual to stop and issue a fine. If “for whatever reason there was a person who refused to obey,” they also had the obligation to immediately contact the local headman and work with him to resolve the situation.

Association regulations also stipulated that in “places where large groups of poor people congregate, such as back-alley tenements” hygiene association directors were to

290 Ibid.
be selected from “among local landlords.” By mandating the appointment of landlords in the city’s slum districts as hygiene association directors, the prefectural authorities sought to establish a permanent structure through which the city’s poor could be constantly monitored and disciplined. In addition to instructing poor urban residents about matters of health and hygiene, association directors participated in the regulation of the urban poor on the local level.

Despite their efforts, however, the prefectural authorities failed to successfully contain cholera outbreaks in the city. As cases of cholera infection skyrocketed once again during the summer of 1886, local officials began to search frantically for an effective weapon against cholera and other types of infectious disease. It was amidst this search that Osaka Prefectural Police Chief Inspector Ōura Kanetake’s slum clearance proposal was first presented. Unsatisfied with the results of drinking water control efforts and disinfection projects, Ōura and other slum clearance advocates began to call for the fundamental reform of the built environment of Nagamachi and other slum neighborhoods. The following analysis examines the character and historical significance of Ōura’s slum clearance project.

(III) Poverty, Disease, and Social Exclusion

(A) Nagamachi: A Brief Sketch

The primary target of Ōura’s 1886 proposal was Osaka’s infamous Nagamachi slum. Located on the city’s southern edge, the area had served since the late

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292 *Osaka mainichi shinbun*, “Eisei kumiai,” 11 October 1890.
293 Nagamachi, or Nagomachi, was the popular name during the Meiji period for the five long, narrow quarters running along both sides of Nipponbashi Boulevard just south of the Dōtonbori Canal. The neighborhood is currently the site of Osaka’s Den-Den Town electronics district. In 1892, journalist Sakurada Bungo famously described the neighborhood as “the city’s largest slum” (*shichū saidai no*...
seventeenth century as a gathering place for “unregistered persons” (mushukunin) and other members of the urban underclass. This was largely the result of a deliberate policy pursued by the city authorities in Osaka regarding unregistered persons beginning in the 1660s. In addition to permitting the establishment of dozens of flophouses (kichinyado) and low-cost inns in the Nagamachi area, the city magistrate (machi bugyō) granted the proprietors of those flophouses the exclusive right to provide lodging to unregistered persons and arrange employment for them in three local industries: sake brewing, oil pressing and rice processing.

As the historian Uchida Kusuo has noted, the decision to grant those rights was strategically motivated. According to Uchida, in an effort to regulate unregistered persons, who were considered a potential threat to urban stability, but represented a vital source of labor power for three of Osaka’s key early modern industries, the city magistrate’s office worked to concentrate such persons in a single area by permitting them to seek temporary lodging in Nagamachi. At the same time, however, the law...

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295 The establishment and operation of flophouses inside the Nagamachi area was initially permitted in the 1660s and 1670s during Ishimaru Sadatsugu’s term as city magistrate. During that time, 106 establishments were authorized to operate in four licensed quarters in the southern part of the city.

296 Saga Ashita. Kindai Ōsaka no toshi shakai kōzō. Tokyo: Nihon keizai hyōronsha (2007), 76-85. According to a late eighteenth-century record of kichinyado occupants, in 1791 there were 1,374 lodgers staying in flophouses and cheap inns located in Nagamachi. 1,034 of the lodgers worked as unskilled and semi-skilled day laborers in the city’s oil mills, sake breweries and rice mills. The record also indicates that contemporary occupants included more than 220 beggars (kotsujiki) and 110 riverside prostitutes (hamadachime).

297 Uchida Kusuo. "Mushukunin to nagamachi kichinyado." In Shinshū Ōsaka-shishi dai-sankan, edited by Shinshū Ōsaka-shishi hensaninkai, 847-851. Kyoto: Kahoku kabushiki-gaisha, 1992. While that right was threatened at various points in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by the appearance of competitors providing similar services, the proprietors of Nagamachi’s flophouses maintained control over it by incorporating competitors as subordinates in a hierarchy over which they presided.
prohibited the unregistered from residing anywhere else in the city.\footnote{298}\footnote{Uchida Kusuo. “Mushukunin to nagamachi kichinyado.” In Shinshū Ōsaka-shi shii dai-sankan, edited by Shinshū Ōsaka-shishi hensaninkai, 850-851. Kyoto: Kahoku Publishing, 1992.} Moreover, city authorities sought the active participation of flophouse proprietors in the day-to-day management of unregistered persons. By doing so, the authorities worked to guarantee a steady supply of labor to three vital local industries, while ensuring that unregistered persons were strictly regulated.\footnote{299} The historian Saga Ashita argues that Nagamachi’s flophouse proprietors maintained these special rights until the early 1870s, when the prefectural authorities in Osaka categorically rejected the existence of “unregistered persons” and prohibited flophouses from providing lodging to persons lacking the proper certification.\footnote{300}

Despite these changes, however, the area did not lose its association with urban poverty. Instead, it continued to expand, absorbing destitute migrants and persons displaced following the dismantling of Osaka’s licensed beggar fraternity in 1871.\footnote{301} Following the fraternity’s dissolution, the prefectural authorities required that hundreds of “able-bodied” beggars and vagrants captured in the city be relocated to Nagamachi and

\footnote{298}{\textsuperscript{298}}\textsuperscript{299}\textsuperscript{300}\textsuperscript{301}
placed under the control of the neighborhood’s flophouse proprietors. While the authorities’ primary intent was to concentrate all visible traces of urban poverty in a single regulated area, in pursuing such a policy, they contributed directly to the establishment of a large-scale slum in Nagamachi. At the same time, the prefectural authorities prohibited Nagamachi’s flophouses from arranging employment for their lodgers. As a result, the flophouses were transformed into “inexpensive inns that functioned as virtual pay-by-the-day tenements.”

By the mid-1880s, Nagamachi had emerged as Osaka’s largest slum. With a population of 6,873 in 1886, it dwarfed the much smaller slum districts that had begun to take shape along the city’s periphery and in the Honden district near the Kawaguchi Foreign Concession. The vast majority of Nagamachi’s residents worked in low-wage, unskilled occupations and lived in “pay-by-the day” (higime) back-alley tenements and flophouses, which they rented from landlords who lived in large dwellings located along Nipponbashi Boulevard.

According to figures compiled in 1890, the most common occupation in Nagamachi was “rubbish collector” (kuzu hiroi). Of the 9,714 persons surveyed, 1,600 (16%) were identified as rubbish collectors. In addition, nearly 74% of those surveyed (7,157) fell into three general occupational categories: casual laborers, peddlers and

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304 Ibid, 85.

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pieceworkers. Broadly speaking, persons in the category of casual laborer worked as construction laborers (doboku) and wagon and rickshaw pullers. Persons identified as peddlers sold a wide array of items, including udon, dried fish, reed screens, sweet sake, legumes, bamboo pipes, clams, loach soup, blocks of ice, sashimi, goldfish, insects and lanterns. Pieceworkers were primarily associated with two local industries: umbrella and match manufacturing. Generally speaking, those individuals worked at home and were contracted by manufacturers to produce pieces necessary for match and umbrella production in exchange for a fixed rate per unit. Some residents, for example, fashioned umbrella handles, while others stuffed matchboxes. Contrary to the claims of local officials and the popular press, beggars, accounted for only 8.5% of those surveyed (828).

Standing at the bottom of the urban economy, Nagamachi’s residents were extremely vulnerable to economic fluctuations. Despite the establishment in the 1880s of large-scale umbrella and match factories in the area, Nagamachi residents were often the first to lose their jobs during periods of economic instability. A newspaper article from 1886 reported that “until two or three years ago there was a total of 460 factory workers” in Nagamachi, “but now that number has fallen to no more than 60.” The reason for this, the article explained, was the “recent recession,” which not only reduced the number of jobs available in local match and umbrella factories, but also drove down wages. As a result, many former factory workers had switched occupations and were instead working as “waste collectors and rickshaw pullers.”

It should be noted, however, that not all tenants who lived in Nagamachi were destitute. While the vast majority of those who lived in dwellings located off of the front

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309 Ibid.
street were impoverished, there was a much smaller stratum of tenants who rented
dwellings and shops located along Nipponbashi Boulevard. The majority were petty
merchants and shopkeepers. Others earned a living as pawnbrokers or by renting bedding,
clothes and household furnishings to the poor tenants of the neighborhood’s back-

\textbf{(B) Discursive Representations of Nagamachi}

By the mid-1880s, Nagamachi had come to be characterized, in both the mass
media and official discourse, as “the city’s largest slum” (\textit{shichū saidai no hinminkutsu}).
Contemporary newspapers commonly referred to the area as a “den of society’s
extremely poor and criminals” (\textit{shakai no gokuhinsha hanzainin no sokutsu}) and a “place
of squalor and filth” (\textit{fuketsu owai no basho}).\footnote{\textit{Asahi shinbun}, “Kyūnagomachi jinka no iten,” 4 September 1886. \textit{Ōsaka nippō}, “Nagamachimono no meiwaku,” 3 July 1886. \textit{Asahi shinbun}, “Nagamachi heishū issen no kyōgi,” 8 August 1886.}
The neighborhood’s “cramped hovels” (\textit{waioku}), observers maintained, were an “unhygienic” (\textit{eisei ni tekishiteinai}) and
“disgraceful blight” on the urban landscape.\footnote{\textit{Asahi shinbun}, “Ryūkōbyō no sōkutsu,” 25 March 1886.}
In addition, the area’s flophouses, unlike
inns in other city neighborhoods, were characterized as “foul” places in which lodgers
stayed not for days, but for “several months or years.”\footnote{\textit{Asahi shinbun}, “Kyūnagomachi jinka no iten,” 4 September 1886.}
Newspapers also frequently identified Nagamachi as the primary source of “infectious disease” (\textit{ryūkōbyō}) outbreaks
in the city and a hub of “corruption and vice.”\footnote{\textit{Asahi shinbun}, “Kyūnagomachi jinka no ura nagaya iten no keikkō,” 17 August 1886.}
One editorial published in the \textit{Osaka nippō} newspaper even went so far as to call the area “Osaka’s disease” (\textit{Osaka no
shippei}), the source of all contagion, poverty and crime in the city.\footnote{\textit{Asahi shinbun}, “Kyūnagomachi jinka no iten,” 4 September 1886.}
Contemporary discourse about Nagamachi also stresses the relative backwardness of its impoverished residents. One article published in the summer of 1886, for example, describes Nagamachi as a place “standing completely outside of human society”\(^\text{316}\) (mattaku ningen shakai no soto ni tate), where conventional standards of behavior and comportment were ignored or misunderstood. Newspapers also frequently asserted that Nagamachi was populated exclusively by “rag-pickers, street performers and child beggars,” whose “corrupt manners and customs” (akufūzoku) distinguished them from “ordinary people” (jinjōnin).\(^\text{317}\) Another article from the summer of 1886 claimed that the beggars and rubbish collectors of Nagamachi “not only facilitated the spread of contagion” (byōdoku baikai no bin o nasu nomi narazu) by wandering the city during epidemics, but also, with the era of “mixed residence” (naichi zakkyo) fast approaching, would cause the city great embarrassment if seen by “the eyes of foreigners” (gaikokujin no me).\(^\text{318}\) Prefectural officials, members of the media asserted, needed to act quickly not only to protect city residents from the threats of crime and contagion, but also to shield the city from the ridicule and criticism of foreign visitors.

Ōura’s proposal employed many of these representations in asserting the urgent need for a citywide slum clearance. He contended that if slum districts, such as Nagamachi, were left unaltered they would continue to serve as a “breeding ground for crime and disease.”\(^\text{319}\) In order to eradicate the roots of both problems, he asserted, it would be necessary to not only raze the city’s slums but also to segregate their residents,

\(^{316}\) *Asahi shinbun*, “Nagomachi no ura nagaya iten no kekkō,” 17 August 1886.

\(^{317}\) *Osaka nippō*, “Nagamachimono no meiwaku,” July 1886.

\(^{318}\) Ibid.

\(^{319}\) Ōura Kanetake. “Nipponbashisuji 3-chō-me o hajime sūchōson jinmin iten no ken.” *Minami kuyakusho gyōsei monjo* (C-8, No. 53), 3 August 1886.
whose behavior facilitated the outbreak and spread of infection and promoted crime and social instability.\textsuperscript{320}

(C) Tateno Gōzo’s Plan for the Remaking of Osaka as a ‘Civilized City’

Ōura’s plan was written under the direction of prefectural governor, Tateno Gōzō, and was part of Tateno’s broader vision for the remaking of Osaka as a “civilized city” \textit{(bunmei toshi)}.\textsuperscript{321} During his time as governor, Tateno sought to transform Osaka’s built environment through the construction of critical urban infrastructure, including roads, water supply, and sewage systems, and the exclusion of “refractory,” “unwholesome” and “noxious” elements, such as slums, prisons, brothels, and flophouses. Through the execution of a range of urban reform projects, he sought to create an orderly, hygienic and secure urban core exclusively populated by “good citizens” \textit{(ryōmin)}.\textsuperscript{322} At the same time, he worked to banish criminals, the poor, and the mentally ill to segregated enclaves outside the city.

While Tateno’s vision was never fully realized, his efforts did have a significant impact on urban society in Osaka. In the mid-1880s, under his leadership, the prefectural authorities initiated a series of major infrastructure projects, including a massive prison merger and waterworks construction project, and enacted strict new regulations targeting “insalubrious” elements of the city’s built environment, including flophouses and back-alley tenements.\textsuperscript{323} Two of those regulations—the Tenement Construction Regulations

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{320} Ōura Kanetake. “Nipponbashisuji 3-chō-me o hajime sūchōson jinmin iten no ken.” \textit{Minami kuyakusho gyōsei monjo} (C-8, No. 53), 3 August1886.
\bibitem{322} Ibid.
\end{thebibliography}
and Inn Control Regulations—collectively facilitated the execution of Osaka’s first large-scale slum clearance in 1891. The former established uniform structural standards for tenements and granted prefectural police officers, who already held significant authority as the chief executors of local public health and epidemic eradication policies, the right to issue building permits, supervise housing inspections, order evictions and mandate the demolition or repair of tenements they judged unfit for residence. When Osaka’s first large-scale slum clearance was finally executed, it was the police who carried out inspections and issued eviction and demolition orders. Therefore, the expulsion of thousands of slum dwellers from Nagamachi was ultimately achieved through the application of police authority.

Notably, Tateno was not the first local official who attempted to achieve urban reform through the exclusion of certain types of businesses and institutions. In the late 1860s and early 1870s, for example, the prefectural government enacted a range of strict new regulations on establishments that they considered “iniquitous” or potentially “injurious” to public morality and security. Rather than banning such establishments outright, however, the authorities instead pursued a “harm reduction” strategy whereby they sought to limit their dispersion and regulate them inside of licensed districts. In 1869, for example, the prefectural authorities banned the operation of small-scale brothels known as tomarijaya outside of the publicly sanctioned Matsushima Pleasure

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324 Although the slum clearances proposals presented in 1886 and 1887 were never carried out, Osaka’s first large-scale slum clearance was carried out in 1891 on the basis of the Nagaya kenchiku kisoku (Tenement Construction Regulations), which was enacted in the spring of 1886. The law established strict new structural regulations on tenements.

325 Asahi shinbun, “Nagaya kenchiku kisoku,” 1 April 1886.

What primarily concerned the prefectural authorities was not the nature of the trade in which these *tomarijaya* engaged. Rather, it was the fact that small-scale brothels were dispersed across the city and therefore difficult to regulate. So, instead of prohibiting them entirely, the authorities created a licensed quarter, strategically located near the Kawaguchi Foreign Concession and a safe distance from the city center, where such establishments could legally operate. In 1871, the prefectural authorities also established an on-site syphilis clinic (*baidokuin*) in an effort to control the spread of sexually transmitted disease. As urban geographer Katō Masahiro has pointed out, this strategy was based on the notion that “iniquitous establishments,” such as brothels, were a “necessary evil” (*hitsuyōaku*), vital for the maintenance of public health and security, but dangerous if left unregulated.

A similar logic is apparent in efforts undertaken in Osaka to regulate the urban poor. While the prefectural authorities recognized that the thousands of impoverished urban dwellers that called Osaka’s slums ‘home’ could not be left ungoverned, they also realized that neither could the poor be simply cast out of the city and excluded from the local socio-economic order. Not only did the poor function as a vital source of cheap, unskilled labor for important local export industries such as match and glass manufacturing, but they also came to represent a crucial source of income for an array of

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328 Ibid.
landowners, landlords, inn proprietors, pawnbrokers and front-street merchants whose financial fortunes depended on their ability to extract money from the city’s poor.\footnote{Saga Ashita. \textit{Kindai Ōsaka no toshi kasō shakai}. Tokyo: Nihon hyōronsha (2007), 153-158.}

As we will see below, some of the strongest opposition to Ōura’s slum clearance proposal came from these groups, whose members stood, at lest in the short term, to lose hundreds of tenants and customers if the urban poor were indeed driven from the city. They, therefore, had a vested interest in preserving the status quo. In order to understand the character of the debate that took place following the presentation of Ōura’s proposal, it is necessary to consider not only the relationship between the residents of Osaka’s slums and the local authorities, but also the broader socio-economic structure of which the city’s poor were part. An examination of the debates precipitated by Ōura’s proposal illustrates the range of competing interests and motives tied to the city’s slums. These debates illustrate the authority and logic of those who supported a comprehensive slum clearance and of their opponents.

\textbf{(D) The 1886 Slum Clearance Plan}

This section examines the contents and logic of Ōura Kanetake’s 1886 slum clearance proposal.\footnote{Ōura Kanetake. “Nipponbashisui 3-chō-me o hajime sūchōson jinmin iten no ken.” \textit{Minami kuyakusho gyōsei monjo} (C-8, No. 53), 3 August 1886.} While Ōura’s proposal was not the first of its kind to appear in Japan in the decades following the 1868 Meiji Restoration, it was both more expansive and qualitatively different than any of its predecessors, including the well-known slum clearance carried out in 1881 in Tokyo’s Kanda district.\footnote{Ishida Yoshifusa. \textit{Nihon kindai toshi keikaku shi kenkyū}. Tokyo: Kashiwa shobō (1987), 70-71.} In its original form, Ōura’s plan targeted 1,867 households spread across 28 neighborhoods in Osaka proper and

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{oura1887} Ōura Kanetake. “Nipponbashisui 3-chō-me o hajime sūchōson jinmin iten no ken.” \textit{Minami kuyakusho gyōsei monjo} (C-8, No. 53), 3 August 1886.
\end{thebibliography}
three villages on the periphery of the city in Nishinari County. More than half of the households targeted under the original proposal were located in the Nagamachi area.

The plan was announced at the peak of the massive 1886 cholera epidemic, at a time when Osaka’s slums were being widely vilified in both the mass media and official pronouncements as “squalid dens of poor people and thugs.” Relying on similar claims about the squalid and unsanitary condition of the city’s slums, the plan described the Nagamachi neighborhood as a place “almost entirely devoid of empty space” where “cramped hovels” (waioku) stand “one on top of the other” like “the teeth of a comb” (shippi).

The plan characterized Nagamachi’s residents as “unregistered vagrants” (museki musan) and “persons of unparalleled hardship” (muhi no naru nanmin). It noted that many lived in flophouse inns known as kichinyado and subsisted by “begging for food in the city” and “collecting paper scraps” (shihen o hiroi). While Ōura conceded that Nagamachi’s appearance had improved somewhat since the Meiji Restoration, he pointed out that the “customs” (kanshū) of local residents remained largely unchanged and were in need of immediate reform. He claimed, for example, that residents spent their days “gambling” and squandered whatever money they had “on food and drink.” During times of financial hardship, he noted that slum dwellers would wander the streets naked accompanied by wives clad in “rags like seaweed” (kaisō gotoki boro). According to

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336 *Asahi shinbun*, “Kyūnagomachi jinka no iten,” 4 September 1886.
Ōura, conditions were so dire that it was “rare for a person not to emerge from Nagamachi’s gates as a criminal.”

As in much of the contemporary discourse about the urban poor, Ōura stressed the moral gap between the residents of Nagamachi and the “good people” (ryōmin) of the city. His proposal contrasted the “immorality” and “depravity” of Nagamachi’s slum dwellers with the more “appropriate” moral sensibility of residents of more affluent city neighborhoods. For example, he maintained that unlike people in other parts of the city, Nagamachi’s residents viewed the “harboring [of criminals]” (intotsu) as an act of chivalry (ninkyō). This, he asserted, led the “good people” of the city to “fear” the area “like the serpent and the scorpion” (dakatsu no gotoku) and to “detest” it “like a plague.”

In order to eradicate the twin evils of crime and disease, Ōura claimed that a comprehensive slum clearance was necessary. Previous efforts to eradicate disease and crime had been ineffective, he asserted, because the authorities had failed to stamp out the root causes of both problems, which lay in the built environment of the city’s slums and the “benighted” attitudes and behavior of slum dwellers. Urging immediate action, Ōura noted that despite expenditures of “more than 100,000” yen on “epidemic prevention” during the first seven months of 1886, more than 10,000 residents of Osaka prefecture had contracted cholera and 8,515 had died. With the cholera epidemic

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337 Ōura Kanetake. “Nipponbashisuji 3-chō-me o hajime sūchōson jinmin iten no ken.” Minami kuyakusho gyōsei monjo (C-8, No. 53), 3 August 1886.
338 Ibid.
339 Ibid.
340 Drawing also on statistics from the cholera epidemics of 1882 (Meiji 15) and 1885 (Meiji 18) and other infectious disease outbreaks from the mid-1880s, Ōura also advanced the claim that rates of infection for cholera and other infectious diseases, such as typhus, were much higher in Nagamachi and other similarly impoverished places. Considered in light of the extreme squalor found in the city’s slums, this, Ōura asserted, was not coincidental” (guzen ni arazaru nari).
showing no signs of abating, Ōura maintained that it was no longer sufficient to “carry out a few cleaning projects and close some tainted wells.” He asserted that the government needed to take more drastic measures to root out the disease at its source.

Ōura advised that the authorities should first purchase a “tract of farmland outside the city” and construct a housing compound there for persons who would be driven out of their homes as a result of the slum clearance. Then, a large-scale tenement demolition and reconstruction project should be carried out on the basis of the aforementioned Tenement Construction Law. The funding for the project, Ōura suggested, should come from the local budgets of the wards and counties directly impacted by the plan. Stressing the immediate need for a slum clearance, he noted that while the cost would be burdensome, “the benefit of preventing future epidemics in Osaka city and Nishinari County would be even greater.” Near the end of the proposal, Ōura called for the establishment of a “joint town and village council” (rengō chōsonkai) including representatives from the city’s four wards and Nishinari County to debate and vote on a slum clearance proposal.

(E) The Establishment of the Four Ward-One County Joint Town and Village Council

Acting on Ōura’s memo, on August 4, 1886, the heads of Osaka’s four wards and the commissioner of Nishinari County held a meeting to discuss the proposal.341 The following day they sent a request to Governor Tateno asking for permission to establish a deliberative assembly comprised of representatives from the city’s four wards and Nishinari County to vote on a slum clearance resolution.342 The request noted that

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341 Minami kuyakusho, ed. “Shiku ichigun rengō chōsonkai soshiki ni tsuki ukagaigaki kaisō oyobi chōsonmei kaisei negai.” Minami kuyakusho gyōsei monjo (Sho-No. 5373), 4 August 1886.
342 Minami kuyakusho, ed. “Rengō chōsonkai soshiki no gi ni tsuki ukagai.” Minami kuyakusho gyōsei monjo (Sho-No. 411), 5 August 1886.
“in recent years” Osaka prefecture had been devastated by repeated “epidemic outbreaks of cholera and typhoid.” “Cholera,” it noted, had been “particularly rampant” during the year and continued to show no signs of abating. As a result, “thousands of lives and tremendous wealth had been lost.”

The reason for this, the request maintained, was that poor urban dwellers living in squalid and overcrowded dwellings on the city periphery were “neglectful of matters of health and hygiene” and thought nothing of living in a state of perpetual squalor. Echoing Ōura’s instructions, it suggested that “suitable housing” should instead be constructed on “a tract of land outside the city” and that the city’s slum dwellers should be relocated en masse there. According to the request, the execution of a large-scale slum clearance would bring three major benefits. First, it “would encourage the improvement of housing” inside the city. Second, it would help to “eradicate the root causes of recent epidemic outbreaks.” Third, it would help to “improve the appearance of the city and its surroundings.”

In order to debate the details of the project, including how it would be funded, the heads of Osaka’s four wards and Nishinari County requested the governor’s permission to establish a joint town and village council in accordance with article eight, section one and article nine, section two of the 1884 Regulations for Ward, Town, and Village Councils.

On August 9, 1886, Governor Tateno issued an official response granting their request. With the governor’s approval, ward and county officials then moved to establish a deliberative body, which became popularly known as the Four Ward-One

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343 Minami kuyakusho, ed. “Rengō chōsonkai soshiki no gi ni tsuki ukagai.” Minami kuyakusho gyosei monjo (Sho-No. 411), 5 August 1886.
County Joint Town and Village Council (shiku ichigun rengō chōsonkai). Watanabe Kanae, the head of Minami Ward, was appointed to oversee the newly created body. Five voting districts—one in each of the city’s four wards and one in Nishinari County—were then established. Elections were held on August 18th and representatives were chosen from among a pool of local public officials, including members of the prefectoral assembly and ward, town, and village councils. In total, 25 representatives, five from each district, were select to serve on the council. As representatives, the individuals elected to the council were then charged with the task of debating and voting on a resolution drafted jointly by the secretaries of Osaka’s four city wards and Nishinari County. The resolution would then be debated and voted on at a meeting of the council in early September.

(F) The September Proposal

The initial draft of the resolution that would be debated at the September council meeting was completed on August 19, 1886, and submitted four days later to Chief

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345 The council’s official title was actually “the 605 Town and Village Joint Town and Village Council including Nishi Ward Tosabori-dōri 1-chō-me” (Nishi-ku tosabori-dōri 1-chō-me gai roppyaku ka chōson rengō chōsonkai.” It was referred to, however, in newspapers by the much shorter title, Four Ward-One County Joint Town and Village Council.

346 He was selected to oversee the council because the vast majority of the dwellings targeted for demolition under Ōura’s proposal were located inside of Minami Ward.

347 Asahi shinbun, “Nagomachi no ura nagaya iten no kekkō,” 17 August 1886.

348 Osaka nippō, “Shiku ichigun rengō chōsonkai,” 19 August 1886. Izumi Yujirō, Yokawa Fukutarō Higuchi Jūbē, Nagao Tozō, and Oi Tōsai were selected to represent Higashi Ward. Ogiya Gōhē, Sano Yohē, Omiwa Chōbē, Ishigami Gisuke, and Aoki Matsuemon were chosen from Nishi Ward. Yasui Kenji, Kida Magojirō, Mita Masaemon, Takeda Genbē, and Matsumura Kyubē were chosen from Minami Ward. Oshima Ryosuke, Kitada Otokichia, Saito Kashichi, Fujiura Shojirō, and Yamaguchi Shoshichiro were chosen from Kita Ward. Nakano Jihē, Oishi Naotaka, Hiramatsu Denbē, Kakimoto Soemon, and Ikushima Genbē were chosen from Nishinari County.

349 Asahi shinbun, “Nagomachi no jinka hikiutsushi,” 21 August 1886. As the article notes, the governor appointed Minami Ward secretary Yamamoto Kiyoshi, Nishi Ward secretary Yagisakatakemasa, Higashi Ward secretary Kui Manjirō, Kita Ward secretary Tanimura Sanjūrō, and Nishinari County secretary Kusaka Yoshi to compose a draft resolution in which they outlined the details of the plan, including its funding structure.
Inspector Ōura for review. In terms of content and aims, it was very similar to Ōura’s original proposal. It differed, however, on two key points. First, unlike Ōura, the resolution’s authors chose to frame the issue only as a matter of public health rather than one of both public health and security. The “explanation” attached to the proposal notes that the “poor people” (saimin) of the city’s slums lived “crowded together in cramped tenements” completely cut off from “sunlight and fresh air.” In many slum districts, “dwellings were located right next to latrines” and “wells stood adjacent to sewer ditches.” As a consequence, well water was often contaminated with feces and slum dwellers were forced to constantly “breathe in the stench” of sewage and human waste. This, the resolution asserted, placed them constantly at risk of infection.

Second, the September resolution’s authors increased the total number of households that would be targeted for clearance from 1,867 to 2,700. Notably, more than 80 percent of the dwellings targeted under the resolution were located in the Nagamachi neighborhood. If a slum clearance were indeed carried out, 90 percent of all dwellings in Nagamachi would be demolished and 98.8 percent of the local population would be driven from the neighborhood. Once completed, the prefectural authorities estimated that there would be more than 39,000 square meters of vacant land in Nagamachi available for redevelopment. Newspapers reported that the authorities intended to permanently exclude former residents from the area and gradually redevelop the massive tract of vacant land as a “middle class residential district.”

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352 Ibid, 211-212.
The site selected for the relocation of the city’s poor was a 24.5-acre tract of land in Nishinari County’s Kuboyoshi District (Map 4). The site was chosen not only because of its distance from the center of the city, but also because it was clean and hygienic. The resolution called for the construction on this site of a totally self-contained residential compound. Encircled by a ditch, the compound was to include 2,700 communal housing units, a workhouse, medical clinic, three hardware stores, two barbershops, four public baths, two pawnshops, two produce shops, four restaurants, two futon rental shops, five rice shops and a community office. The total estimated cost for the project, including housing, bridges, wells, toilets, drainage ditches, garbage dumps, street lamps, trees and roads, was 48,247 yen 87 sen. As Ōura advised, the proposal was to be jointly funded by Nishinari County and Osaka’s four wards rather than the prefecture.

The compound proposed by the authorities was intended as more than just a quarantine facility. By forcing the poor to live outside the city in a segregated, but hygienic and orderly housing compound, the prefectural authorities aimed not only to protect the general population from the threat of infectious disease, but also to encourage the reform of the poor themselves. Once inside the facility, former slum dwellers could be kept under the constant supervision of government-appointed officials, monitored by an on-site physician, provided with vocational training and put to work in a range of trades, including match and textile production.

Contemporary newspapers applauded efforts to execute a citywide slum clearance. The August 17, 1886 edition of the Asahi shinbun, for example, commented that efforts

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356 Ibid. 44.7% of the funding was to come from household taxes, 35.1% from business taxes and 20.2% from land taxes.
to rid the city of poverty and disease “should be lauded by the people of the prefecture.” Praising the earnestness of those seeking election to the joint council, the article also noted that many local officials “passionately hoped” to win a seat.\(^357\) Similarly, the August 19, 1886 *Osaka nippō* reported that the authorities were “at last” taking steps to demolish the slums and “rid the city of filth.”\(^358\)

Despite mass media support for the slum clearance proposal, differences of opinion were already apparent among local leaders in Osaka even before the council convened at the beginning of September. A number of local officials, for instance, felt that the proposed relocation site, which was located 2.2 kilometers from Osaka proper, was far “too close the city.”\(^359\) They suggested that the authorities should instead relocate the poor to the Yahataya Shinden, which was located 5.5 kilometers west of the Nagamachi area.

By mid-August, petty merchants from Nagamachi had also begun to voice their opposition to the relocation plan. On August 18, the *Osaka nippō* reported that such local merchants had formed an opposition organization and were working to ensure that a slum clearance was not carried out.\(^360\) These merchants operated shops along Nipponbashi Boulevard and earned a living by selling food, clothes and other daily necessities to the residents of Nagamachi’s flophouses and back-alley tenements. If a slum clearance were in fact carried out, they stood to lose their primary source of income.

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\(^359\) *Asano Shinbun*, “Shiku ichigun rengōkai,” 21 August 1886. Contemporary documents indicate that the council included members such as Toyoda Bunsaburō, who served as a member of the Osaka Prefectural Assembly and was elected in 1890 to the lower house of the Japanese National Diet. Toyoda was an influential local leader who was also involved in the establishment of the Osaka Electric Company and was a co-founder of the non-governmental Osaka Educational Association and Osaka Hygiene Association.

\(^360\) *Osaka nippō*, “Shiku ichigun rengō chōsonkai,” 18 August 1886.
Although sources are limited, newspaper articles from August and September 1886 indicate that there was also strong opposition to the plan from among the poor residents of Nagamachi, as well. A newspaper article from early September 1886, for example, noted that a large number of residents from the Nagamachi area, including several “threatening-looking hoodlums,” attended the public debates over the slum clearance proposal held in September.\(^\text{361}\) It is likely that the term “hoodlums” refers specifically to the gangsters (kyōkaku), such as Okuda Benjirō, known to operate during the late-nineteenth century in Nagamachi.\(^\text{362}\) While no acts of violence were reported, the September 1886 article commented that the hoodlums looked elated when the proposal was rejected. It also speculated that their presence might have influenced the votes of some of the members of the council, who feared reprisals if they supported the slum clearance.

Strong opposition also came from local landowners in Nishinari County. They opposed the proposal first for financial reasons. For under the September proposal, Nishinari County residents were expected to provide more than 12,000 yen to help fund the project. Many farmers in Nishinari County felt by late August that this was unfair because the vast majority of the households being targeted for relocation were located inside the city limits.\(^\text{363}\) They, therefore, felt that city residents should shoulder a larger percentage of the financial burden. Many farmers were also unhappy about the fact that thousands of impoverished and potentially dangerous urban dwellers were going to be relocated to Nishinari County.

\(^{361}\) Ōsaka nippō, “Narazumono giji o bōchōsu,” 7 September 1886.
\(^{363}\) Ōsaka nippō, “Rengōkai bunri no kyōgi,” 28 August 1886.
On August 26, 1886, the five representatives from Nishinari County elected to the Four Ward, One County Joint Town and Village Council held a meeting north of the city at the Myōtokuji Temple in Fukushima Village to discuss the possibility of officially withdrawing from the council. Contemporary newspaper coverage indicates that 35 village headmen from across Nishinari County were also in attendance and voiced strong opposition to the proposed slum clearance resolution. Those in attendance resolved to seek permission from the prefectural authorities to break away from the council. On August 31, formal requests were submitted simultaneously to Governor Tateno and Nishinari County Commissioner Tanabe Hisoka on behalf of the more than 100 villages in Nishinari County. Both requests, however, were quickly rejected and when the council was convened in mid-September, representatives from Nishinari County were in attendance during all three days.

The landlords of Nagamachi also fiercely opposed Ōura’s slum clearance proposal. The income of many landlords in Nagamachi was directly dependent on how much money they could extract from poor neighborhood residents. Landlords earned a living not only by providing the poor with housing, but also by selling them daily necessities, lending them money, acting as their pawnbroker, and employing them to produce umbrellas, matches and other goods. Like the petty merchants mentioned above, they too stood to lose a significant portion of their income if a slum clearance were indeed carried out.

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364 Osaka nippō, “Rengōkai bunri no kyōgi,” 28 August 1886.
365 Osaka nippō, “Kochō no shukai,” 1 September 1886.
367 Ibid.
Therefore, when the Four Ward, One County Joint Town and Village Council finally convened on September 3, 1886, the slum clearance proposal was already facing significant opposition. The proceedings were opened to the public and “nearly 80 interested persons,” including influential residents from Nagamachi and village headmen from communities across Nishinari County, were in attendance on the first day of debate.  

The resolution was put up for an initial vote on September 4. At the time of the vote, 22 representatives were in attendance. Only four members of the council voted in favor of the proposal and it was easily defeated. In total, 18 members of the council, including all of the representatives from Nishinari County opposed the slum clearance proposal. The majority did so because they felt it was insufficient in scope and would place an excessive financial burden on the residents of the city’s four wards and Nishinari County. Ogiya Gohē of Nishi Ward, for example, characterized the proposal as “a stopgap [measure] that addressed only a small part of the problem.” He urged the authorities to “wait for another day” until a comprehensive project of urban reform could be carried out and “true reform achieved.” Moving forward at the present time, he cautioned, “would be uneconomical, particularly in light of the flood damage last year and the cholera outbreaks of this year. The people of the prefecture are suffering greatly and they should not be made to shoulder this burden.”

During the debate, Izumi Yujirō of Higashi Ward also made a strong statement against the plan. Speaking on behalf of the landlords and landowners whose interests

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369 *Osaka nippō*, “Narazmono giji o bōchōsu,” 7 September 1886.
370 The bill was supported by prefectural assemblyman and Minami Ward alderman Yasui Kenji, prefectural assemblymen and Higashi Ward alderman Nagao Fujimi, Higashi ward pharmacist Oi Bokushin and one other individual whose identity is unknown.
371 *Asahi shinbun*, “Shiku ichigun rengō chōsonkai giji bōchō ryakki,” 7 September 1886.
were threatened by the proposal, he noted that the proposed resolution failed to provide any compensation to the owners of dwellings that were targeted for demolition. This, he claimed, was unfair to the owners of tenements in neighborhoods, such as Nagamachi, who stood to lose significant income as a result of the slum clearance project.

Immediately after the vote, Governor Tateno ordered that the proposal be promptly resubmitted on September 6 for a second round of deliberations. Facing even heavier opposition the second time around, the proposal was once again defeated. At the time of the second vote 18 representatives were in attendance and only one—Higashi Ward representative Nagao Tōzō—voted in favor of the proposal. Despite this setback, however, the proposal’s supporters vowed to fight on. One of the proposal’s strongest advocates, Yasui Kenji of Minami Ward, proclaimed, “We must enact this proposal as quickly as possible for the good of the city. We are now facing an epidemic outbreak and this is the right moment to enact a resolution.”

The proposal’s defeat was celebrated in both Nagamachi and the villages of Nishinari County. On September 11, the Asahi shinbun reported that a group of “more than 40 landlords” from Nagamachi led by Yoshikawa Kumagorō had visited the homes of several council representatives who voted against the slum clearance proposal in order to express their gratitude. Similarly, the Osaka nippō noted that a group of village headmen from Nishinari County held a banquet after the vote to celebrate the resolution’s failure and to honor the representatives who had offered their opposition.

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Members of the media and general public, however, continued to support efforts to expel slum dwellers from the city. A letter to the editor published in the *Osaka nippō* two days after the proposal’s defeat urged prefectural officials to go further in their efforts. Rather than relocating the poor to Namba Village, the author suggested that the authorities should round up all the poor people living in the city and send them to Hokkaido to clear tracts of undeveloped land.376 This, the author maintained, would bolster health and security in the city, while also promoting the mobilization of thousands of slum dwellers for the “good of the nation.”

Similarly, the *Asahi shinbun* published an editorial in which they praised the authorities and called on local citizens to support efforts to carry out a slum clearance.377 Noting that criminals from as far away as “Kyūshū and Shikoku” found refuge in the city’s slums, the editorial asserted that the execution of a large-scale slum clearance would “deprive criminals of their hiding places” and force them out into the open.378 This, in turn, would make it easier for police to apprehend criminal offenders and foster improved security in the city. At the same time, by demolishing the city’s slums, the authorities would be able to improve hygienic conditions in Osaka, while protecting more affluent city residents from the threat of infectious disease.

Influential business leaders and members of the medical community also continued to strongly support plans for a slum clearance. In August 1886, just as the government’s efforts were beginning to take shape, members of the Osaka Chamber of Commerce, led by influential financier Fujita Denzaburō, called upon a group of

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376 *Osaka nippō*, “Himin wa hokkaido e okure,” 8 September 1886.
377 *Asahi shinbun*, “Kyūnagomachi jinka no iten,” 4 September 1886.
378 Ibid.
epidemiological experts at Osaka Imperial University, including professors Ozawa Kenji and Ogata Masaki, to draft a comprehensive cholera eradication plan.\footnote{Asahi shinbun, “Korerabyō bokumetsu,” 17 August 1886.} After more than a month of consideration, the group presented their findings to the Chamber of Commerce. In order to permanently eradicate the threat of cholera, they asserted that the authorities needed to provide “sufficient drinking and service water” to every household in the prefecture, construct a prefecture-wide sewer system, improve the sanitary condition of housing, mitigate overcrowding, and segregate “the poorest residents of the city” (mottomo hinku no jinmin) from the rest of the urban population.\footnote{Asahi shinbun, “Korerabyō bokumetsu konjihō,” 8 October 1886.} Their recommendations were published in consecutive editions of both the Asahi shinbun and Osaka nippō newspapers during the days leading up to the second round of deliberations over the prefectural government’s slum clearance proposal, which took place in mid-October. Their recommendations not only served to bolster governmental claims about the relationship between the city’s slums and infectious disease, but also helped to strengthen public support for the government’s efforts.\footnote{Harada Keiichi. Nihon kindai toshi shi kenkyū. Kyoto: Shibunkaku shuppan (1997), 221.}

**G) The October Proposal**

Despite the slum clearance bill’s overwhelming defeat in September, the prefectural government did not abandon its plans to execute a large-scale clearance. Instead, efforts began in mid-September to redraft the proposal. In terms of both logic and content, the new proposal was very similar to the one debated in early September. However, there were several noteworthy changes. First, in an effort to reduce the total cost of the project, the number of households targeted for relocation was reduced from...
2,700 to 2,225. In addition, the number of households from the county area was increased from 153 to 550.\textsuperscript{382} This was done to appease critics who felt it was unfair that the September proposal called upon Nishinari County to provide the same amount of funding for the project as the city’s four wards, despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of dwellings targeted for clearance were located inside the city.

Second, the prefectural authorities expanded the Four Ward, One County Joint Town and Village Council to include representatives from Higashinari County. As historian Harada Keiichi has noted, Higashinari County was added in an effort to placate opponents of the September proposal who argued that Higashinari County should also be involved in the proceedings and made to shoulder part of the financial burden.\textsuperscript{383} Although the \textit{Asahi shinbun} newspaper reported that a provision guaranteeing financial compensation to landlords whose dwellings were targeted for demolition had been added to the revised resolution, this report proved unfounded.\textsuperscript{384} Like the September draft, therefore, the October resolution offered no monetary compensation to landlords for lost revenue.

Third, the October’s proposal’s authors altered the plan’s funding structure. Namely, the September proposal mandated that funding for the project come from three sources: household taxes (44.7%), business taxes (35.1%), and land taxes (20.2%).\textsuperscript{385} The October proposal, however, required that the plan be funded entirely from household (70%) and business taxes (30%).\textsuperscript{386} This was done in an effort to reduce the total

\begin{footnotes}
\item[382] \textit{Asahi shinbun}, “Rengō chōsonkai gian setsumei,” 17 October 1886.
\item[383] Ibid.
\item[385] \textit{Asahi shinbun}, “Shiku ichigun rengōkai gian,” 5 September 1886.
\item[386] \textit{Asahi shinbun}, “Rengo chōsonkai gian setsumei,” 17 October 1886.
\end{footnotes}
financial burden on the counties, while shifting more of the burden to the city’s four wards.\footnote{387}{Harada Keiichi. \textit{Nihon kindai toshi shi kenkyū}. Kyoto: Shibunkaku shuppan (1997), 224.}

At the same time, on September 23, 1886 the prefectural government entered negotiations with Namba Village headman Narimai Chōzaemon to purchase a tract of farmland. By September 25, it appeared as though the purchase would be concluded with little difficulty.\footnote{388}{Harada Keiichi. “Kankyō no kindaika to kasō shakai.” In \textit{Shinshū Ōsaka-shishi, dai-gokan}, edited by Shinshū Ōsaka-shi shi hensaniinkai, 544-545. Kyoto: Kahoku kabushiki-gaisha, 1992.} However, news of the impending land sale sparked fierce opposition within the village and widespread contempt for Narimai, who was accused of assisting the authorities at the expense of local residents.\footnote{389}{Asano shinbun, “Osaka hinmin ijū jiken,” 3 October 1886.}

In late September, a group of 100 local landlords, including wealthy landholder Kakimoto Sōbē, held a meeting at Namba Village’s Yasaka Shrine. All eight members of the village council and a number of influential Nishinari County officials attended the meeting. All of those present were reportedly outraged about the proposed land sale and criticized the prefectural government’s actions as unfair.\footnote{390}{Harada Keiichi. \textit{Nihon kindai toshishi kenkyū}. Kyoto: Shibunkaku shuppan (1997), 221.}

Contemporary newspaper reports indicate that village residents opposed the prefectural government’s plan to move the city’s poor to Namba Village for two key reasons. First, they were concerned that the influx of thousands of “beggars and disabled persons” from Nagamachi and other slum districts would rapidly inflate the local population, resulting in an increase in the village’s overall tax burden. Lacking stable income, however, newly relocated slum dwellers would be unable to pay their fair share. Instead, critics warned, the burden would fall to taxpaying households already present in the village. Second, many feared that slum dwellers posed a threat to the livelihoods of
village residents. Namely, if thousands of destitute city residents moved to Namba Village, villagers were concerned that they would “steal crops and damage area farm fields,” depriving local farmers of vital food and income. Many, no doubt, believed that by opposing the prefectural government’s efforts they were protecting the livelihoods and safety of persons already living in the village.

Despite intense opposition from local villagers, Narimai agreed, at the urging of Nishinari County Commissioner Tanabe Hisoka, to personally sell the prefectural authorities a tract of land. Hearing news of this, however, villagers erupted in anger and “descended upon” Narimai’s house to force him to withdraw his support.391 Facing pressure from higher ranking officials to conclude a land deal with prefectural government and intensifying opposition from local residents, Narimai had no other choice but to resign. Naturally, following his resignation as headman, any potential for a land deal involving Narimai disappeared.392

At the end of September, “in accordance with the wishes of the villagers,” Kakimoto Sōbē was chosen to serve as “Narimai’s successor.” As a leader of the faction in the village opposed to the proposed slum clearance, he was unwilling to assist County Commissioner Tanabe in securing a tract of land. At a meeting with Commissioner Tanabe on October 1, Kakimoto informed Tanabe that he had been “appointed by village landowners” to represent their interests and was unwilling to act against their wishes. In an effort to win the support of villagers for the slum clearance project, on October 5, Tanabe traveled to Namba Village to meet with village officials. According to newspaper reports, he “invited more than 70” villagers “to the local elementary school”

392 Ibid.
and attempted to win their consent to purchase a tract of land in the village. The meeting lasted late into the night. Despite being “bombarded” with “complaints and grievances,” Tanabe struggled for hours to gain the villagers’ support. By the end of the meeting, it appeared as though he had succeeded in winning the trust and support of village leaders. However, after finding out the next day that Tanabe would soon be leaving his post as county commissioner and would, therefore, not be involved in the slum clearance project as it moved forward, villagers immediately withdrew their support.

Village leaders then convened an emergency meeting on the morning of October 6 at Yasaka Shrine. During the meeting, every person in attendance voiced opposition to the government’s efforts to purchase land in the village’s Kuboyoshi district. On the following day, seven village representatives, including local assemblymen Tsuchi Kyūzaemon submitted a statement to the commissioner of Nishinari County announcing the village’s formal opposition to the proposed slum clearance.393 The statement asserted that “the majority of the more than 7,000 households” already residing in Namba Village were “deeply impoverished.”394 It also noted that the “recent construction of a railroad line and new factories” inside the village had led to a decrease in the amount of land under cultivation.395 As a consequence, village yields and the income of many residents had been declining, while the number of households “unable to pay household and business taxes” had been “increasing from year to year.” A sudden influx of poor residents, therefore, would result in “increased taxes” and “further financial hardship” for already cash-strapped villagers.

393 *Asahi shinbun*, “Nishinarigun no jinmin,” 9 October 1886.
394 *Asahi shinbun*, “Handan iyoio haretsu,” 8 October 1886.
395 Ibid.
On October 8, a group of “34 representatives” from Nishinari County, including officials from Namba Village, submitted a personal appeal to Governor Tateno. They requested that Tanabe Hisoka be kept on as Nishinari County Commissioner until the slum clearance issue had been resolved. The governor, however, refused their request and, as planned, Commissioner Tanabe stepped down in order to assume a new position as commissioner of nearby Oshimi County. Tanabe’s successor, Nakanishi Tamotsu, took over officially as county commissioner in Nishinari on October 11. Unlike Tanabe, who had served as county commissioner since the early Meiji period, Nakanishi had no prior relationship with Namba Village and lacked the trust of local villagers. Consequently, his appointment appears to have hardened the opposition of local villagers, who continued to refuse the government’s overtures.

Despite fierce resistance from local villagers and pledges from village leaders to oppose effort on the part of the government to acquire land, the prefectural authorities continued to search for a tract of land in Namba Village. In the days leading up to his departure, county commissioner Tanabe visited the village in a last ditch effort to bring villagers to his side. According to newspaper reports from early October, he succeeded in winning the support of ten local landholders. However, the authorities required more land than those ten individuals could provide. They needed to secure the consent of at least ten additional landholders. The vast majority, however, remained firm in their opposition. Newspapers reported that many of those opposed to the prefectural government’s efforts were smallholders who stood to “immediately lose their

396 Asahi shinbun, “Nakanishi tamotsu shi,” 10 October 1886.
397 Asahi shinbun, “Namba-mura jisho kaiage no koto,” 9 October 1886.
livelihoods” if they sold the small parcel of land in their possession. Economic exigencies, therefore, prevented many from offering their consent. As a consequence of these circumstances, Commissioner Tanabe failed to secure enough land for the proposed relocation site before stepping down as county commissioner.

Even before Tanabe’s official departure, his successor, Nakanishi Tamotsu, made a separate appeal to local leaders in Namba Village. On October 8, 1886, he and Nishinari County secretary Kusaka were dispatched to Namba Village to meet with community representatives. While visiting the village, Nakanishi and Kusaka met with a group of “local landholders” and strongly urged them to comply with the prefectural government’s efforts to purchase a tract of land. Landholders, however, remained ardent in their opposition. Just as they had refused both Narimai and Tanabe, they rebuffed Nakanishi and Kusaka’s advances.

On October 13, just three days before the Four Ward, Two County Joint Town and Village Council was scheduled to open proceedings, a group of Namba Village residents held a meeting in Osaka’s Kita Ward with a group of county officials and representatives of the Four Ward, Two County Council. During the meeting, villagers once again declared their unanimous opposition to the slum clearance proposal. As on earlier occasions, they argued that the funding burden was excessively onerous and that the mass relocation of poor people to would promote increased crime and economic instability in the village. After several hours of discussions, villagers won assurances from each of the council representatives in attendance that they would vote against the government’s proposal.

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399 *Asahi shinbun*, “Namba-mura jisho kaiage no koto,” 9 October 1886.
400 *Asahi shinbun*, “Kyōdō kaoku kenchikuchi no koto,” 10 October 1886.
Villagers then assembled for a final time at Yasaka Shrine on October 15. At that final meeting, they drafted a formal petition, which they submitted to Governor Tateno on October 18. In that document, they requested assurances from the governor that the authorities would abandon efforts to relocate the residents of Nagamachi and other urban slums to Namba Village. If their plea was rejected, villagers then planned to send an appeal directly to the Home Ministry.

Further complicating the situation for the authorities, two of the proposal’s key supporters failed to win reelection to the reformed Four Ward, Two County Joint Town and Village Council. Following elections in early October, Nagao Tōzō and Oi Bokushin were not selected to represent their respective wards at the October council. Instead, two vocal opponents of the proposal were elected in their place.

Following a month of intense opposition from the residents of Namba Village, proceedings for the Four Ward, Two County Joint Town and Village Council began on October 16, 1886. In an effort to prevent outsiders from influencing the vote, the prefectural authorities issued a ban prohibiting members of the general public from attending the council meetings. Their efforts proved unsuccessful, however, as newspaper reports indicate that “more than 100 onlookers” were in attendance when the council meeting opened.

During the two-hour proceedings, not a single statement was made in favor of the reworked slum clearance proposal. A number of council members, however, made

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401 *Asahi shinbun*, “Kyōdō kaoku kenchikuchi no koto,” 10 October 1886.
402 Ibid.
403 Although the council was popularly referred to as the *Shiku ichigun rengō chōsonkai*, it was officially termed the *Higashi-ku hirokojichō gai gohyaku sanjūrokun ka chōson rengō chōsonkai*.
404 *Asahi shinbun*, “Shiku nigun rengokai no koto,” 22 September 1886.
405 *Asano shinbun*, “Shiku ryōgun rengokai,” 21 October 1886.
strong statements of opposition. Among others, prefectural assemblyman and council member Toyota Bunsaburō criticized the project as “frivolous” and “non-urgent.”⁴⁰⁶ He argued that the demolition of a small number of “slum districts” would be insufficient to eradicate contagion and improve the urban built environment. Rather, he asserted that a slum clearance would only be effective if it was carried out as part of broader program of “urban reform” (shiku kaisei). As no future plans for such a program existed, he called for the slum clearance proposal’s immediate withdrawal. Facing unanimous opposition, a vote was quickly called and the proposal was once again defeated.⁴⁰⁷

The proposal’s resounding defeat was celebrated in Nagamachi and across Nishinari County.⁴⁰⁸ For example, on October 19, the Asahi shinbun reported that “the people of Namba Village” were “overjoyed” about the proposal’s defeat. To commemorate their victory, the villagers gathered at Yasaka Shrine, where they “performed sacred songs and dances” and made offerings to the local tutelary deity. They then held a lavish banquet in order to thank the representatives of the Four Ward, Two County Joint Town and Village Council who voted against the proposal.⁴⁰⁹

Despite facing defeat for a second time, the prefectural authorities did not give up their efforts to carry out a large-scale slum clearance. Just hours after the proposal’s rejection, a group of city officials, including the head of Higashi Ward, met at the Higashi Ward Office to discuss the results of the council meeting and plot an alternative strategy for managing the “threat” posed to public health and safety by the city’s slums.⁴¹⁰

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⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.
⁴⁰⁸ Osaka nippō, “Zenpai o yorokobu,” 19 October 1886.
⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.
⁴¹⁰ Asahi shinbun, “Kekkyoku hatashite ikaga,” 19 October 1886.
following day, a report outlining the details of their discussion was sent to Governor Tateno. The prefectural authorities decided at this point not to resubmit a similar slum clearance proposal for a vote. Rather, under Tateno’s leadership, they began working to dismantle the city’s slum districts through the enactment of stringent new regulations on flophouses and the application of recently established regulations on tenement construction.

(IV) Conclusion: Nagamachi’s Dismantling

While governmental efforts to regulate the urban poor in Osaka during the 1870s and early 1880s focused primarily on the reform of the poor and were designed to achieve their controlled incorporation into the local socio-economic order, the 1880s saw the presentation of a project designed to achieve just the opposite. In an effort to counter the mass destruction caused by outbreaks of cholera and infectious disease, the chief inspector of the prefectural police presented a plan for Osaka’s first comprehensive slum clearance. Prepared under the direction of reform-minded governor Tateno Gōzō, the plan was, at least initially, also intended as a public security measure. Therefore, by executing a slum clearance, the prefectural authorities in Osaka hoped to eradicate what they perceived to be the root cause of epidemics, while at the same time helping to foster a crime-free city.

The plan’s primary target was Nagamachi. Long a gathering place for Osaka’s poor, the area had come by the 1880s to be vilified in both official and popular discourse as a den of poverty, disease and crime. At the same time, however, the area’s residents had come to represent a vital source of labor power for a number of Osaka’s key export

\[411\] Asahi shinbun, “Kekkyoku hatashite ikaga,” 19 October 1886.
industries and an important source of income for an array of landlords, inn proprietors, pawnbrokers and merchants. The financial fortunes of these individuals depended on their ability to extract money from the poor. In the end, it was the opposition of these individuals and residents of Nishinari County, which defeated the proposal.

The authorities were, however, able to begin the process of dismantling the city’s slums through the enactment of two important regulations, the Inn Control Law (yadoya torishimari kisoku) and the Tenement Construction Law (nagaya kenchiku kisoku). Enacted in 1886, these measures targeted flophouses and back-alley tenements, both of which were dwelling types that were prevalent in the city’s slums.

Enacted in December 1886, the Inn Control Law banned the operation of flophouses inside the city’s four wards and established five licensed quarters outside of the city in which they could legally operate. Considering that the vast majority of Osaka’s flophouses were located in Nagamachi and catered primarily to the city’s poor, the authorities’ clearly intended to drive the poor out of the city by requiring the establishments in which many made their homes to operate outside the city.

Similarly, the Tenement Construction Law, which was enacted in July 1886, targeted unsanitary and poorly built tenements in the city. It established strict new structural regulations on tenements and mandated that landlords reconstruct or demolish dwellings that failed to meet the newly established regulations at their own expense. Landlords would then be required to raise rental rates in order to defray the costs that they incurred in reconstructing their dwellings. In reality, very few of the dwellings in Nagamachi and other slum districts met the newly established standards and once the law took effect, a large portion of the dwellings in such areas would have to be razed and
completely reconstructed. In the case of Nagamachi, this is exactly what happened.

The prefectural authorities waited until 1891 to apply the Tenement Construction Law because of ongoing debates over a proposal initiated by local landlords to redevelop the neighborhood as an amusement quarter like that in the neighboring Sennichimae district. Once it appeared as though the proposal was going to fail, the authorities moved to apply the law in Nagamachi, resulting in what amounted to Osaka’s first large-scale slum clearance. Beginning in March 1891 and continuing for a period of two months, the authorities executed a massive tenement demolition and reconstruction project in Nagamachi. In total, nearly 4,000 dwellings were targeted. By the end of April 1891, newspapers were reporting that 380 dwellings had been demolished and totally reconstructed and that construction was already underway on more than 2,522 additional dwellings.\footnote{\textit{Osaka mainichi shinbun}, “Fuketsu nagaya kaichiku,” 24 April 1891.}

As a result of the project, thousands of urban dwellers were forced out to villages on the periphery of the city, including Namba Village (1,905 households), Tennōji and Kitano Villages (1,226 households), and Kizu and Imamiya Villages (874 households). Although the authorities had finally achieved what amounted to Osaka’s first slum clearance, they had also unintentionally set the stage for the development of a number of Osaka’s most infamous twentieth-century slum districts, including the well-known Kamagasaki slum, which emerged during the first decade of the twentieth-century just south of Nagamachi in Imamiya Village.\footnote{Katō Masahiro. 2002. \textit{Ōsaka suramu to sakariba: kindai toshi to basho no keifu}. Osaka: Sōgensha, 115-118.} The following chapter focuses on efforts to provide relief and elementary education to the residents of a number of those slums.
CHAPTER 4. CIVILIZING THE SLUMS: POVERTY AND SOCIAL CONTROL IN EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY OSAKA’S “POOR SCHOOLS”

(I) Introduction

On an Autumn afternoon in 1910, Amano Tokisaburō, the recently appointed chief of Osaka’s Namba Police Precinct, set out from Namba Police Station with a group of patrolmen to acquaint himself with his new surroundings. Making his way southward from the station through the precinct’s impoverished Nishi Kizu neighborhood, he encountered a group of “six or seven young boys” lingering by the side of the road. Drawing closer to the group, Chief Amano heard one of the boys irreverently shout, “Look, look, the police are coming!” Then, as Amano and his companions passed, several of the boys suddenly reached down, picked up rocks, and began hurling them at the officers.

Shocked at the youths’ blatant disregard for police authority, Amano’s first instinct was to severely punish them for their actions. However, as he advanced towards the group, it suddenly occurred to him that all of the boys were of school age and, considering the season and time of day, supposed to be in school. Realizing that none of the youths were currently at school, he immediately attributed their behavior to a lack of education and a failure on the part of the youths’ parents to properly discipline their

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415 Asai Seita, ed. Shiritsu tokuufū jinjō shogakkō kiyō. Osaka: Shiritsu tokuufū jinjō shogakkō (1915), 1-2. Amano Tokisaburō was appointed as chief of the Namba police in September 1910. He later served as the first director of the Osaka municipal government’s Social Department and was “a leading authority on poverty relief and management policies.” He was a close associate of leading early twentieth-century social reformers and Home Ministry bureaucrats Tomeoka Kōsuke and Aida Norio.
children. With that realization, Amano’s anger is purported to have quickly dissipated. Instead, he began to feel a mix of compassion for their plight and fear about the long-term consequences of failing to provide elementary education to needy urban youth.

For Chief Amano, the boys’ lack of respect was a learned behavior, absorbed through years of life in the slums.\textsuperscript{418} Constantly surrounded by “depravity, immoderation, and squalor,” it was only natural that the youths developed deviant traits.\textsuperscript{419} Mimicking their elders, they too engaged in criminality and debauchery.\textsuperscript{420} Therefore, Amano maintained, it was the responsibility of the police to intervene in order to ensure that poor children received basic practical and ethical instruction in a controlled disciplinary context. Standing in for the parents of needy children, who were either absent or incapable of providing their offspring with the “appropriate” social influences, officers and instructors would serve as a civilizing force, bringing normative values and discipline to the squalid and disorderly slum districts in Namba precinct.

According to Amano, his encounter with the unruly youths represented more than just an isolated incident. In his understanding, his encounter was the manifestation of a larger social problem affecting hundreds of needy school-aged children across the precinct.\textsuperscript{421} For a variety of reasons, including parental negligence, economic hardship, and a lack of night schools, many local children failed to enroll in school and complete the compulsory six-years of primary education.\textsuperscript{422} Concluding that this in turn led the majority to engage in anti-social behavior, he began searching for a way to provide

\textsuperscript{418} Asai Seita, ed. \textit{Shiritsu tokufū jinjō shogakkō kiyō}. Osaka: Shiritsu tokufū jinjō shogakkō (1915), 1-2.
\textsuperscript{419} Ibid, 19-20.
\textsuperscript{420} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{421} Ibid, 1-2.
\textsuperscript{422} In 1907, a revision of the 1900 Elementary School Edict (\textit{Shōgakkōrei}) extended the length of compulsory education from four years to six years.
elementary education to children in the precinct currently excluded from the public school system. In cooperation with local philanthropists and members of Osaka’s business community, he devised a plan to establish a pair of privately funded, police administered night schools—Tokufū Elementary School and Airin Elementary School—for children from slum districts in southern Osaka’s Nipponbashi, Kizu, and Imamiya neighborhoods.423

Popularly known as “poor peoples’ schools” (hinmin gakkō), both institutions were created in an effort to extend mandatory education to child laborers who were unable to attend school during the day because they were required to work in support of their families.424 Child labor played a vital role in the economic lives of low-income families across Namba precinct.425 During the 1910s and 1920s, the survival of hundreds of local households depended upon the constant contribution of income from every member of the family, including young children.426

On one level, therefore, the opening of Tokufū and Airin Elementary Schools represents an attempt on the part of local police in one of Osaka’s poorest precincts to extend basic educational instruction to the members of a social group conventionally excluded from public education.427 Therefore, unlike the poverty management policies examined in the previous chapter, which were intended to promote the exclusion of slum

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423 All located in Namba precinct, the eleven districts include Funademachi, Hirotamachi, Higashi sekiyamachi, Nishi sekiyamachi, Minami takagishiko, Nipponbashi higashi 1-chō-me, Nipponbashi higashi 2-chō-me, Nipponbashi 3-chō-me, Nipponbashi 5-chō-me, Shimoderachō 3-chō-me, and Tobita.
427 Asai Seita, ed. Shiritsu tokufū jinjō shogakkō kiyō. Osaka: Shiritsu tokufū jinjō shogakkō (1915), 4-5.
dwellers from urban society, the schools proposed by Amano were designed to encourage their reform and inclusion in the urban socio-economic order.

At the same time, it is essential to view Osaka’s “poor schools” as one part of the nationwide Local Improvement Movement, a Home Ministry-directed community improvement and revitalization campaign initiated in the aftermath of the Russo-Japanese War. The Local Improvement Movement’s primary objectives included revitalizing rural and urban communities bankrupted by the increased taxation that accompanied the Russo-Japanese War, helping such communities establish a stable fiscal foundation, cultivating a talented pool of local leaders to head up community reform efforts, and encouraging national indoctrination. In part, it was designed to prevent incidents of urban social unrest and crime by the intensified regulation of the urban lower and working classes. It involved not only the deployment of enhanced techniques of violence and repression, but also the implementation of a range of police-administered social programs. Those programs were designed to facilitate the enhanced surveillance of the poor and promote long-term socio-economic stability in needy urban districts by “reforming” the attitudes and beliefs of local residents.

This chapter examines the history of one of the most enduring police-run social programs established during this period, Tokufū Elementary School. More than an educational institution, the school also served as a community welfare center and the locus of a range of police-administered relief projects, such as a trachoma eradication program, which were designed to foster long-term urban stability by raising the living standards of the city’s poor. Municipal government documents, newspaper reports, and internal school records reveal the fundamental characteristics and objectives of Tokufū
Elementary School. The school’s creation represents a major turning point in the history of poverty management in Osaka. Specifically, its establishment marks a shift away from a system under which a select group of private citizens were specially contracted to execute the functions of poverty management to one directly administered by the police and funded by private philanthropists.

While police officials hoped that Tokufū School would function as an effective tool of social management and reform, its achievements were mixed. Police struggled to keep in school children from the city’s slums. Despite the fact that classes were held at night in order to make it possible for children with day jobs to attend the school, periods of heightened demand for low-wage labor in Osaka’s manufacturing sector, such as World War I, led hundreds of students to abandon their studies. The promise of additional wages for work performed at night prompted many parents to send their children out to work rather than sending them to school. This was true during periods of economic insecurity, as well. For example, during the early 1920s, when Chinese demand for Osaka-made matches slumped, match factories operating in the vicinity of Tokufū School were forced to significantly curtail production, depriving hundreds of students of their jobs. As a result, nearly 70 percent of the school’s students were forced to temporarily abandon their studies in order to search for alternative employment.

Therefore, while police officials succeeded in providing educational opportunities to hundreds of the city’s poorest children, their efforts clashed with and were ultimately undercut by broader economic trends. Although many slum dwellers recognized the value of education and were eager to pursue their studies, the struggle for survival

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429 *Osaka mainichi shinbun*, “Saimin shōgakkō no seito wa ichinenhan ni zenbu irekawaru,” 17 April 1921.
continued to dominate the lives of poor families residing in the vicinity of the school. While World War I brought increased demand for industrial labor power, it also prompted a sharp increase in the price of staple commodities, including rice. In order for low-income households residing in southern Osaka’s slums to pay rent and obtain the foodstuffs that they required each day, it was necessary for every member of the household to work and contribute income. Ultimately, this situation undermined police-led efforts to ensure that children residing in the city’s slum districts completed the mandatory six years of elementary education, a problem that will be taken up at the end of the chapter. First, however, the chapter examines the founding of Tokufū Elementary School, focusing on both the specific series of events leading up the school’s opening and the broader historical context.

(II) The Founding of Tokufū Elementary School

In the summer of 1911, a group of police officers from Osaka’s Namba Police Precinct established Tokufū Elementary School in an effort to provide education to hundreds of child laborers from “slums” (saiminkutsu) along the city’s southern periphery. Required to work during the day, the children in question were unable to attend conventional elementary schools, which held classes in the morning and early afternoon. As a consequence, many were effectively excluded from the local public school system. At the time of the school’s founding, the 1911 Factory Law, which banned the employment of children under age 12, had not yet taken effect and child laborers from the city’s slums remained in high demand as a source of cheap, unskilled

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431 According to figures from late March 1909, in the city’s four wards, there were a total of 3,545 school-age children not attending school. The largest number, 1,216, were from Minami Ward, the ward in which both Tokufū and Airin Elementary Schools were constructed.
labor power. Osaka’s match manufacturers were eager to cut costs by employing child laborers from the city’s slums.432

In many cases, economic necessity compelled children to go out and work. Although child laborers were generally low-paid, often earning less than 20 sen a day for 14 hours of labor, the income that they generated was vital for the survival of their families.433 As a consequence, some poor families actively dissuaded their children from attending school, encouraging them instead to go out and earn a wage.434 While local employers were eager to exploit their labor for profit, police and city officials began to grow concerned about the long-term consequences of excluding poor children from access to educational opportunity. According to the authorities, educational insufficiencies would ultimately render poor children susceptible to “dangerous” political ideologies and lead many to engage in illicit and socially disruptive activities.435

At the time that the school was established, officials across Japan were becoming increasingly concerned about the rising threat of socialism and its growing popularity among the urban masses. In the aftermath of the 1904-1905 Russo-Japanese War, increasing numbers of lower and working class men and women in major cities, such as Osaka, began to embrace “the socialist doctrine of direction action,” a trend that government officials around Japan viewed as a serious danger to the state’s long-term political stability. In an effort to halt the spread of socialism and shore up the existing political system against mass political movements, police departments in Tokyo, Osaka,

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and other major cities began to focus significant time and resources on a newly created category of policing known at the time as hinmin keisatsu, or “the policing of poor people.” As modern historian Iida Naoki has demonstrated, the authorities attempted to root potential sources of social unrest by executing dozens of organized crackdowns targeting criminal activities closely associated with “the urban poor” (toshi hinmin), including “vagrancy, gambling, unlicensed prostitution, and petty theft.” Between February 1907 and December 1908, police departments across the city executed 94 such crackdowns, during which several thousand vagrants (furōsha), unlicensed prostitutes (mitsuinbaifu), beggars (kojiki), hoodlums (buraikan), and gamblers (bakuto) were detained and sent either to jail or Kobayashi Sahē’s officially licensed workhouse (jusanjo) just north of the city.

At the same time, the Home Ministry, working through its regional offices, launched an ambitious program of nationwide socio-economic improvement known as the Local Reform Movement (chihō kairyō undō). After holding a series of conferences in 1908 and 1909 to discuss policies of relief and social reform, Home Ministry officials were dispatched around the country to meet with “local government officials, police officers, and educators.” Those officials encouraged local social reformers across the country to begin planning reform and relief projects, which encouraged “the development of national resources,” “the promotion of discipline and public morals,” and “strenuous effort and self-restraint.”

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438 Ibid.
and oversight, they did not offer much in terms of direct financial assistance. Rather, the burden of funding and executing such projects was left to local governments and actors from the private sector.440

In Osaka, the administration of local improvement efforts fell to the city’s police chiefs, including the founder of Tokufū Elementary School, Amano Tokisaburō. After conducting a detailed survey of socio-economic conditions in Namba precinct in the winter of 1911, Amano decided to focus first on the education of needy school-age children. His primary objective was to find a way to provide elementary education to needy students who were required to work during the day. Like many of his contemporaries around the country after the Russo-Japanese War, Amano became acutely aware of the political and social significance of education as a means of promoting long-term social stability and protecting the existing governmental structure from the threat of mass political unrest.441 As he and many others in positions of authority realized, education had an essential role to play not only in the cultivation of labor power and soldiers, but also in the management of political ideology.442 At the same time, Amano hoped that education for the poor in conjunction with other forms of relief would serve as a means of crime prevention.443 Namely, by providing students with basic moral instruction and helping them to secure an alternative means of survival, he believed that it would be possible to dissuade them from engaging in illegal activities.

442 Ibid.
443 Ōsaka jiji shinpō, “Hinmin gakkō to kyusai,” 8 June 1911.
Therefore, Tokufū Elementary School was born out of a compromise between economic necessity and a desire on the part of police officials in Osaka’s impoverished Namba precinct to foster socio-political stability and prevent crime by providing basic educational instruction to children conventionally excluded from the public school system.\textsuperscript{444} Despite the fact that citywide rates of elementary school enrollment rose to more than 95 percent after the Russo-Japanese War, as of March 1909, 1,087 boys and girls from the slum districts on the city’s southern edge had never properly enrolled.\textsuperscript{445} In fact, the vast majority were child laborers from three impoverished neighborhoods in Namba precinct: Nipponbashi, Imamiya, and Kizu.\textsuperscript{446} This issue was of great concern for Osaka prefecture, which continued to report attendance rates several percentage points below the national average. Despite the promulgation of a series of proclamations ordering all school-aged children in the prefecture to register for school, more than a thousand continued to avoid inclusion in the public school system.

The primary reason that many children continued to fail to properly enroll in school was that they had to work during the day. In an effort to resolve this issue, the prefectural authorities officially revised the prefecture’s Elementary School Regulations to allow for the establishment of night schools. Previously prohibited, the authorities announced that such schools were necessary in order to provide elementary education to “children who are unable to attend school during normal class times.” Soon thereafter,

\textsuperscript{444} Osaka-fu. \textit{Osaka-fu tōkeisho}. Osaka: Ōsaka-fu (1910), 170-172. In Osaka’s Minami Ward, exclusion from the public school system remained a significant problem into the early twentieth century. According to figures compiled two years before Tokufū and Airin Elementary Schools were established, at least 1,216 children residing in the ward were not enrolled in school. The vast majority of those students were concentrated in slum districts in three neighborhoods: Imamiya, Kizu, and Nipponbashi.

\textsuperscript{445} Osaka-fu kyōiku inkai, ed. 1994. \textit{Shinshū Ōsaka-shishi, dai-rokkan}. Osaka: Ōsaka-shi, 716. In 1899, school enrollment in the city was 85.7 percent. However, by 1907, that figure had risen to 95.2%.

the Osaka city council passed a separate resolution calling for the implementation of nighttime courses at 15 public elementary schools around the city.\(^{447}\) By 1910, that number had risen to 32. Although the specific curriculum varied widely from one school to the next, most night schools focused on three main subjects: arithmetic, language and ethics. Courses were held six nights a week for two to three hours.\(^{448}\)

During the period in question, the funding burden for both day and night schools fell entirely to the school district (*gakku*).\(^{449}\) In order to defray the cost to local residents, the vast majority of elementary schools, including those in Namba precinct, charged tuition. Although night school tuition was generally less expensive than day tuition, it was still prohibitive for many needy families. Therefore, despite the establishment of more than 30 local night schools, financial difficulties continued to ensure the exclusion of hundreds of poor children from the public school system.

In contrast, Tokufū School did not charge tuition. It was established to provide education to child laborers, who lacked the economic wherewithal to pay tuition fees and, as a consequence, were excluded from the city’s public schools. As in the case of public night schools, classes were held only in the evening in order to allow students to attend school while continuing to work during the day.\(^{450}\) From the outset, the school’s primary intent was not to prepare children from the slums for educational advancement. Rather, it was to ready them for integration into the lower tiers of the urban labor market.

\(^{447}\) Osaka-shi, ed. 《大阪市史，大正篇》。大阪: 大阪市 (1911), 685-687.
\(^{448}\) Unsurprisingly, most of the children who attended night schools were employed in some sort of occupation. According to figures from 1910, the most common occupation was that of domestic servant.\(^{448}\) Of the more than 3,000 students attending night courses, 1,214 identified this as their primary occupation. The second most common occupation was odd-jobber. More than 800 children cited this as their occupation.
\(^{450}\) Asai Seita, ed. 《 Shiritsu tokufū jinjō shogakkō kiyō》。大阪: Shiritsu tokufū jinjō shogakkō (1915), 9.
Although the school moved to a new site in 1926, it was originally located in Osaka’s impoverished Hirotamachi neighborhood, just southwest of the old Nagamachi slum and immediately north of Imamiya’s massive twentieth-century flophouse district, Kamagasaki. Kubota Gonshirō, the owner of Osaka’s famous Kubota Ironworks, provided most of the 3,176 yen 25 sen 5 rin necessary to establish the school. According to an official school history published in 1915, Kubota was a well-known philanthropist and agreed to provide funding at the personal request of Chief Amano Tokisaburō. Until 1922, he continued to provide yearly donations of 1,800 yen to pay for the school’s operating costs.

Despite putting up much of the capital required to establish and operate the school, Kubota was not directly involved in its day-to-day administration. In the beginning, administrative duties were entrusted primarily to Amano. In addition to formulating school regulations and curriculum, he was charged with the task of hiring teaching staff and planning school-administered relief projects. A group of officers from Namba precinct, including Sergeant Yamashita Toyokichi and patrolmen Shimizu Kiyoshi, Kitano Masatake, Toda Hideo, and Mashita Yutaka, assisted Amano in his efforts. They played a vital role in the school’s administration and in the regulation of truancy. When a child suddenly stopped attending or there were concerns about the behavior of a specific student, officers used their authority as police to conduct household visits (katei hōmon), during which they were able to interact with parents and assess conditions in the home.

451 Ibid, 4.
452 Asahi shinbun, “Hinmin gakkō no setsuritsu,” 8 June 1911.
454 Osaka-fu. Ōsaka jikei jigyō no shiori. Osaka: Ōsaka-fu (1915), 188. According to the latter source, the school also required an additional “600 to 700 yen” per year in order to pay for operating costs. The Osaka municipal government, Osaka prefectural government, and private donors provided this funding.
Although some officers also served as instructors, teaching duties were handled primarily by staff from four local public schools, Kizu dai-ni, Nipponbashi dai-ni, Emi dai-ichi, and Emi dai-ni Elementary Schools.\(^{455}\)

In addition to the funding offered each year by Kubota Gonshirō, private donors also provided thousands of yen in direct financing. For example, in 1911, school administrators received private donations totaling 390 yen 5 sen.\(^{456}\) Although some of the money was provided anonymously, the bulk was donated by wealthy benefactors, including Asahiyama Shirōemon and Yagi Fukumatsu, and large corporations, such as the Hankai Electric Railway Company.\(^{457}\)

In addition to cash donations, scores of individuals and corporations also contributed school supplies and equipment. Between July 1911 and March 1914, 39 private, corporate, and institutional donors supplied the school with a wide range of items, including ink, umbrellas, soap, mirrors, towels, and textbooks.\(^{458}\) The Awaza Soap Company supplied 37.5 kilograms of hand soap, while an individual named Onishi Takematsu provided 303 pairs of wooden clogs for student use. The school published annual reports detailing the activities carried out each year. The reports were published at the end of each year in all of the major daily newspapers. At the end of each report, there was a section entitled “school patrons.” That section listed the names and amounts provided by each donor. While some donors were no doubt motivated by a genuine sense of public responsibility, many no doubt relished the opportunity to publicize their charity.

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\(^{455}\) Initially, the school’s teaching staff included Asai Kiyota (Kizu dai-ni), Sasaoka Gosen (Kizu dai-ni), Hosokawa Keikichi (Emi dai-ichi), Matsumoto Tetsuo (Emi dai-ni), Tarumoto Kintarō (Nipponbashi dai-ni), Masuda Yusuke (Namba Police Station), and Funatsu Seitarō (Namba Police Station).


\(^{457}\) Ibid.

\(^{458}\) Ibid.
Annual reports also provided school administrators with an opportunity to solicit additional donations. In an effort to arouse the sympathies of potential donors, school reports emphasized the misery faced by needy students and stressed that they were to be pitied.

Although limited in scale, the school also received occasional cash payments directly from the Home Ministry and Osaka municipal and prefectural governments. For instance, in 1912, the school received payments of 200 yen from the Home Ministry, 250 yen from the prefecture, and 70 yen from the city. However, school was still a privately administered institution and not part of the city school system.

Until 1926, the school was located in Namba precinct’s Hirotamachi neighborhood. The school grounds had a total area of 963.75 square meters and were surrounded on all sides by a large fence. Entering from the east through the main gate, there was a narrow walkway, which opened up to a large dirt recreation ground. On the right, there was a small bathing facility with separate areas for men and women. On the left, there was a large two-story building with an attached medical clinic, small garden, and caretaker’s office. By 1915, the school contained four classrooms, a sewing room, nursery, staff room, large bathroom, and urinal. The facility’s total value, including the land, was 5,370 yen. Notably, Takakura Tōhei, the former owner of the parcel of land on which Tokufū Elementary was constructed, donated it to the school at no additional cost.

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(III) The Socio-Economic Structure of Namba Precinct’s Slums

According to figures compiled in July 1914, the vast majority of Tokufū’s students came from five residential districts in southern Osaka’s Namba precinct: Higashi sekiyamachi, Hirotamachi, Shimoderachō 3-chō-me, Nippobashisuji higashi 2-chō-me, and Tobita.\textsuperscript{463} While approximately 70 percent of the students who attended Tokufū School were born inside the city, most of their parents were relatively recent migrants to Osaka.\textsuperscript{464} According to figures compiled in 1914, more than 80 percent of the household heads whose children attended the school were born outside of Osaka and relocated to the city in the early twentieth century in search of economic opportunity.\textsuperscript{465} Of the 202 household heads surveyed, 98 had been in the city less than ten years.\textsuperscript{466}

According to official school records, many of the individuals who migrated to the residential districts surrounding Tokufū School were from “communities traditionally associated with outcast social groups.”\textsuperscript{467} Despite the fact that outcast statuses had been officially abolished in 1871, many residents of former outcast communities continued during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century to face severe socio-economic discrimination. Unable to secure steady employment in their home communities, thousands of former outcasts sought refuge in the slum districts on Osaka’s southern edge.\textsuperscript{468} Joining former residents of Osaka’s Nagamachi slum and the city’s largest “outcast community” Nishihama, they found shelter in the cramped tenement row houses

\textsuperscript{463} Ibid, 17.
\textsuperscript{464} As of 1914, more than 80 percent of the parents whose children attended Tokufū School had lived in the city of Osaka for less than 20 years.
\textsuperscript{465} Asai Seita, ed. Shiritsu tokufū jinjō shogakkō kiyō. Osaka: Shiritsu tokufū jinjō shogakkō (1915), 17.
\textsuperscript{466} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{467} Ibid.
that lined the back alleys of the Nipponbashi and Imamiya neighborhoods. Like most migrant laborers, the parents of Tokufū’s students no doubt hoped to find stable employment upon arrival in Osaka. However, many struggled to integrate into the urban economy and were forced to survive on its margins, working in a range of unstable, low-wage occupations.

According to official figures published by the school, the most common occupation performed by the parents of students at Tokufū Elementary was that of clog mender (geta naoshi). As of July 1914, 20 heads of household identified this as their primary occupation. While the job of clog mender required competence in a skill, household heads performed unskilled occupations. For example, 16 worked as manual laborers, 15 as rubbish collectors, 15 as maintenance workers, and 8 as rickshaw pullers.

Although school records identify parents with fixed occupations, in reality, the employment structure of the communities surrounding Tokufū Elementary School was characterized by significant flexibility. Rather than working the same job throughout the year, local residents frequently changed occupations. When demand for a specific trade declined, slum dwellers readily abandoned that trade for another more dependable one. According to a 1902 article from the Hinode newspaper, it was not uncommon for a local slum dweller to work as a rickshaw puller one day and then a construction laborer or vegetable seller the next. In extreme cases, some individuals moved between multiple occupations on the same day. On occasion, a slum dweller “seen hauling a

\[^{470}\] Murashima Yoriyuki. Donzoko seikatsu. Kyoto: Bungadō shuppan (1917), 118-120.
\[^{472}\] Hinode shinbun, “Hinmin buraku,” 8 April 1902.
\[^{473}\] Hinode shinbun, “Hinmin buraku,” 8 April 1902.
rickshaw in the morning” could be found “pulling a wagon fill with produce in the afternoon” and “fashioning hemp sandals at home at night.”

Slum dwellers regularly switched occupations out of sheer economic necessity. According to urban historian Nogawa Yasuharu, the survival of many depended on their ability to earn a wage each day. Therefore, when a rickshaw puller “waited for three hours without picking up a single customer,” he often had no choice but to quickly shift to an alternative that would provide him with enough money to make it through the day. The majority lacked significant savings and could not depend on friends or relatives for assistance. Consequently, when their current occupation was not generating income, many slum dwellers thought nothing of going to the pawnshop and borrowing eight or ten sen to purchase the materials or products necessary to begin engaging in an alternative form of employment.

Deeply impoverished, most of Tokufū School’s students were forced to live in dwellings shared by two or more households. Historian Saga Ashita has demonstrated that during the late-Meiji and early-Taishō periods, tens of thousands of needy families in Osaka lacked the economic wherewithal to obtain dwellings of their own. As a consequence, many were compelled to sublease to a secondary tenant household a part of their dwelling, usually a single room on the second floor of a two-story tenement. In this way, primary tenants were able to share with another family the financial burden of rent. While the most common arrangement involved two households, it was not uncommon for

474 Ibid.
476 Ibid.
477 Ibid.
three, four, or even five separate households to share the same small dwelling. As of 1914, 295 students from a total of 204 households were enrolled in Tokufū Elementary School. Of those 204 households, 172 were shared by at least two families. Two-family households (93) were by far the most common. In contrast, single-family dwellings numbered only 32, or 16 percent of the total.

Rental rates varied widely depending on the size and quality of the dwelling in which the student’s family lived. In 1914, the most expensive monthly rent paid by a student household was 6 yen 50 sen, while the median was much lower at 1 yen 62 sen. At the time that the survey was conducted, the median monthly income of student households was 18 yen 37 sen. Therefore, on average, rent consumed approximately nine percent of monthly student household income.

Nearly all of Tokufū Elementary School’s students came from deeply impoverished families. According to information compiled in 1914 by the Namba police, the poverty of student families was the result of four primary factors. The first and most common factor was “unemployment resulting from illness.” In 92 cases, this was identified as the primary cause of household poverty. The second most common factor was the presence in the household of “too many non-productive women and children.” Although such individuals consumed the same amount of resources as other family members, they did not contribute income to the household budget. For 52 households, the excessive presence of such individuals was identified as the key cause of impoverishment. The third most common factor was “generational destitution.” Namely,

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479 Asai Seita, ed. Shiritsu tokufū jinjō shogakkō kiyō. Osaka: Shiritsu tokufū jinjō shogakkō (1915), 16.
481 Ibid.
the 42 individuals included in this category were born into situations of chronic poverty. Unlike illness or unemployment-related poverty, which was triggered by a sudden shift in household fortune, poverty in this case was chronic in nature. The fourth and final factor was “irresponsibility and disorganization.” In 17 cases, this was identified as the primary cause of household poverty. In such instances, impoverishment was considered the result of personal failings, such as profligacy, rather than external circumstances.

(IV) Education and Social Improvement

While the specific causes of poverty varied depending on the household, school officials maintained that student households were similar in that they were comprised primarily of “typically backward individuals, who for generations had been “treated with public derision and scorn.”482 Suffering constant discrimination, many had become “servile” and lost a “desire to improve one’s condition.” According to school officials, the majority of student guardians were “of such weak moral character” that they thought nothing of “theft and violence.” Regardless of how many children they had, few “felt the urge to save money” and this in turn caused them to “fall deeper and deeper into destitution.” Furthermore, as many were “almost entirely illiterate,” the majority of guardians lacked an understanding of “normal social behavior” and “failed to see issues that most citizens would consider shameful as shameful.” At the same time, most guardians lacked a basic understanding of personal hygiene and, as a consequence, “lived each day in squalor,” constantly “plagued by poverty and disease.”

According to school officials, all of this had a deleterious impact on the children who attended the school. It led them to develop thirteen specific traits, which ensured

that they remained impoverished and obstructed their integration into local society. First, children who attended the school “lacked a basic knowledge of manners and etiquette.” Second, their “language was coarse”, their “behavior was rude,” and they were “prone to fighting.” Third, many were “prone to lying” and “lacked any sincerity.” Fourth, they thought nothing of “squalor” and “refused to properly deal with illness,” preferring instead to allow it to run its course. Fifth, they were “stubborn” and refused to listen to the advice of others, even when they were wrong. Sixth, they were unable “to distinguish between self and others,” which lead them to treat classmates’ possessions as their own. Seventh, many interacted roughly with their peers and thought nothing of “shoving others.” Eighth, the majority was “reckless, foolhardy, and intolerant of others.” Ninth, like their parents, most students “lacked a spirit of self-improvement” and desire for “self-sufficiency.” Tenth, many were “self-indulgent” and lacked self-control. Eleventh, most students had a poorly developed “sense of public responsibility.” Twelfth, the majority was “easily influenced by coarse or vulgar feelings of love,” which led many to engage in deviant sexual behavior. Lastly, many students thought nothing of committing “coldhearted and cruel acts” and possessed an unshakable “spirit of solidarity” with others in a similar socio-economic condition.

All of these traits, it was asserted, made it difficult for them to interact properly with more affluent sectors of the population, while marking them as a social deviant. At the same time, school officials maintained that the above traits prompted poor children to engage in anti-social and, in extreme cases, politically dangerous behavior. While the spirit of solidarity found in the city’s slums could, if properly manipulated, be mobilized

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in support of state objectives, it generally manifested itself in outbursts of social unrest, such as labor and tenant strikes, which threatened urban stability and security. For that reason, the final trait was no doubt of particular concern for the police and officials involved in the creation of the school.

In order to address the above issues, school officials agreed that Tokufū’s curriculum should not match that found in “normal elementary schools.” As students were from “the lowest classes of society,” they required a specialized education. In order to design a suitable curriculum, Amano asserted, it was essential to consider “the habits of students, the state of their households, and the condition of communities in which they lived.”

At the same time, school officials argued that it was essential to consider “the natural tendencies of the Japanese people.” According to Amano, the Japanese were generally “prone to dependency” and lacked a “spirit of self-sufficiency.” Consequently, such qualities had to be gradually inculcated via a range of disciplinary mechanisms, including the elementary school. However, thousands of Namba’s poorest residents had never attended school. As a consequence, he asserted, many continued to “hold the belief that their personal welfare was the responsibility of others.” In order to prepare needy children for “the fierce struggle for survival in contemporary society,” it was essential to “cultivate in them the belief that the welfare of the household” was the responsibility of its members. Once students had developed such a belief, school officials asserted that

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they would then begin to proactively seek financial independence and eventually “free
themselves from a state of impoverishment.”

In order to cultivate a spirit of self-sufficiency in their students, teachers at
Tokufū School were advised to emphasize three fundamental concepts: frugality and
diligence (kinken), integrity (renchoku), and cleanliness (seiketsu).\textsuperscript{487} The cultivation of
each quality required the employment of a specific methodology. First, in order to teach
students diligence, it was advised that they be made each day to “tidy their classrooms,”
“clean inside and outside the school,” and “handle the distribution, collection, and storage
of school supplies.” Tokufū Elementary School did not employ any cleaning staff.\textsuperscript{488} Instead, students executed the tasks that a cleaner would have otherwise performed.
According to school regulations, teachers were to show their students proper cleaning
techniques and issue commands. Students were required to obey their teacher and to
execute assigned tasks diligently and precisely.

In the case of frugality, teachers were advised to “constantly exhort students”
about the value of savings and moderation.\textsuperscript{489} This included urging them to “use school
supplies responsibly” and “handle school equipment with care.” Over time, Amano
believed, students would develop an appreciation for their supplies and would avoid
using them excessively. In addition, teachers were instructed to “strongly encourage
students to save a portion of the meal money they received from their parents each day.”
This, officials hoped, would get children in the habit of saving money, while at the same
time discouraging them from wasting what little they had on frivolities.

\textsuperscript{487} Asai Seita, ed. \textit{Shiritsu tokufū jinjō shogakkō kiyō}. Osaka: Shiritsu tokufū jinjō shogakkō (1915), 19.
\textsuperscript{488} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{489} Ibid.
School regulations also emphasized the need to teach students integrity. According to school officials, the children that attended Tokufū Elementary School grew up “in households with low moral standards.” As a consequence, many were able to “steal things from others without feeling a deep sense of guilt or regret.” In addition, many students were taught to view “fraud and acts of dishonesty” as a normal part of everyday life. As this was judged to be a matter of great urgency and one that related directly to criminality in the city, regulations stipulated that teachers were to constantly remind students to be honest and forthright in their dealings with others.

The third major issue that teachers were expected to focus on was cleanliness. School officials maintained that instruction related to the concept of cleanliness was “essential from the perspective of both manners and hygiene.” With this goal in mind, in 1913, the school opened an on-site bathing facility. Students were required to bathe “twice a week.” In addition, bathing facilities were made available to students’ parents and siblings at no additional charge. Therefore, the school’s bath was intended as a mechanism of local hygiene improvement. It was intended as a community bathing facility where individuals who lacked a bath of their own and were too impoverished to patronize a privately operated bathhouse could clean themselves.

(V) School Curriculum and Regulations

As of 1915, the school offered six years of educational instruction. Despite the fact that Tokufū School was founded as a private institution, students were not required to pay tuition. Before the school was integrated into the municipal public school system in 1922, children in the first-year class attended school for four hours six days a

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491 Osaka jiji shinpō, “Hinmin gakkō to kyusai,” 8 June 1911.
week, while children in years two through six attended school for two hours six nights a week. In the case of night school, each two-hour class session was divided into three segments of varying length. During each segment, instruction was provided in a different subject. Due to the limited length of each class period, teachers were advised to stress “basic, practical subjects” and “work to provide students with an understanding of normal social behavior” and “a spirit of independence and self-sufficiency.” In contrast, science and other advanced subjects were to be deemphasized in favor of “moral instruction.” This, it was hoped, would allow for the cultivation of “self-reliant” urban subjects who “aided their parents” and “cared for their households.”

Each week, first-year students received two hours of “moral education,” six hours of arithmetic instruction, six hours of reading instruction, two hours of physical training, three hours of vocational training, and one hour of singing instruction. In contrast, students in the second to sixth years were required to receive moral instruction three nights a week, arithmetic instruction six nights a week, reading instruction three nights a week, and writing instruction three nights a week. When there was room in the schedule, night school students were also to receive singing instruction and physical education, as well. This system remained in place until the early 1920s, when daytime courses were introduced for grades two through six.

Under rules established at the time of the school’s founding, students were to be provided with all of the materials that they required at no additional charge. Certain materials, including paper, brushes, pencils, ink, uniforms, wooden clogs, towels, split-

toe socks, and sewing sets, were given to the students. Others, including textbooks, abacuses, slates, work tools, needlework materials, hats, and umbrellas, were lent to students on a temporary basis. Private donors provided the majority of the materials distributed by the school. Deeply impoverished, many of Tokufū’s students, no doubt, would have been unable to secure the materials that they required for school on their own. In that sense, financial support from the local community played a vital role in supporting efforts to educate children from Namba precinct’s slums. A reflection of the fact that the school was founded as a poverty management project, students were also provided each week with “relief rice vouchers” (seryōmaiken).

Notably, teachers took care to emphasize that all of the materials and benefits that students received at school were a concrete manifestation of the “compassion” and “beneficence” of others. As such, students were strongly encouraged to handle the materials they received with care and gratitude. By constantly stressing the idea that students were indebted to their benefactors, teachers hope to cultivate in their pupils both a sense of obligation and a desire for personal improvement. By inculcating those qualities, teachers no doubt believed that poor students would become loyal urban subjects who worked to perpetuate rather than undermine the existing political order.

In order to ensure that registered students attended classes each day, school officials established a strict system of truancy regulation. Initially, Namba police

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497 Ōsaka jiji shinpō, “Hinmin gakkō to kyuusai,” 8 June 1911.
constable Murakami Kichigorō was appointed to supervise the system.\textsuperscript{499} When a student was absent and failed to alert school officials, an officer was dispatched to the student’s home to conduct a “household visit” (\textit{katei hōmon}). If the student had a legitimate reason for missing school, such as a death in the family, no punitive action was taken. However, if the student was caught skipping school, officers maintained the authority to compel him or her to attend. Tokufū School’s “household visitation” system allowed officers to monitor conditions in the homes of students and, after the Factory Law took effect in 1916, enabled them to determine when students were working or being forced to work illegally. In other words, the truancy regulation system provided officers in Namba with unfettered access to some of the precinct’s poorest households.

In order to make it possible for impoverished local residents to work outside of the home during the day, school officials established an on-site “day care center.”\textsuperscript{500} According to contemporary newspaper reports, many households in the Nipponbashi and Imamiya area struggled to balance the need to generate income each day with the responsibility of caring for young children.\textsuperscript{501} With limited financial resources and no one to care for their sons and daughters, many mothers were required to remain in the home each day. This “inhibited their ability to work” and drove many families into poverty. In an effort to mitigate this problem, Tokufū School agreed to take care of “infants and young children age six and under” during the day “for free.”\textsuperscript{502} School officials hoped that Tokufū’s day care program would also contribute to improved health and hygiene among local children. By taking them out of the unhygienic environment of

\textsuperscript{499} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{500} \textit{Asahi shinbun}, “Hinmin gakkō no setsuritsu,” 8 June 1911.  
\textsuperscript{501} \textit{Asahi shinbun}, “Hoiku to seyaku,” 22 June 1911.  
\textsuperscript{502} \textit{Asahi shinbun}, “Hoiku to seyaku,” 22 June 1911.
Namba precinct’s “slum tenements” and placing them in the “sanitary” environment of the school’s daycare center, children would be cared for and fed. Less than a month after the school’s opening, the daycare center was already filled to capacity. According to contemporary newspaper reports, local slum dwellers were so grateful for the service that many deposited their children each morning “with tears of joy in their eyes.”

The school also included an on-site medical clinic, which was supervised by a Nipponbashi-area physician by the name of Toda Yutaka. In addition to carrying out regular medical examinations, Dr. Toda prescribed medicines and administered more complex forms of treatment. When students were “too sick to come to the school to receive treatment,” Dr. Toda even went so far as to make free home visits. A reflection of the insalubrious conditions in which many of the students lived, Toda was forced to spend the majority of his time treating trachoma, an infectious eye disease prevalent in Osaka’s slums. For example, according to figures compiled in April 1915, 209 of the school’s 318 students were infected with trachoma. School officials blamed the high rates of infection on two factors. First, students spent most of their lives in squalid and overcrowded slums (hinminkutsu). Second, they lacked a basic understanding of health and hygiene and, therefore, failed to take the necessary precautions against the infection. In contrast, only 81 students had cavities. This, school records indicate, was not because students were careful with their oral hygiene. Rather, it was because very few of them could afford to consume sugar.

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503 Ibid.
504 Ibid.
505 Ibid.
In order to encourage improved personal hygiene, students at the school were required to bathe two times a week, using the on-site facility.\textsuperscript{508} According to school regulations from 1915, bathing took place on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Furthermore, students’ relatives were encouraged to use the bathing facilities, as well. Once students had finished their baths, their parents and siblings were permitted to bathe free of charge. According to internal school records, most of Tokufū’s students were unable to bathe on a regular basis because of either “a lack of money” or “the need to work long hours.”\textsuperscript{509} In fact, there were many students who “failed to bathe even once a week.” Before entering the school, most students felt that bathing “two times per month” was sufficient. Lacking a basic understanding of personal hygiene, many failed to see infrequent bathing as an “unhygienic practice.”\textsuperscript{510}

Therefore, school officials maintained that it was vital to encourage proper bathing practices. However, during the school’s first two years of existence, it lacked an on-site bathing facility. Until a bath was constructed in 1913, officials enlisted the assistance of Namba’s Bathhouse Proprietors’ Association.\textsuperscript{511} At the request of the school’s founder, Amano Tokisaburō, area bathhouse proprietors agreed to provide students with special vouchers, which enabled them to bathe for free at local bathhouses.\textsuperscript{512} By stressing the value of cleanliness and removing the financial obstacles that prevented needy individuals from bathing, school officials hoped to encourage improved student health and personal hygiene. They found this easier to do following the

\textsuperscript{508} Asai Seita, ed. \textit{Shiritsu tokufū jinjō shogakkō kiyō}. Osaka: Shiritsu tokufū jinjō shogakkō (1915), 10.
\textsuperscript{509} Ibid, 18-19.
\textsuperscript{510} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{511} Asai Seita, ed. \textit{Shiritsu tokufū jinjō shogakkō kiyō}. Osaka: Shiritsu tokufū jinjō shogakkō (1915),10.
\textsuperscript{512} \textit{Asahi shinbun}, “Hinmin gakkō no setsuritsu,” 8 June 1911.
opening of the school’s bathing facility in April 1913. By requiring students to use the on-site bath, school officials could ensure that “they bath[ed] frequently and properly.”

At the same time, very few students who attended the school possessed the economic wherewithal to go to a barber and pay for a haircut. As a consequence, when the school opened in 1911, many students had an “ungroomed and slovenly” appearance. According to school officials, this was a common feature among the city’s poor (saimin). Unaccustomed to frequent washing and grooming, they were visibly distinct from the members of more affluent urban social groups. In order to bring students’ hairstyle and appearance in line with contemporary social norms, school officials believed that it was necessary not only to compel students to bathe, but also to provide them with regular haircuts. At the request of Amano Tokisaburō, the owner of a Namba-area barbershop, Tokofuku, came to the school several times a month and “with compassionate hands” cut the hair of “poor students.” Through a strict regime of bathing and grooming, officials believed that they could “free students from a state of a squalor and torpidity,” while at the same time “cultivating in them a spirit of fastidiousness and refinement.” This, in turn, would help to rid Tokufū’s poor students of “the distinct stench” (isshu tokuyū no akushū) that many emitted. School officials also asserted that it would also positively impact both “student hygiene and conduct.”

Also, in 1916, school administrators initiated a breakfast program for poor students. According to an October 1916 article from the Osaka asahi newspaper, of the approximately 200 registered students, 30 to 40 came to school each day without

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514 Ibid.
515 Ibid.
eating.\textsuperscript{517} They did so, the article maintained, because their families lacked sufficient economic resources to purchase food. As a consequence, many were gaunt and malnourished. School administrators asserted that a lack of food also negatively affected student performance.\textsuperscript{518} Therefore, with the assistance of a philanthropist from southern Osaka’s Sumiyoshichō neighborhood, the school began in September 1916 to provide meals to needy students. Two female teachers were placed in charge of the meal program and students who were unable to obtain food at home were encouraged to come to school before classes each day to receive a free meal. Before receiving their food, students were made wash their hands and feet. By compelling them to do so each day, teachers at the school hoped that they would gradually begin to engage in the practice without external encouragement. Once each student had properly washed, they were then allowed to eat. Food was consumed under the supervision of the two female teachers in charge of the meal program. Students were required to observe “proper table manners while eating.” Notably, in an effort to foster improved student health, school officials selected foods that were hearty and nutritious, such as white rice, vegetables, and fish.

Efforts to reform the students’ attitudes and behavior went beyond the realm of health and hygiene. In order to encourage “responsible” habits of financial management among students, school officials established a compulsory savings program. Everyday students were required to save one or two sen in an account overseen directly by Amano Tokisaburō. As of March 1915, students at the school had saved a total of 481 yen 30 sen. Through the promotion of student savings, school officials hoped to suppress habits of profligacy and extravagance, which, they maintained, were widespread in the

\textsuperscript{517} Asahi shinbun, “Asagohan wa gakkō de: saimin jido no oyorokobi,” 16 October 1916.
\textsuperscript{518} Asai Seita, ed. Shiritsu tokufū jinjō shogakkō kiyō. Osaka: Shiritsu tokufū jinjō shogakkō (1915), 18-20.
impoverished communities surrounding the school. At the same time, by teaching students the value of savings, they hoped cultivate in them a spirit of “thrift and moderation.” That spirit, they hoped, would allow Tokufū’s students to achieve self-sufficiency in the future, while supporting their inclusion in urban society. Teachers also hoped that students would share the ideas that they learned at the school with their parents and siblings, thereby helping to encourage their improvement, as well.

This emphasis on moral improvement and physical health is apparent in other aspects of the curriculum, as well. For example, during recess each summer, teachers and administrators selected approximately 20 of Tokufū’s frailest students for a two-week program known as school camp. The program was introduced at the urging of Osaka Prefectural Advisor Ogawa Shigejirō and was funded through donations and financial assistance from the prefecture. Amano Tokisaburō and officers from Namba police station handled the program’s planning and administration.

The first “school camp” was held in August 1913 at Osaka’s Gokuraku Temple. Located in Osaka’s rural Kawachi Nagano region, the location was selected because it was both cool and sanitary. While school officials were careful to avoid selecting students that were suffering from serious illnesses and those that had to work during the day, they attempted to choose individuals who were in poor physical health and would most benefit from an extended period outside the heat and squalor of the city.

Students and staff departed for Gokuraku Temple from Osaka’s Kizugawa Rail Station at 10 AM on August 10. During two-week camp, students were required to wake each day at 6 AM. They were to then wash, stretch, and perform calisthenics. After

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519 Ibid, 18.
completing morning calisthenics, students then received reading lessons and reviewed subjects covered before the summer recess. Evenings were to be spent collectively performing piecework. In 1913, students who attended the camp spent their evenings fashioning envelopes. In addition to inculcating a spirit of industriousness, school officials believed that collective labor would help to strengthen bonds between students and encourage individual children to be more considerate of their peers. Activities ended each day at 9:30 PM, at which time students retired to bed.

According to a report filed after the first camp was complete, school staff achieved “unexpectedly positive results” in improving the “character and health” of student attendees. The results, staff maintained, were primarily a product of the reformatory techniques applied at the camp. Namely, by “forcing students to live a disciplined, familial lifestyle,” school officials were able to impart to students everyday practices that supported improved health and fitness and fostered a spirit of shared purpose and responsibility.

The second school camp was held in August 1914. This time Amano and his colleagues selected Ikoma Mountain in Nara Prefecture. During the twenty-day camp period, students and staff stayed in a lodge located on the mountain. Campers were divided into two ten-person groups. The first group visited Ikoma from August 1 to August 10. The second then replaced them and remained in Nara until August 20. Two teachers and one patrolman from Namba station supervised the children during their time at the camp.

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During the camp, the adult supervisors were instructed to emphasize proper techniques of health care and personal hygiene. This included teaching students how to wash, care for one’s clothing, clean toilets and eating spaces, and properly dispose of food scraps and fecal matter. Students rose at 5 AM and were required to immediately move to the washroom and clean themselves under the watchful eye of the supervisors. They then headed outdoors for a period of morning exercise, including swimming in the Yamato River. Exercise was followed each day by a short hike and then a mid-morning meal. Efforts were made to select healthy nutritious foods. Snacks were limited to one small item a day. According to a report filed after the second camp was complete, this helped to “make students healthier and stronger, while teaching them self-discipline.”

In terms of daily curriculum, the staff was instructed to “primarily emphasize moral and spiritual subjects” over academic ones. In the case of math and language, teachers were only to “review material that had already been covered rather than introducing new topics.” For Amano and the other individuals involved in the camp’s planning, more than additional academic instruction, efforts needed to be taken to encourage the “cultivation of appropriate interests and emotions.” The lack of such interests and emotions, Amano asserted, was “the most serious flaw in the lives of the poor.”

By giving them an opportunity to spend time surrounded by nature, school staff believed that they would gain “an interest in the beauty and peace of rural life,” “an appreciation for the beauty of a communal lifestyle,” and “an understanding of the quiet solitude of mountain life.” Mentally, the camp would “expand students’ knowledge of

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social norms” and provide them with “knowledge of geography and history,” as well as of “manners and etiquette.”

School staff asserted that the camp was a boon to students’ families, as well. Namely, while children were away, needy student families were able to “cut back on food expenditures.” With one less mouth to feed, families purchased less food, thereby enabling them to set aside small amounts of money. In addition, it freed up family members to focus more time and energy on income-generating activities. Time previously spent looking after one’s children could, during the camp period, be spent at one’s place of work or doing piecework in the home.

In summary, Tokufū Elementary School functioned as more than just an educational institution. While it played a vital role in providing elementary instruction to members of a social group conventionally excluded from the public education system, it was also designed to promote the moral and physical “reform” of poor city children. Through the deployment of a range of mechanisms, including compulsory bathing and savings programs, school staff, led by officers from the Namba police, worked to provide needy students with essential relief assistance and teach them “appropriate” attitudes towards work, hygiene, grooming, and peer interaction. At the same time, home visits carried out in the name of truancy regulation provided police officers with direct access to hundreds of poor city households. Home visits, in turn, enabled officers to monitor conditions in students’ homes and cultivate a network of relationships with their parents and relatives. Once established, those relationships facilitated enhanced police intervention into Namba’s most impoverished and socially unstable residential districts, including Kamagasaki and the small-scale slums scattered across the Nipponbashi.
(VII) Reform and Relief in Osaka’s ‘Poor Schools’

Although Tokufū School was founded as a private, independently operated institution, it did not exist in isolation. In fact, efforts to integrate the school into a broader network of relief and reform institutions began almost immediately after its establishment in the fall of 1908. In September of that year, the Home Ministry held a multi-day conference on the topic of “reform and relief projects.” On the final day of the conference, officials in attendance announced the formation of a new body dedicated to the planning and administration of such projects, the Central Philanthropic Association (chuō jizen kyōkai). Shibusawa Eiichi, the banking magnate and philanthropist, was chosen to serve as the body’s chairman. The society was founded in an effort to integrate and organize the activities of privately operating philanthropic institutions into a nationwide network.

In 1912, Osaka’s “poor schools” received official recognition from the Central Philanthropic Association and were integrated into the association’s organizational structure. As sanctioned institutions, the schools became eligible for grants from the Home Ministry. At the same time, however, executive members of the association reserved the right to provide oversight and direction to school administrators. On several occasions in 1912, association members, including leading Home Ministry bureaucrats Tomeoka Kosuke, Namae Takayuki, and Ogawa Shigejirō, came to inspect the school and the relief projects being carried out there.

In 1913, Osaka prefectural governor Okubo Toshitake appointed Home Ministry bureaucrat and social policy expert Ogawa Shigejirō to serve as the director of reform and relief projects inside the prefecture. After arriving in Osaka, Ogawa formed the Relief Projects Research Association (kyūsai jigyō kenkyūkai) in an effort to “carefully study both foreign and domestic relief projects and to encourage the improvement and development of such projects” in the prefecture. Amano Tokisaburō and Kubota Gonshirō served as board members of the association and participated in the research activities supervised by Ogawa. The association held monthly meetings and all of the teaching staff at Tokufū School were required to attend. There, they received advice and directions from Ogawa and the other prefectural social bureaucrats in attendance.

So, what sort of role did Ogawa envision for Tokufū School? Ogawa encouraged the school’s administrators and teaching staff to incorporate into their activities the basic principles outlined in the fall of 1908 at the Home Ministry-sponsored conference on relief and reform projects. Speaking at the conference’s opening ceremony, Tokonami Takejirō, the head of the Home Ministry’s Regional Bureau, noted that reform and relief projects were more than anything else a matter of interpersonal interaction. Namely, such projects were designed to encourage the “reform of negative personal characteristics” by bringing “the individual who possesses those characteristics” into contact with “another individual who recognizes that they are wrong.” In the interaction between the two parties, Tokoji noted, the latter individual would serve as a

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model. By behaving properly, he or she would show the individual possessing negative personal characteristics a better, more constructive way of being.

In the case of relief projects, Tokoji stressed that they involved more “than just providing an individual with food and clothes.” As relief recipients were “persons who lacked a spirit of independence and self-sufficiency,” it was the duty of the individuals administering relief to arouse that spirit in the relief recipient. According to Tokoji, relief projects had to go beyond the provision of material goods to a person in need. They also had to focus on the reform of individual attitudes. Therefore, it was essential that the individuals administering the relief themselves possessed “a rich spirit of independence and self-sufficiency,” “a noble character,” and the belief that the work of relief was one’s mission in life. On the contrary, if the individual carrying out relief activities lacked such qualities, those activities would fail to produce “a sufficient result.”

At the same 1908 conference, Home Minister Hirata Tōsuke discussed the question of why reform and relief projects were necessary. For him, it was essential to provide “juvenile delinquents, paupers, and orphans” with instruction, guidance, and employment because the fortunes of such individuals were intimately tied to the fortunes of the Japanese nation. By helping “just one needy person” to become “a useful, productive individual,” relief and reform projects contributed to the wealth and prosperity of the nation. Therefore, by providing “livelihood assistance” to “criminals and paupers” and working to encourage their “moral reform,” the executors of relief projects helped to “promote industrial development” and “enhance the strength of the nation.” Yet, to

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526 Ibid.
realize these objectives, it was essential that “the individuals administering reform and relief projects were themselves of sound character.”

According to Ogawa Shigejirō, this issue was important from a funding perspective, as well. Namely, in order to “gather the capital necessary to carry out reform and relief projects,” Ogawa argued, it was essential that the individual administering the projects be “reputable and trustworthy.” If the individual in charge of such projects was not upstanding and failed to win the confidence of potential donors, it would be impossible to obtain the resources required to “execute relief projects of the appropriate scale and type.” In contrast, if the individual supervising relief efforts was “a person of sufficient standing,” who, “as a result of their experience and circumstances,” possessed the ability to “win the consent of others,” Ogawa asserted, it would be easy to achieve desired results.

In meetings of the Relief Projects Research Association, Ogawa also discussed the role of the general public. Due to the fact that privately administered relief and reform projects were of benefit to the “state, society, and the individual,” it was the “duty of the general public” to actively support such projects. Specifically, he argued that affluent private citizens should not only help to fund relief projects, but should also engage directly with the poor. Poorly-run reform projects, however, would produce the opposite effect. Namely, they would drive away benefactors. Therefore, in order to ensure the necessary level of public participation, Ogawa emphasized that projects had to be administered by “persons of virtuous character.” They, in turn, would serve “as model citizens.” In that capacity, they would not only attract the support of the general public.

public for reform and relief projects, but also provide others with an example of how to be an ideal subject.

In one sense, Tokufū School represents a concrete example of the sort of projects that the Home Ministry advocated as part of the Local Reform Movement. Namely, Chief Amano founded the school on his own initiative in an effort to improve living conditions and promote socio-economic stability in the community in which he worked. Lacking sufficient personal financial resources, he enlisted the support of local philanthropists, such as Kubota Gonshirō, who provided the funding necessary to build the school. As a respected local figure, he succeeded in attracting and retaining the support of dozens of donors. That support, in turn, made it possible for the project to remain in operation without significant public financing until the early 1920s.

However, the support that the school received from the general public was not limitless. While it is true that a certain number of private donors willingly provided both money and supplies to the school, the level of donations varied significantly from year to year. During the school’s first stage of existence, the school received dozens of donations each year. However, school administrators found that level of support difficult to sustain. By 1915, donations of both money and supplies had fallen sharply.⁵³⁰

In addition, school administrators also struggled to keep students enrolled in school. As mentioned, during World War I, the Japanese economy entered a period of unprecedented industrial growth. At the same time, in 1916, the Factory Law took effect, placing severe restrictions on the employment of child laborers. The law mandated that

factory owners allow child laborers who had not yet completed six years of compulsory education to attend school.

Following the implementation of the above regulations, the owners of match factories and other small and medium-sized manufacturing concerns on Osaka’s southern edge began contacting local elementary schools in an effort to enroll their child employees in school. For example, Tokufu School took in “dozens of child laborers” from the Saito and Denkōsha Match Factories. By April 1916, the school had received so many enrollment requests from factory owners that it was forced to add “an additional first and second year night school class.”

However, in many cases, child laborers enrolled, but failed to properly attend. In fact, many factory owners actively “prohibited their employees from attending school,” forcing them to work during the evening instead. Despite the fact that they were actively obstructing their workers from going to school, some owners went so far as to request “certificates of attendance,” so that they could provide inspectors with evidence that they were in compliance with the new provisions governing child labor established under the Factory Law.

At the same time, some child laborers skipped school in order to earn additional income by working at night. While the World War I period saw the establishment of new regulations restricting the use of child labor, it also brought unprecedented employment opportunity for unskilled and semi-skilled industrial laborers. In an effort to take advantage of the increased opportunity brought on by the economic boom, students from Tokufu School sought additional shifts. This, in turn, resulted in dramatically reduced rates of attendance at the school. During the school’s first three years of existence,
median attendance rates had exceeded 80 percent ever year. However, following the outbreak of World War I, they began to fall precipitously. Whereas the median attendance rate in 1913 was 82 percent, by the following year it had fallen to 74 percent. It continued to decline steeply as the conflict in Europe intensified, hitting 58 percent in 1917.

Shiraishi Masaaki has attributed this decline in attendance largely to the fact that the curriculum at Tokufū Elementary emphasized moral suasion and behavioral reform over more conventional academic subjects. According to Shiraishi, this caused many students to lose their initial enthusiasm for school. While this may have played a part, in my understanding, the primary factor was increased economic opportunity. Students at Tokufū School were among the most impoverished in the city. Many lived from day to day, constantly facing the threat of starvation. The opportunity to obtain a modicum of economic stability by working extra hours in the evening was no doubt more appealing than attending night school. According to one article from the *Osaka asahi* newspaper, in late 1915, demand in China for “phosphorus matches” (*ōrin macchi*) suddenly spiked. While European producers had previously dominated a significant segment of the Chinese market, the conflict in Europe had severely disrupted established supply chains. In order to meet domestic demand for phosphorous matches, Chinese consumers began to look instead to Japanese producers, many of whom were based in Osaka in the immediate vicinity of Tokufū School. Eager to take advantage of burgeoning Chinese demand, local producers

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531 Attendance rates were highest in 1911. During that year, the median rate was more than 91 percent. The following year it fell to 84 percent and by 1913 it dropped to 82 percent.
producers in Imamiya, including both the Denkōsha and Saitō Match Companies, attempted to rapidly expand production.

However, as demand continued to increase, Osaka-based producers struggled to keep pace. By early 1916, newspapers began to report that they were facing “a shortage of workers.”534 In an effort to secure additional labor power, many producers began actively recruiting children from the slum districts surrounding Tokufū Elementary School. According to an Osaka asashi newspaper article from February 1916, local match producers were eager to hire children from the city’s slums “because they could be employed cheaply.”535 At the same time, economic desperation compelled students from Tokufū School to abandon their studies in order to obtain additional wages. As the above article indicates, many of the children who attended the school “had no other choice but to work in order to support their parents.”536 As a consequence, many “greeted the opportunity to earn additional income” and thereby “improve their families’ lot.”537

Unfortunately, the war did not bring improved laboring conditions for many of the city’s child laborers. According to a second report from the Osaka asahi, despite the fact that the 1916 Factory Law had already taken effect, match producers in southern Osaka continued to force child laborers to work “from 5 AM to 9:00 PM each day.”538

To make matters worse, the work that children performed was often “hazardous to their

536 Ibid.
health.” This was particularly true in the case of phosphorus matches, which, by 1916, had been banned in many parts of the world. Ignoring potential dangers to their health, hundreds of students from Tokufū School abandoned their studies in 1915 and 1916 in order to work producing matches. Moreover, despite the fact that many child laborers were required to work sixteen hours a day, they often earned wages of just “less than 20 sen per day.” However, beginning in the winter of 1916, the owners of some factories began providing “slightly improved wages” to child laborers who worked at night. This no doubt served to further dissuade students enrolled at Tokufū School from attending classes.

It is also worth noting that a small percentage of the children who abandoned their studies were under the age of 12. Despite the fact that the Factory Law explicitly prohibited employers from hiring children under 12, many match manufacturers operating in southern Osaka continued to engage in the practice. They worked around the law by allowing child laborers to work “outside the factory.” Therefore, rather than abandoning the practice of employing young children, manufacturers provided them with the materials they needed and allowed them to carry out the work of production in the home. Thereby, they were able to continue exploiting child labor, while protecting themselves from potential sanction.

In an effort to encourage students to come back to school, in the autumn of 1918, school administrators initiated a monetary inducement scheme. Using money provided to the Namba police by a local philanthropist, they introduced a program whereby children

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539 *Asahi shinbun*, “Kōkeiki ga saisuru hinmin buraku no kodomo,” 5 February 1916.
541 *Asahi shinbun*, “Kōkeiki ga saisuru hinmin buraku no kodomo,” 5 February 1916.
who regularly attended class would be provided with “one yen per month.” Under rules established at the time of the program’s founding, the money provided to students was to be placed directly into the savings accounts maintained by school administrators for each student.

Although “attendance rates rebounded slightly” in September 1918 as a result of this program, the ongoing industrial boom continued to lead many students to select work over school. In less than a year, wages in many industries had “doubled or tripled.” This, in turn, prompted many school-age children from southern Osaka’s slums to select “the joy of earning a wage and helping one’s family” over attending class at Tokufū School. If even for “just one additional hour each day,” poor children eagerly embraced every opportunity to obtain additional income. This fact led a journalist to conclude that “declining rates of attendance” at Tokufū Elementary were the product of “a booming job market” and the continuing “impoverishment” of children residing in the slums surrounding the school.

Notably, attendance remained poor even after the boom ended. As manufacturing activity resumed in Europe following the conclusion of World War I, European producers began reentering markets that they had been forced to abandon during the conflict. As a consequence, manufacturers in Osaka were forced to scale back production and incrementally curtail their work forces. Inevitably, Osaka’s poorest residents were the

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542 *Asahi shinbun*, “Bukka tōki to shōgaku jido,” 22 September 1918.
543 Ibid.
546 Ibid.
first and hardest hit. Needy families in the neighborhoods surrounding Tokufū School were no exception. As the boom turned to bust, many families fell once again into a state of extreme destitution.

Reduced employment opportunity did not mean that students came rushing back to Tokufū School. Rather, severe economic hardship and fewer jobs for unskilled industrial laborers drove students to seek whatever work they could find. As one contemporary newspaper report notes, until 1919, “almost all of the students attending Tokufū School [had worked] in local match factories.” In most cases, male students spent their time sorting matches, whereas female students were generally employed to stuff and package match boxes in order to prepare them for shipment.547 For their labors, students generally earned a daily wage of 30 to 50 sen. Beginning in late 1919, “match factories began to close down” and most of the school’s students were forced from their jobs. By 1920, the situation had grown so dire that students from Tokufū School were forced to go from house to house begging for work. While some students succeeded in finding employment in local glass, tubing, metal plating, umbrella, iron, paper box, and soap factories, they were often only able to work a few days a month and, as a consequence, saw steep reductions in their total monthly wages.548 At the same time, during the summer of 1921, the price of a number of key commodities, including rice, increased sharply, which placed a severe strain on the budgets of many student households. As a result, students and their families were driven into “a state of destitution far more severe than before.”549

547 Osaka mainichi shinbun, “Saimin shogakkō no seito wa ichinenhan ni zenbu irekawaru,” 17 April 1921.
548 Osaka mainichi shinbun, “Saimin shogakkō no seito wa ichinenhan ni zenbu irekawaru,” 17 April 1921.
549 Ibid.
As a consequence, enrollment rates once again fell dramatically. According to a July 1921 report from the *Osaka mainichi* newspaper, 239 students, or 69 percent of Tokufū School’s entire student body, had dropped out during the first six months of the year.\(^{550}\) In most cases, “parents ordered students to stop attending” so that they could go out and work.\(^{551}\) In other instances, students were forced to migrate with their families to another part of Japan to search for employment. Falling attendance rates remained a significant problem until Tokufū Elementary School was integrated into the public school system in 1922.

**(VIII) The Integration of Tokufū Elementary School into the Municipal School System**

In February 1922, the Osaka City Assembly passed a resolution formally placing Tokufū School under city government control. The resolution was enacted during a period of significant transition in the city’s approach to poverty management. Until the period immediately following the Rice Riots in 1918, the municipal and prefectural authorities in Osaka played an extremely limited role in the administration of poverty relief and prevention projects. Instead, they shifted much of the burden to private citizens, and in the aftermath of the Russo-Japanese War, local police officials.

However, that situation began to change dramatically in the fall of 1918. Beginning with the establishment of the publicly administered District Commissioner System (*hōmen iin seido*) in October of that year, the authorities in Osaka implemented a series of new publicly administered social welfare and poverty management projects. At the same time, the city government moved to take control of a number of previously

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\(^{550}\) Ibid.

\(^{551}\) Ibid.
privately operated relief institutions, including Tokufū School. The final section of this chapter briefly examines the process whereby Tokufū School was integrated into the municipal public school system.

The series of events leading up to Tokufū School’s integration into the city school system began in April 1922. At the urging of the city authorities, Tokufū School’s owner, Kubota Gonshirō, submitted a petition to the city council in which he requested permission to donate the school and all related assets to the municipal government. At the time that the petition was filed, the total value of the school’s assets, including the school building, were valued at 7,340 yen. His request was discussed at a June meeting of the city council and promptly approved. With that, the school’s legal classification officially shifted from private to public and it lost its specialized status as a police-administered “poor school.” Instead, it was taken over by officials from the municipal government’s Education Department.

As Shiraishi Masaaki has noted, Kubota was happy to dispense with the school. By 1922, private donations had all but disappeared and Kubota found it increasingly burdensome to keep the school open. At the same time, the original school had begun to fall into disrepair. The lighting at the school was poor, so classrooms were dark. In addition, the school lacked flush toilets. Unwilling to invest personal resources to make the necessary improvements, Kubota was eager to shift to the city government the cost for running the school.

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It is worth noting that Kubota had attempted to shift control of the school to the city authorities on a previous occasion. In early 1918, he and Amano requested that the city government assume responsibility for the school’s administration. However, at that point, the Rice Riots had not yet taken place and the municipal authorities continued to view the execution of relief projects as the joint responsibility of the police and private sector. They maintained that the school’s administration should be “entrusted to the compassion of philanthropists.”

At the same time, however, the city government began to face criticism for its position. In a 1918 essay, Ogawa Shigejirō argued that by entrusting the tasks of poverty management to affluent private citizens, the municipal authorities ensured that poor urban dwellers were “robbed of their dignity.” Therefore, rather than helping the poor to achieve self-sufficiency, the city government’s approach to relief served to reinforce their social exclusion and feelings of alienation from the rest of urban society.

The major event that caused the city authorities to shift their position was the 1918 Rice Riots. The Riots began in the summer of that year in a small fishing village in Toyama Prefecture and rapidly spread across the country. They raged for nearly two months until they were finally suppressed in mid-September. The incident prompted a dramatic shift in the character of social policies across Japan. Beginning in late 1918, the Home Ministry began to take a more direct role in the planning, funding, and administration of social welfare policy. At the same time, it adopted a fundamentally different approach to the problem of poverty management. Abandoning a “symptomatic”

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554 Ibid, 246-247.
approach to poverty, which attempted to treat it after it had appeared, the authorities began working to prevent the occurrence of poverty by eradicating its root causes.\footnote{Serizawa Kazuya. ‘Hō’ kara kaibōsareru kenryoku: hanzai kyōki hinkon soshite taishō demokurashī. Tokyo: Shinyaisha (2001), 171-174.} This entailed the creation of a broad range of permanent, publicly funded social institutions, which were designed to raise the living standards of the nation’s poorest citizens, while also providing them with increased economic stability. On the national level, the Home Ministry’s Social Department supervised the planning and implementation of those institutions.

The following chapter discusses a parallel shift in Osaka prefecture. Beginning in the fall of 1918, the authorities in Osaka implemented a range of public social welfare policies. A new administrative body, the prefectural Social Department, was established to formulate and administer those policies. Under the Social Department’s leadership, the prefectural and municipal authorities created a range of public social institutions, including public markets, cafeterias, employment introduction centers, pawnshops, social welfare centers, health care clinics, shelters, and rental housing.\footnote{Tamai Kingo. Bōhin no sōzu: kindai shakai seisakuron kenkyū. Kyoto: Keibunsha (1992), 53-107.} In addition, the Rice Riots led the authorities to fundamentally reassess their position on educating the urban poor. Motivated by fear of subsequent unrest and eager to shore up the existing political system against threats from below, the authorities in Osaka assumed control over the city’s poor schools, including Tokufū School.
(I) Introduction

In the aftermath of the massive 1918 Rice Riots, the Osaka prefectural and municipal authorities launched an expansive social reform program targeting low-income sectors of the urban population. Broadly, the government’s poverty management efforts targeted two groups: ① households “lacking a sufficient total income to guarantee the physical survival of all household members” and ② households that earned “just enough income each month to guarantee the basic physical survival of all family members.” The latter group included all individuals and households living in the

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prefecture that paid “monthly rents of no more than seven yen” and earned monthly incomes of “no more than 25 yen.”

In an effort to transcend the limitations of the city’s existing poverty relief system, which had proven incapable of sufficiently moderating the underlying socio-economic factors responsible for the widespread unrest that occurred in the summer of 1918, the authorities implemented a comprehensive set of poverty management policies, the centerpiece of which was the District Commissioner System (Hōmen iin seido). Modeled on Germany’s Elberfeld System, the District Commissioner System was a publicly administered relief system under which the primary tasks of poverty management were entrusted to a citywide network of government-appointed social workers known as hōmen iin, or district commissioners.

In an effort to transition from what contemporary critics termed a “symptomatic” (taishōteki) approach to poverty, the reforms implemented after the Riots were designed to prevent poverty’s occurrence by simultaneously encouraging the rapid socio-economic inclusion of the urban poor and mitigating the range of external forces, such as rapid inflation, usury, and unemployment, which served to promote economic instability and

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561 Osaka no burakushi iinkai, ed. “Ōsaka-fu kōhō, 599.” Ōsaka no burakushi, dai-gokan. Osaka: Buraku kaihō jinken kenkyūsho (2003), 10-11. Ikeda Yoshimasa. Nihon shakai fukushishi. Kyoto: Hōritsu bunkasha (1986), 510-513. The Elberfeld System was a local relief system established in January 1852 in the German city of Elberfeld. The authorities in Elberfeld divided the city in 546 districts. A commissioner was appointed in each district to supervise poverty relief efforts. A central committee, which composed of the city mayor, four city councilmen, and four private citizens, handled the system’s executive administration. When a commissioner identified an individual in their district requiring assistance, they were required to submit a relief request to the central committee. The central committee then conducted an investigation and issued a response.
social unrest. That dual focus on the personal and external causes of destitution distinguishes the measures implemented after the Riots from foregoing relief policies, which, critics claimed, attempted only to address the personal flaws responsible for impoverishment.

At the same time, many of the reforms introduced after the Rice Riots were explicitly intended to facilitate enhanced governmental penetration into “restive” slum districts along the city periphery where official authority was weakly entrenched and institutions of local governance were poorly developed. In the aftermath of the Riots, such districts came to be increasingly characterized in official reports and proclamations as “lawless zones” (muhō no chitai), where chronic poverty, immorality, and socio-economic exclusion prompted residents to espouse dangerous ideologies, such as socialism, and engage in activities which “threatened the order and stability of urban life.” Accordingly, many of the poverty management policies introduced during this period, including the District Commissioner System, were designed to suppress emerging sources of social instability in low-income communities and thereby prevent the possibility of subsequent large-scale unrest.

This chapter analyzes the District Commissioner System’s character and function, and seeks to elucidate the logic, objectives, and historical significance of the long-term

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562 Ogawa Shigejirō. “Kasaishiki saisei komon ni tsuite no shokan.” Kyūsai jigyō 12 (1917), 2. Contemporary critics, including Ogawa Shigejirō, maintained that conventional relief policies sought to address poverty only after it had appeared. They argued that an effective long-term approach to poverty management had to address the underlying causes of poverty. Furthermore, it had to focus not only on individuals that were already impoverished, but also those in danger of falling into destitution.


governmental response to the Rice Riots. The social reforms implemented in the aftermath of the Riots mark an important turning point in the history of poverty management efforts in Osaka. Shifting from a system of poverty relief dominated by privately administered charity institutions and police-led social projects, the public authorities assumed a leading role in the funding, planning, and administration of poverty management policies.567

Under the prevention-based regime of poverty management implemented after the Riots, the primary executor of urban social policy shifted from private philanthropists and local police to hundreds of officially appointed district commissioners.568 Commissioners were charged with a broad range of duties, including identifying needy individuals in their district and helping them to achieve long-term self-sufficiency by providing them with access to the resources necessary to subsist without external assistance.569 An examination of case reports filed by Osaka’s district commissioners reveals the nature of their everyday activities and the basic strategies through which they attempted to assist needy city residents.

In addition, by analyzing the writings of the District Commissioner System’s chief architect, Osaka Prefectural Advisor Ogawa Shigejirō, this chapter seeks to clarify the system’s guiding principles and overarching objectives. According to Ogawa, the

567 Tamai Kingo. Bōhin no sōzō: kindai shakai seisakuron kenkyū. Kyoto: Keibunsha (1992), 56-74. This remained a constant feature of poverty relief and prevention activities in the country for much of the pre-1945 period. Whereas the national government continued to play an extremely limited role in the provision of assistance to the poor, regional and local governmental agencies came, after the 1918 Rice Riots to closely supervise the planning and administration of poverty prevention and relief activities.
569 Hayashi Ichizō. “Hōmen iin no secchi ni tsuite.” Ōsaka-fu hōmen iin dai-ikki jigyō nenpō. Osaka: Ōsaka-fu (1920), 7. For example, the primary cause of a person’s destitution was judged to be the lack of a “suitable” occupation, it was the duty of the district commissioner to help that individual find employment by sending them to one of the city’s publicly administered employment introduction centers (shokugyō shōkaisho) or by introducing them directly to a local employer.
District Commissioner System was intended primarily as a permanently functioning “surveillance mechanism” (sokuryō kikan). Its primary function, he argued, was to constantly monitor socio-economic conditions in the city’s poorest residential districts. Up-to-date information about socio-economic conditions in the city’s poorest neighborhoods, Ogawa asserted, would enable the authorities to react swiftly to emerging sources of social unrest.

At the same time, Ogawa hoped that the District Commissioner System would function as a conduit linking the residents of Osaka’s poorest communities with the city’s expanding network of public health, welfare, educational, and employment institutions. By channeling impoverished city residents to the appropriate institution, he argued that district commissioners would help to ensure not only that thousands of “genuinely needy” city residents received vital assistance, but also that publicly administered social welfare institutions effectively executed their officially mandated functions.

However, commissioners were not always able to depend on public resources when arranging assistance for needy households in their district. Fiscal constraints and the complexity of conditions on the ground in impoverished urban communities forced many commissioners to rely on personal resources and a network of private relationships with local residents, employers, landlords, and inn proprietors when attempting to execute their duties. A lack of sufficient public resources restricted the scope of

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commissioners’ activities and limited their ability to effectively address the problems faced by impoverished city residents.

(II) The District Commissioner System’s Establishment and Organizational Structure

(A) The District Commissioner System’s Founding

The District Commissioner System was formally established on October 7, 1918 with the promulgation of the Regulations for District Commissioners (Hōmen iin kitei). Created less than two months after the Rice Riots, it was the centerpiece of a broader social reform program, which included the creation of a vast network of publicly directed employment introduction centers, vocational training centers, shelters, goods markets, medical clinics, baths, nurseries, and housing tracts. Initially, the system was funded using donations provided to the city and prefectural authorities by private citizens during the 1918 Rice Riots. Prefectural Advisor Ogawa Shigejirō was appointed to oversee the system’s formation and direct its executive committee. In its initial incarnation, the committee was comprised of 16 city and county police chiefs, three high-ranking prefectural and municipal officials, four ward supervisors, and two county

575 Ōsaka-fu, ed. Ōsaka hyakunen shi. Osaka: Ōsaka-fu (1962), 855-856. Ōmori Minoru. “Toshi shakai jigyō seiritsu ni okeru chūkansō to minponshugi: Ōsaka-fu hōmen iin seido no seiritsu o megutte.” Hisutoria 97 (1982), 70-73. The Osaka prefectural and municipal authorities did not spend all of the money donated during the Rice Riots to fund relief projects. As of September 1918, they had a total surplus of 550,000 yen. In the end, the prefectural and municipal government agreed to split the remaining funds in half. The prefectural authorities used the money to establish the District Commissioner System, while the municipal authorities used it to construct the first in a series of municipally administered community centers known as shiminkan.
Commissioners. Committee members handled the system’s long-term planning and executive administration.

Under Ogawa’s direction, the committee established “districts” (hōmen) in 16 of the city’s poorest neighborhoods, including Nipponbashi, Nishihama, and Imamiya. In a speech given five days after the system’s official formation, Governor Hayashi noted that committee members ultimately selected “working-class and industrial neighborhoods” along the city periphery “in which migrants from other regions” and “proletarians alienated from all forms of ownership” comprised “the majority of the local population.” With no property or vested interest in local society, he noted that the residents of such communities posed an imminent threat to the city’s long-term stability and security.

In contrast to older neighborhoods in the center of the city, which were said to possess a “long-standing internal order,” the communities that ultimately received district designation were described as “disorderly and chaotic” places where destitution was

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576 Ōsaka-fu, ed. “Ōsaka-fu hōmen iin.” Ōsaka-fu hōmen iin dai-ikki jigyō nenpō. Osaka: Ōsaka-fu (1920), 48-49. In its initial incarnation, the system’s executive committee included Ogawa Shigejirō (Osaka Prefectural Advisor), Sakama Muneji (Osaka Prefectural Relief Department Chief), Ikegawa Ōjirō (Nishi Ward Chief), Murao Shizuaki (Kujō Police Chief), Ieshima Yasuji (Sonezaki Police Chief), Sano Rihei (Home Affairs Department Budget Office Director), Ōgi Shunsuke (Asahibashi Police Chief), Takahisa Kaname (Minami Ward Chief), Takanu Kōichi (Shimanouchi Police Chief), Tanaka Heitarō (Kita Ward Chief), Kanno Kisaburō (Namba Police Chief), Urushima Sakichi (Imamiya Police Chief), Kurahara Toshikatsu (Osaka Prefectural Police Department External Affairs Section Chief), Ishizuka Taizō (Wakamatsuchō Police Chief), Uomori Ichitarō (Nakatsu Police Chief), Hamada Naoshige (Izuo Police Chief), Shii Suekichi, Ota Kintarō (Ashiharabashi Police Chief), Kashii Mitsuhiro (Kōzu Police Chief), Kurauchi Gakunojō (Tamatsukuri Police Chief), Amano Tokisaburō (Osaka Municipal Relief Department Chief), Sakamoto Shigehide (Higashi Ward Chief), Kanemori Teruo (Nishinari County Commissioner), Shinoda Teitarō (Higashinari County Commissioner), Yoshida Kosaku (Tennōji Police Chief), Miyamoto Shigeo (Ebisu Police Chief).

577 Tamai Kingo. Bōhin no sōzō: kindai shakai seisakuron kenkyū. Kyoto: Keibunsha (1992), 31-33. The first 16 districts were Kasugade, Emi District One, Emi District Two, Tennōji, Kizu, Nipponbashi, Sakae (Nishihama), Nishi nodō District One, Nishi nodō District Two, Nishi nodō District Three, Kitano District Two, Kitano District Three, Kawasaki District One, Kujō District One, Kujō District Three, and Shimofukushima.

widespread and relations of mutual assistance were poorly developed.\textsuperscript{579} In a 1919 essay, Ogawa likened them to “a massive powder keg just waiting to explode.”\textsuperscript{580} He cautioned that a failure on the part of the authorities to project order into such communities and raise the living standards of local residents would bring nothing less than “the internal collapse of urban society.”\textsuperscript{581}

(B) The District Commissioner System’s Organizational Structure

The District Commissioner System had a three-tiered organizational structure. As noted, it was directed by an executive committee, which was comprised of high-ranking bureaucrats and police officials and based at the Osaka Prefectural Office. In each district, the committee appointed a “chief commissioner,” or jōmu iin, to oversee the system’s local administration and supervise the activities of individual commissioners.\textsuperscript{582} In addition to mediating relations between the district and prefectural government, the chief commissioner held the responsibility of attending monthly meetings at the prefectural office and transmitting directives issued by the system’s executive committee.\textsuperscript{583}

The system’s local operations were carried out by hundreds of officially appointed neighborhood district commissioners. In late October 1918, the prefectural

\textsuperscript{580} Ogawa hakase ibun kankōkai, ed. Ogawa Shigejirō chosaku senshū chūkan. Tokyo: Nihon hyōronsha (1943), 4-6.
\textsuperscript{581} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{583} In each district, a secretary (hōmen shoki) was hired to assist the chief commissioner. The secretary’s primary duties included maintaining a range of daily administrative records, including an attendance record (shukkinbo), income and expense record (kakei shūshibo), daily affairs log (jimu nisshi), an equipment inventory (bihin daichō), and minutes from all district meetings (iin kaigi jiroku), and sorting the massive volume of paperwork produced each month by the city’s commissioners. Unlike the other groups involved in the system’s daily administration, secretaries were paid a monthly wage and were almost never residents of the districts in which they worked.
authorities selected an initial cohort of 206 commissioners to serve the city’s 16
districts. Depending on the size of the district, “a group of 10 to 15 individuals” were
appointed to serve as commissioner. Commissioners were chosen on the basis of a
multi-stage process. First, the prefectural governor ordered police chiefs and local
officials in each newly established district to identify a pool of suitable candidates.
According to instructions issued by Ogawa as system director, it was essential that all
candidates were either “permanent district residents” or “persons who possessed an
intimate and enduring relationship of financial interest” that bound them to the district.
He also advised that police and officials should avoid choosing “persons seeking to
advance their reputation by obtaining important-sounding titles” and “individuals who
were already encumbered by public duties and other sorts of complex responsibilities.”
Rather, Ogawa suggested, they should try to select “hidden philanthropists (kakuretaru
tokushika) and masked notables” who were “well regarded” in the local community and
already engaging independently in efforts to “assist their neighbors.” Lastly, he
stressed that all individuals selected should possess the “desire, time, and financial

584 Osaka-fu, ed. “Ōsaka-fu hōmen iin jimu nisshi.” Ōsaka-fu hōmen iin dai-ikki jigyō nenpō. Osaka:
Ōsaka-fu (1920), 95. That number rose to 475 following the addition of 19 new districts in January 1919.
585 Serizawa Kazuya. ‘Hō’ kara kaihōsareru kenyoku: hanzai kyōki hinkon soshite taishō demokurashi.’
Tokyo: Shinyaōsha (2001), 176. Generally, individual commissioners were given responsibility for a
territory or sub-district containing “200 to 250 households.”
586 Osaka-fu, ed. “Ōsaka-fu hōmen iin jimu nisshi.” Ōsaka-fu hōmen iin dai-ikki jigyō nenpō. Osaka:
Ōsaka-fu (1920), 77.
587 Ogawa hakase ibun kankōkai, ed. Ogawa Shigejirō chosaku senshū chūkan. Tokyo: Nihon hyōronsha
(1943), 4.-6.
78.
589 Ogawa hakase ibun kankōkai, ed. Ogawa Shigejirō chosaku senshū chūkan. Tokyo: Nihon hyōronsha
(1943), 4.-6.
resources” necessary to perform the various daily tasks required of a district commissioner.\(^{590}\)

Notably, while district commissioners were granted a range of official powers, they were not paid for their service. This, Ogawa asserted, would help to “preserve the integrity of the position” and ensure that persons of the appropriate moral character were appointed to serve as commissioner.\(^{591}\) Such a policy was also pursued, no doubt, because it enabled the authorities not only to limit public expenditures on poverty relief, but also integrate socially active private citizens into the growing public welfare apparatus. He also asserted that maximum effort should be made to select non-officials, who possessed a specific knowledge of local conditions in their district and interacted on a daily basis with poor and working class families.\(^{592}\) In practice, this meant a wide array of actors, including landlords, inn proprietors, factory operators, merchants, and public servants.\(^{593}\)

An analysis of the type of individuals that were actually selected to serve as commissioner suggests that Ogawa’s recommendations were closely observed. Consider, for example, the case of southern Osaka’s Nipponbashi District, one of the 16 original districts established in October 1918. During the system’s first year of existence, Nipponbashi had 14 commissioners.\(^{594}\) Of those, 11 were full-time residents of the district and three were intimately connected to it through their occupation. Kida

\(^{590}\) Ibid.
\(^{591}\) Ibid, 6.
Shisaburō, a local tea wholesaler and ward assemblyman, was appointed to serve as chief commissioner (jōmu iin). In addition, the principal of Nipponbashi Elementary School (Yoshida Denjirō), a neighborhood rice merchant (Mizutani Matsutarō), two pawn brokers (Kishida Jirōsaburō and Toyama Yatarō), a property manager (Kajikawa Heikichi), a pharmaceutical merchant (Okumura Teiji), a cotton thread merchant (Nakano Yahē), a hemp thread merchant (Shironaka Toyomatsu), a textile manufacturer (Yamaguchi Ichirōbē), the Minami Ward Secretary (Yoshikawa Masao), a police lieutenant (Saika Yashiro), and a police sergeant (Otsuka Yoshitsugu) were appointed to serve as commissioners. Many of those selected were already active in a range of community organizations, including neighborhood hygiene associations (eisei kumiai) and the local school board (gakumu iinkai). Notably, none of the individuals selected were members of the neighborhood’s wealthiest or most influential social stratum. Rather, they were from middle class backgrounds and, as a result of their position in local society, had ample opportunity to interact directly on a regular basis with low-income district residents.

This was true of the vast majority of the individuals selected to serve as district commissioner. According to a survey of 360 commissioners conducted in 1919, the most common occupations included teacher (54), police officer (45), workshop foreman (31), public servant (31), pawnbroker (30), rice dealer (18), sundries seller (18), farmer (11), and physician (9). As these figures indicate, the majority of Osaka’s district

595 Born in 1872, Kida was a lifetime resident of Nipponbashi. In 1909, he won election to the Minami Ward Assembly and in 1921 was selected as a city councilman.
596 Osaka-fu shakaika. “Ōsaka-fu hőmen iin.” Ōsaka-fu hőmen iin dai-ikkī jigyō nempō. Osaka: Ōsaka-fu, 1920. For example, Kumada Kakuma was the head of the local hygiene association, while Yoshikawa Masao served as a member of the Nipponbashi School Board.
commissioners were members of the urban middle class, who either lived or worked in the local communities that they were appointed to serve. That included not only merchants who plied their wares within the district, but also local employers, educators, medical practitioners, and police officers.

Notably, many of those initially selected to serve as commissioner rose to prominence after participating in government-directed efforts to distribute relief rice during the 1918 Rice Riots.\(^{598}\) In northern Osaka’s Kitano District One, for example, 10 of the 15 individuals appointed as district commissioner played a key role in rice distribution efforts during the Riots. Writing in 1919, Ogawa Shigejirō noted that the emergency response to the Riots had actually provided the authorities with “an excellent opportunity” to identify “local persons of influence” around the city, who were already working proactively to assist needy members of their community.\(^{599}\) With the creation of the District Commissioner System, the prefectural authorities attempted to organize such persons into a permanently established network of social workers, which they could mobilize in support of broader efforts to restore long-term stability to the city and raise the living standards of the residents of low-income neighborhoods across the Osaka metropolitan area.

(III) Ogawa Shigejirō and the Making of the District Commissioner System

The District Commissioner System’s chief architect was an individual named Ogawa Shigejirō (1863-1925).\(^{600}\) A leading Meiji-era penology expert, Ogawa spent much of his career as an official in the Home Ministry’s Office of Penal Affairs.

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\(^{600}\) Ogawa hakase ibun kankōkai, ed.  *Ogawa Shigejirō chosaku senshū chūkan*. Tokyo: Nihon hyōronsha (1943), 4-6.
However, in 1913, following a brief stint in China advising the Qing government, he was assigned to the Home Ministry’s Regional Bureau (Chihōkyoku) and dispatched to Osaka Prefecture, where he supervised prefectural poverty relief and prevention programs until his death in 1925. During his time in Osaka, Ogawa presided over a massive expansion of the city’s social welfare system and directed a fundamental shift in the prefectural government’s approach to poverty management. Under his leadership, the prefectural authorities transitioned from a system based primarily on the concept of “poverty relief” (kyūhin), in which the various tasks of poverty management were delegated to a small group of privately administered relief institutions, to one premised on the notion of “poverty prevention” (bōhin), in which the public authorities played a dominant role in the funding, planning, and administration of urban social policy.

According to Ogawa, conventional relief policies failed to effectively address the needs of the poor because they were “insufficiently funded, non-specialized, and superficial.” An effective system of poverty management, he argued, required generous public financing and direct bureaucratic oversight. Only then, Ogawa believed, would it be possible to plan and execute social projects of the appropriate character and scale.

At the same time, however, Ogawa warned against the “excessive and irresponsible dispensation of poverty relief.” While he agreed that public assistance had a vital role to play, he cautioned that its misuse had the potential to promote increased public dependence. In order to ensure that state assistance was effectively

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602 Ibid.
administered, he argued that the authorities required a permanently functioning survey mechanism, which would allow them to accurately identify and continuously monitor the urban poor. In a 1920 essay, he noted, “Just as the military requires ‘reconnaissance patrols’ (sekkōtai) in order to predict enemy movements, officials must first survey conditions on the ground before formulating and executing social projects.” In one sense, therefore, Ogawa viewed the poor as an internal enemy, which threatened the stability and prosperity of the Japanese state and society. Intelligence about the urban poor, he believed, would enable the authorities to suppress potential sources of internal unrest and promote social stability.

Ogawa was not the first official to stress the vital importance of quantitative surveys in the formulation of social policy. For example, in 1911 and 1912, officials in the Home Ministry’s Social Bureau directed a series of “poor peoples’ surveys” (saimin chōsa) in the Tokyo and Osaka metropolitan areas. As intellectual historian Serizawa Kazuya has noted, those surveys were significant in that they provided Home Ministry officials for the first time with a detailed body of statistical information about the demographic composition of and socio-economic conditions in a small number of low-income communities in the nation’s two most populous cities. However, according to Ogawa, surveys such as those conducted by the Home Ministry had a number of critical flaws. First, they were static and therefore failed to capture the perpetually changing socio-economic situation on the ground. Second, they were costly and produced only

605 Ibid.
limited results.\textsuperscript{609} Despite the mobilization of thousands of officials and a significant investment of time, the Home Ministry surveys conducted in 1911 and 1912, he argued, resulted “in little more than the compilation of a static body of statistical data on a small group of poor people” in two large cities.\textsuperscript{610} In order to develop relief policies of an appropriate character and scale, Ogawa maintained that regional and local governmental agencies required a constant and accurate supply of current information about conditions on the ground in each of the impoverished communities in their jurisdiction.

In Ogawa’s opinion, the third major problem with conventional social surveys was that they reduced the complex and dynamic “socio-economic conditions of the poor” to a “static body of numerical data.”\textsuperscript{611} While he recognized that such data had an important role to play in the planning of new social policies, Ogawa noted that policymakers also required the sort of information that “could not be reduced to figures.”\textsuperscript{612} The collection of that information, in turn, required the creation of a government-directed network of local collaborators, whose social position enabled them to interact directly and frequently with needy members of their community.

However, surveys were only a first step. According to Ogawa, once a needy household had been identified, it was then necessary to encourage the socio-economic improvement and “moral reform” (\textit{dōtoku kōjō}) and of its members.\textsuperscript{613} For Ogawa, more than any other factor, personal “flaws” served to perpetuate the socio-economic exclusion of the urban poor. While he recognized that broader socio-economic forces also played a

\textsuperscript{609} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{610} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{611} Tamai Kingo. \textit{Bōhin no sōzō: kindai shakai seisakuron kenkyū}. Kyoto: Keibunsha (1992), 27.
\textsuperscript{612} Ogawa Shigejirō. “Hōmen iin jigyō hōkoku.” \textit{Kyūsai kenkyū} 12 (1918), 9-10.
\textsuperscript{613} Ogawa Shigejirō. \textit{Shakai mondai kyūjutsu jūkun}. Tokyo: Hokubunkan (1912), 323.
major role, he argued that “idleness and prodigality” led many impoverished urban dwellers to shun work and prevented them from achieving financial self-sufficiency. 614 Therefore, he asserted that relief efforts had to begin with the reform of the attitudes and behavior of the poor. That included not only teaching them rational methods of household management, but also transforming their attitudes about work, family, and other aspects of daily life. 615

Accordingly, Ogawa argued that it was the duty of district commissioners to provide needy individuals residing in their district with the guidance and supervision that they needed to secure steady employment and fully integrate into local society. This included not only making sure that all marriages, births, adoptions, and deaths were properly registered, but also arranging medical treatment, employment, vocational opportunities, and, in certain cases, shelter for needy local residents. 616

Yet, Ogawa recognized that there were limitations to the sort of assistance that commissioners could provide. Therefore, he argued that an economically sustainable and effective system of poverty relief had to be based first on local relations of “mutual assistance” (sōgo fūjo) rather than on public largesse. 617 In place of the government, Ogawa argued that the family and community had to function as the primary provider of relief. That belief, in particular, shaped the strategies through which Osaka’s district commissioners attempted to assist impoverished city residents. Whenever possible,

614 Ibid, 117-118. In 1912, Ogawa wrote that poverty was commonly the result of “irresponsible spending rather than insufficient income.”


commissioners attempted to utilize familial and communal resources before seeking public relief.

(IV) The Duties of Osaka’s District Commissioners

What sort of tasks did Osaka’s district commissioners perform? According to a set of regulations issued in October 1918, commissioners were charged with five basic duties: ①“surveying general living conditions in the district and formulating methods to improve those conditions,” ②“investigating the condition of households in the district already receiving public assistance, assessing the appropriateness of current assistance methods, and, when necessary, implementing improved assistance methods,” ③“surveying the state of existing relief institutions in the district and identifying what if any additional institutions need to be constructed,” ④“investigating the state of supply and demand for daily necessities,” and ⑤“formulating strategies to mitigate economic distress.” 618

In order to stay abreast of local socio-economic conditions, commissioners were expected to conduct regular house-to-house surveys in their area of responsibility. 619 In addition, regulations mandated that commissioners maintain close ties with “local police, schools, temples, shrines, neighborhood hygiene associations, reservist associations, and other area organizations.” 620 Through close cooperation with community organizations and members of the public security apparatus, the system’s administrators hoped that

619 Ibid.
district commissioners would be able to promptly identify emerging sources of instability and efficiently address the needs of low-income households in their territory.621

The surveys conducted by Osaka’s district commissioners differed from foregoing poverty surveys in three important ways. First, unlike past surveys, which were conducted during a single, fixed period and then suspended, district surveys were carried out continuously for the entire duration of the system’s more than two-decade existence. Every month, survey results were compiled in each of Osaka’s districts and transmitted directly to the prefectural government. Second, district commissioners, rather than police and government officials, handled the administration of district surveys. According to Ogawa Shigejirō, police and officials were widely viewed with suspicion in low-income city neighborhoods. As a consequence, they struggled to obtain accurate information about the communities that they were attempting to survey. By employing district commissioners in place of police and officials, the prefectural authorities believed that they could gain unprecedented access to urban communities that they had long struggled to sufficiently penetrate. Third, in contrast to conventional poverty surveys, which attempted only to identify the already destitute, the surveys conducted by Osaka’s district commissioners also focused on persons living at or immediately above the poverty line. By focusing attention on the nearly destitute, prefectural officials argued that it would be possible to identify and effectively assist persons in danger of falling into poverty.622

System regulations stipulated that households judged to require assistance should be divided into two categories: type one (dai-isshu) and type two (dai-nishu). Type one households were defined as “single-member households incapable of self-sufficiency, multi-member households incapable of self-sufficiency, and impoverished singletons incapable of self-sufficiency because of an illness or some other sort of obstacle.” As a rule, the members of type one households were already impoverished.

In contrast, type two households were defined as “multi-member households with a total monthly income of less than 25 yen and a monthly rent of less than seven yen, who [were] judged to have no flexibility in their household budget.” Although type two households were able to subsist in normal circumstances without external assistance, a sudden loss of income could result in their immediate impoverishment. As of 1921, there were 1,776 type one households and 7,319 type two households receiving assistance in Osaka’s four city wards and neighboring Nishinari and Higashinari County.

As historian Tamai Kingō has shown, this system of classification was based on standards developed by English sociologist B.S. Rowntree in his 1901 study of poverty in York, England, *Poverty: A Study of Town Life*. That study identified two basic types of poverty: “primary poverty” and “secondary poverty.” Households in a condition of primary poverty were defined as those in which total household income was “insufficient to obtain the minimum material necessities for the maintenance of mere physical

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624 Ibid.
625 Ibid.
existence.” In contrast, households in a condition of secondary poverty were defined as those in which total household income was “sufficient to obtain the minimum physical necessities of household members as long as no part of it was redirected towards other uses, regardless of their practical value.”

District commissioners were required to prepare a “card” (kādo) for each of the “type one” and “type two” households in their territory. On each card, they recorded a range of data, including the name, registered domicile, age, birth date, occupation, religious sect, habits (shūheki), leisure pursuits (goraku), and proclivities (shikō) of the household head and the name, age, physical condition, occupation, income, and educational history of each household member. In addition, they recorded the household’s total income, monthly expenditures on rent, food, and incidentals. In addition, they noted the specific problems faced by the household and the steps taken by the commissioner to resolve those problems.

Once composed, each card was placed in a register (daichō), which was permanently stored at the local district office. In order to make sure that the information contained on each card was current, commissioners were required to constantly update the cards in their register. If, for example, the head of a type two household recovered from an illness and returned to work, the commissioner assisting that household was required to record that fact and adjust their assistance strategy accordingly.

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631 Ibid.
In addition to conducting regular household surveys and monitoring local socio-economic conditions, Osaka’s commissioners were expected to provide households in their district with basic guidance about a range of daily activities, including childcare and personal hygiene. According to Ogawa Shigejirō, such duties were particularly important because district residents were isolated from the rest of urban society and ignorant of civilized standards of behavior and comportment.\(^\text{632}\) Writing in 1919, he went so far as to compare district residents to the inhabitants of “a recently discovered colonial territory on an isolated island in a distant sea.”\(^\text{633}\) Therefore, Ogawa argued, it was essential that commissioners serve as both a civilizing force and a conduit of accurate information about basic everyday practices.

In addition, district commissioners came to play a vital role in the local administration of low-income city neighborhoods. Taking over for police and local officials, they held the responsibility of caring for sick and diseased vagrants, distributing vouchers for free medical treatment at Osaka’s Saiseikai Hospital, and arranging public assistance for qualified city residents.\(^\text{634}\) In accordance with rules established at the time of the system’s founding, commissioners also assumed primary responsibility for the local enforcement of a range of national regulations, including the 1889 Conscription Order (Chōheirei), 1900 Reformatory Law (Kankahō), 1911 Factory Law (Kōjōhō), and, following its enactment, the 1929 Relief Law (Kyūgohō).\(^\text{635}\) In short, district commissioners emerged after the Rice Riots as the chief local executor of a broad range

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\(^{633}\) Ogawa Shigejirō. “Hōmen iin seido (1).” Kyūsai jigyō 8 (1921), 8-9.


of government policies and the primary mediator of relations between the state and low-income urban communities.\textsuperscript{636}

When a district household was suffering financial hardship, it was the duty of the commissioner to ascertain the underlying cause and to help the household achieve financial stability and ultimately self-sufficiency. That often involved the deployment of a blend of public and private resources and efforts to “improve” the behavior and habits of household members. In particular, regulations stressed the vital importance of “rationalizing” household budgeting techniques.\textsuperscript{637} Consequently, commissioners took great care to promote household savings and the reform of spending practices. They did so by encouraging participation in publicly sponsored savings associations and consumer cooperatives, and by the use of public markets, pawnshops, and credit cooperatives.\textsuperscript{638}

For example, by mid-1919, each of Osaka’s districts had established neighborhood trust associations (shinyō kumiai).\textsuperscript{639} Administered by the secretaries employed in each district, the associations served as both savings encouragement societies and neighborhood financial institutions, where needy city residents could obtain low-interest loans.\textsuperscript{640} In exchange for assistance, district commissioners commonly required the individuals they were assisting to join the local trust association and deposit an agreed percentage of their monthly earnings in a shared association account. This, in

\textsuperscript{637} Ogawa Shigejirō. Shakai mondai kyujutsu jūkun. Tokyo: Hokubunkan (1912), 346.
\textsuperscript{638} Ōsaka-fu shakaika, ed. “Hōmen iiin ni kansuru sankō kōmoku.” Ōsaka-fu hōmen iiin dai-ikki jigyō nenpō (1920), 20.
\textsuperscript{639} Ōsaka-fu shakaika, ed. Ōsaka-fu hōmen iiin jigyō nenpō, taishō jūnen. Osaka: Ōsaka-fu (1922), 191-192.
turn, enabled Osaka’s commissioners to control a portion of the income generated by the households they assisted.

For the system’s founders, district trust associations were essential not only because they helped encourage city residents to adopt “responsible” financial practices, but also because they provided them with a safe alternative to the high-interest black-market lenders, which poor families commonly turned to for small loans and cash advances. According to Ogawa, many poor families, even those with a steady source of income, struggled to escape the cycle of poverty because they were heavily burdened by household debt. The district trust association was intended as a mechanism that would allow such households to at last pay back their debts and begin working towards long-term self-sufficiency.

During the system’s first two years of existence, Osaka’s commissioners handled a total of 66,220 cases. More than 56 percent of those cases involved the provision of short-term relief to households that were unable to survive without external assistance. In such instances, commissioners began by searching for a relative or acquaintance that could care for the needy individual or family. When a suitable individual could not be found, they then employed personal resources or turned to the municipal government for emergency relief.

The second most common sort of case with which commissioners dealt involved the arrangement of medical treatment for persons lacking the economic wherewithal to seek it on their own. Between January 1919 and March 1921, commissioners arranged

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642 Ibid, 35.
644 Ibid.
medical treatment for more than 17,875 individuals. In accordance with system guidelines, impoverished city residents were commonly sent to Osaka’s Saiseikai Hospital, where they received publicly subsidized care. However, beds at Saiseikai Hospital were extremely limited in number and often filled to capacity. As a result, district commissioners were frequently forced to seek treatment elsewhere for the individuals they were assisting.

The third most common type of case that commissioners handled involved the adjustment and control of household registers. In impoverished city neighborhoods across Osaka, thousands of households continued during the late 1910s and 1920s to evade the system of household registration. This not only obstructed efforts to encourage household formation in impoverished urban districts, but it also hampered efforts to enroll children from low-income households to attend school and allowed scores of poor urban dwellers to evade conscription. As a consequence, district commissioners spent a great deal of time and effort attempting to identify improperly registered households and working to ensure that they completed the proper registration procedures. According to contemporary statistics, during the first two years of the system’s existence, commissioners handled more than 4,475 household registration-related cases.

(V) The Character and Function of Osaka’s District Commissioners

In order to further explore the character and function of Osaka’s district commissioners, this section analyzes a series of case records maintained by individual commissioners during the late 1910s and 1920s. In particular, it seeks to understand the basic strategies and mechanisms whereby commissioners attempted to assist impoverished households in their district. The majority of the cases analyzed in this section are taken from monthly reports filed by individual commissioners. At the end of each year, the reports that commissioners filed were compiled and published by the prefectural government’s Social Department. In order to protect the identity of the aid recipients mentioned in the reports, their last names were almost always stricken from the published record. For that reason, in most of the cases discussed below, aid recipients are referred to only by their first names.

(A) Household Registration and Social Inclusion

During the system’s first stage of existence, district commissioners focused significant attention on issues related to household registration. Guidelines issued at the time of the system’s establishment advised that commissioners “should work diligently to correct abnormal familial relations resulting from a failure to complete necessary legal procedures.”\textsuperscript{650} In this case, the term “abnormal familial relations” refers primarily to “common-law marriages” (naien kankei) and “children born out of wedlock” (shiseiji). As data from the early 1920s indicates, both common-law marriages and unregistered births were a common feature of life in Osaka’s “slum districts” (saimin chiku).\textsuperscript{651} According to figures compiled in 1924 in Nagamachi district’s impoverished Hachijūkennagaya neighborhood, 58% of all marital relationships were unregistered “common-law

\textsuperscript{650} Saga Ashita. \textit{Kindai Ōsaka no toshi shakai kōzō}. Tokyo: Keizai hyōronsha (2007), 265-266.
\textsuperscript{651} Ibid.
marriages.” In addition, 46% of all children under the age of 16 were classified as children born out of wedlock. In order to explore this issue further, let us examine a case report from Tennōji’s Fourth District. District commissioner Tamano Naganosuke filed the report in July 1919.

**Case One: “Dirty Munekichi” (*Yogore no munekichi*)**

In the spring of 1919, commissioners in Tennōji’s Fourth District began hearing stories about a local resident known only by the nickname “Dirty Munekichi.” According to neighborhood rumors, the man had no legal surname and had never attempted to register the births of any of his children, all of whom were born out of wedlock. Chief commissioner Tamano Naganosuke was dispatched to look into the matter. Upon investigation, Tamano determined that Munekichi’s real name was Tōjirō and that he earned a living peddling fresh fruits and vegetables. In addition, he confirmed that Tōjirō did in fact have seven unregistered children, several of whom were nearing adulthood.

As Tamano notes in his report, the issue was particularly concerning because Tōjirō’s eldest son, Hatsujirō, was “approaching conscription age.” Tamano instructed Tōjirō that it was “the obligation of all Japanese citizens to undergo a conscription examination once they reach[ed] the appropriate age.” He also informed him that all children, regardless of their economic condition, were legally required to complete six

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653 Ibid.
655 Ibid.
years of elementary education. As none of Tōjirō’s children had ever enrolled in school, the commissioner told him that steps needed to be taken to enroll them immediately.

In addition, Tamano discovered that Tōjirō had never legally registered his marriage. At the same time, however, he found that Tōjirō did in fact have a household register. Unfortunately, he was improperly registered as an unmarried adult male living in Higashinari County. As Tōjirō now lived in Osaka’s Minami Ward, Tamano began by filing for an official change of address. He then contacted the parents of Tōjirō’s common-law wife and, after securing their consent, arranged for her to be officially registered as Tōjirō’s wife. Tamano then escorted Tōjirō to the Minami Ward Office and registered the births of all seven of his children, beginning with his eldest son. He concluded his efforts by enrolling Tamano’s six youngest children in elementary school.

(B) Medical Aid and Livelihood Assistance

Individuals who received aid through the District Commissioner System were often so impoverished that they were unable to seek medical assistance when they fell sick or suffered an injury. Many survived on the wages that they earned each day and serious illness or injury often meant an immediate loss of income.656 Unable to work, they were unable to earn the money required to seek medical care. Particularly, when the afflicted individual was the primary breadwinner, health-related problems served to intensify and perpetuate a household’s impoverishment. Consequently, commissioners were often compelled to arrange medical treatment for individuals that they were attempting to assist. Once the needy individual had healed, then commissioners could

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begin helping them to reintegrate into the workforce and ultimately achieve economic self-sufficiency.

Case records contain dozens of examples in which commissioners helped to arrange medical care for needy district residents. One representative example comes from a “district notebook” (*homen techō*) maintained by the chief commissioner of Namba’s First District, Tanaka Hanjirō. The 200-page notebook was donated to the Osaka Prefectural History Museum in 2008 by one of Tanaka’s grandchildren. It contains entries from a five-year period spanning 1918 to 1923. The first entry is from October 1918, the month of the District Commissioner System’s founding. The example discussed here is from January 1919.

**Case Two: Hirai Sue (Age 21)**

On January 31, 1919, Tanaka Hanjirō visited the home of an individual named Hirai Tokutarō in Namba’s Kawaramachi neighborhood. According to Hirai’s household register (*koseki*), he was an unmarried 21-year-old male who lived with his 54-year-old mother Sue. At the time of Tanaka’s visit, however, Hirai was not living at home. According to Sue, he left home in early December 1918 after being “drafted into the Army’s Eighth Infantry Regiment.”

Sue struggled to survive following her son’s departure. She lived in a small back-alley tenement, which she rented for 16 yen per month. When her son was at home and

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657 Under article eight of the 1918 District Office Administrative Regulations (*Hōmen jimusho shomu kitei junsoku*), commissioners were required to carry a notebook with them when conducting their duties. In it, they were required to record all of their daily business. When, for example, they visited a type one or two household in their district, they had to record the nature of their visit and any changes that may have occurred in the home.

658 Tanaka Hanjirō, *Homen iin techō*, 1918-1923. This document is currently stored in the archives at the Osaka Prefectural History Museum. I would like to thank museum curators Iida Naoki and Yagi Shigeru for permitting me to use it.
earning a daily wage, Sue had no problem paying rent. However, Tokujirō’s departure meant that she was forced to pay rent on her own. In order to make ends meet, Sue was forced to lease the second floor of her rental dwelling to a secondary tenant for a monthly fee of 6 yen 50 sen. In addition, she leased a bedroom and small kitchen on the bottom floor to a second lodger for 5 yen 50 sen. While the fees that Sue collected helped to cover a significant portion of her rent, she was still required to contribute 4 yen of personal income each month.

In order to earn enough money to cover her share of the rent and other living expenses, Sue worked as a domestic servant. Although she was able to earn enough money to survive during December and most of January, on January 25, 1919, she was “suddenly stricken with a severe illness.” As a result, she lost her ability to work and earn a daily wage. Without money, she was unable to pay rent or seek medical treatment.

After hearing Sue’s story, Tanaka immediately arranged for her to receive medical treatment at nearby Imamiya Medical Clinic. Founded in the aftermath of the 1918 Rice Riots, the clinic was established by the municipal government in an effort to provide expanded medical services to city residents lacking the economic wherewithal to seek treatment at a private hospital or infirmary. In addition, using personal funds, Tanaka provided her with “an emergency supply of relief rice.”

According to a subsequent entry in Tanaka’s notebook, Sue received the treatment she required and made a swift recovery. Once Sue had regained her health, Tanaka then helped her to secure part-time work. In addition, he established a savings account on Sue’s behalf and ordered her to save a portion of the wages she earned each month.

Sue was able to subsist without difficulty for the next several months. However,
in May 1919, her landlord, Matsumoto Yatarō, “attempted to raise her monthly rental rate.” In response, Sue sought Tanaka’s help and he quickly arranged to meet with Matsumoto. Following a brief negotiation, Matsumoto agreed only to raise rent on the sections of the dwelling that Sue subleased to secondary tenants. In addition, he agreed to allow Sue “to live rent-free in her room” until her son had completed his term of military service.

(C) Financial Independence and Family Reorganization

District commissioners generally focused their efforts on the entire family, when attempting to help needy district residents achieve long-term economic self-sufficiency. As the following example indicates, commissioners often intervened deeply into the internal relations of needy households. In addition to supervising the restructuring of household finances, commissioners sometimes went so far as to temporarily separate parents from their children.

The following example is taken from a case report filed in 1922 by the chief commissioner of Tennōji’s Third District, Yasumoto Sakubē. It clearly displays the tremendous authority that commissioners exerted in relations with needy households in their district. Households seeking assistance through the District Commissioner System were required to comply with all orders issued by the commissioner handling their case, even when they felt the order was unnecessary or unfair.

Case Three: Wakichi (Age 42)

On the evening of February 1921, a 42-year-old house painter from Tennōji’s Rokumantaichō neighborhood by the name of Wakichi visited the district office in search
of assistance. At the time, he was married with four children and earned a daily wage of 30 sen. After giving birth to their most recent child in December 1920, Wakichi’s wife had fallen sick and was now unable to work or look after the children. With no savings, Wakichi was unable to pay for his wife’s medical treatment. At the same time, because his wife was bedridden, Wakichi was forced to stop working and remain in the home to care for his young children, all of whom were under the age of 10. Without Wakichi’s daily wages, the family fell into destitution. By the time that he sought assistance at the district office, the situation had grown so serious that Wakichi was no longer able to feed his children.

After carrying out a brief investigation of conditions in the household, chief commissioner Yasumoto immediately arranged for Wakichi’s wife to receive medical care at Osaka’s Saiseikai Hospital. He then forced Wakichi to give up custody of his baby daughter. Despite opposition from Wakichi and his ailing wife, Yasumoto eventually compelled the couple to turn their daughter over to the non-profit Kōsaikai Charity. Although he was ultimately compelled to turn his daughter over to the Kōsaikai, with his wife and baby daughter temporarily living outside the home, Wakichi was once again free to go out and earn a wage. In accordance with Yasumoto’s instructions, he brought his eldest daughter and younger son with him to work each day. While Wakichi was working, his eldest son remained at home during the day to care for the house and cook breakfast and dinner for the rest of the family. According to Yasumoto’s case report, this arrangement was absolutely essential in order to put Wakichi’s family back on the path to self-sufficiency.

(D) Poverty Relief and the Family
As a general rule, commissioners acted with the belief that poverty relief was ultimately the responsibility of the family rather than the state. Accordingly, they attempted whenever possible to limit the use of public resources and involve the family in efforts to care for the poor. In order to analyze this issue more closely, let us examine the case of Imamiyachō resident Komakichi. It comes from a report filed in early 1922 by Imamiyachō chief commissioner, Iwama Hankichi.660

**Case Four: Komakichi (Age 77)**

According to Iwama’s report, Komakichi lived in a back-alley tenement with his elderly wife, Yae, and daughter, Hisa. Both Yae and Hisa were blind (momoku) and unable to survive without external assistance. The family fell into destitution in January 1922 following the death Hisa’s husband. Before passing away, he had served as the family’s primary breadwinner. Without his wages, however, the family found it difficult to pay rent and purchase food.

Hearing the news of Hisa’s husband’s death, chief commissioner Iwama visited Komakichi’s home to pay his respects and check in with the family. Following a brief inspection, he determined that the family required some sort of external assistance. Accordingly, he began searching for a living relative that could act as the family’s guardian.

After contacting the Minami Ward Office, he determined that Komakichi’s younger sister lived with her husband Iwanosuke in the nearby Sakamachi neighborhood. Although Iwanosuke was by no means wealthy, he earned a stable living. After obtaining Iwanosuke’s address, chief commissioner Iwama went to meet with him to explain the

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situation and seek his assistance. Following a brief discussion, Iwama convinced
Iwanosuke to provide Komakichi with five yen per month to help pay his rent and other
household expenses. Recognizing that Komakichi’s family would be unable to survive
on five yen, Iwama then visited the Imamiyachō Town Office to submit a request for
public aid. His request was quickly approved and the authorities agreed to provide
Komakichi with an additional five yen per month. Together with the five-yen wage that
Komakichi earned each month collecting and selling used rope scraps, this helped to
bring the family’s total income to 15 yen.

For the next several months, this arrangement worked effectively. Komakichi
was able to pay his rent on time and purchase enough food to ensure the survival of his
wife and daughter. Over time, however, Komakichi’s wages began to decline. As a
result, “he fell behind on his rent” and the landlord ordered him “to vacate his dwelling.”

In response, Iwama once again met with Iwanosuke and requested additional
assistance. With no more money to provide, Iwanosuke was forced to refuse Iwama’s
request. Iwama then began searching for other living relatives who could provide
assistance. After a brief search, he located four individuals who could potentially provide
assistance: Komakichi’s cousin and Yae’s brother, sister, and nephew. Although
Komakichi’s cousin and Yae’s nephew refused to contribute any money, Yae’s siblings
quickly agreed to pool their resources and “construct a new house” for Komakichi, Yae,
and Hisa on “a parcel of land in [Osaka prefecture’s] Tondabayashi Town.” In addition,
they offered to “contribute a small amount of money” each month “to pay for the
family’s living expenses.” In short, by engaging Yae’s relatives in relief efforts, Iwama
was able to guarantee the long-term stability of Komakichi’s household.
(E) Establishing Bonds of Communal Assistance

Although Iwama succeeded in engaging Yae’s relatives in Komakichi’s care, case records indicate that there were many instances in which aid from relatives was unavailable. In such cases, commissioners commonly attempted to enlist members of the local community in efforts to care for the poor. The following is one such example. It comes from a case report filed in June 1921 by Tamano Naganosuke, who was then serving as the chief commissioner of Tennōji’s Second District.661

Case Five: Tokujirō (Age 38)

In the winter of 1921, Tamano Naganosuke conducted a routine visit to the home of an individual named Tokujirō. According Tamano’s report, Tokujirō lived with his 85-year-old step-grandmother Kiwa and older sister Fuku in a cramped back-alley tenement in Tennōji’s Teradachō neighborhood. Both Tokujirō and Fuku were mute (asha) and Kiwa was deaf (rōsha). At the time of Tamano’s visit, Tokujirō and Fuku were the family’s primary breadwinners. Both worked as laborers at a nearby match factory and earned “a combined daily wage of 80 sen.” Despite her advanced age, Kiwa performed piecework in the home and earned an additional “14 to 15 sen per day.”

This arrangement served to guarantee the family’s subsistence for many years. However, in the summer of 1920, Tokujirō suffered a “severe mental breakdown” and was forced to stop working. Without his wages, the family “grew deeply impoverished.” In response, Tamano applied for assistance at the Minami Ward Office on the family’s behalf. However, his application was denied on the grounds that Fuku was of working age and sufficiently capable of supporting the family. To make matters worse, Tokujirō’s

condition continued to decline after he left his job at the match factory. Fearing that he was a threat to his family and the local community, Tamano eventually forced him to enter nearby Yamamoto Mental Hospital.

Recognizing that Tokujirō would be unable to return to work, Tamano then began attempting to secure some sort of long-term financial assistance for Fuku and Kiwa. He contacted a number of local philanthropists, but efforts were unsuccessful. Eventually, however, he secured “a 50-yen donation” from a local philanthropist by the name of Takakura Shinsaburō. After receiving the money from Takakura, Tamano set up a jointly controlled savings account at Yamaguchi Bank and deposited the entire amount in the account. At the same time, he encouraged Fuku and Kiwa to keep working and to avoid using the money in the account unless it was absolutely necessary.

Initially, the two women were able to subsist without external assistance. However, on June 16, Tokujirō suddenly died while still in the hospital. Lacking sufficient income to pay for his funeral, Fuku and Kiwa asked commissioner Tamano for permission to use some of the money that he had placed in savings for them. Tamano promptly agreed to their request. However, before withdrawing a portion of the money on their behalf, he consulted with the family’s neighbors and convinced them to contribute a total 8 yen 30 sen to help pay for the funeral arrangements. As a result, Fuku and Kiwa were able to pay for Tokujirō’s funeral without using any of the donated funds.

In sum, although Fuku and Kiwa were denied public assistance, Tamano was able to guarantee their survival by encouraging them to work diligently and proactively engaging members of the local community in their care.

(F) Intervention in Landlord-Tenant Relations
Although commissioners spent much of their time working to arrange assistance for needy households in their district, they were also frequently called upon to intervene in disputes between landlords and their tenants. In most instances, commissioners worked to make it possible for tenants to remain in their dwellings. Whenever possible they attempted to find mutually agreeable solutions and to foster improved relations between the disputing parties. Thereby, they attempted to foster long-term social stability in the communities that they served, while making it possible for economically insecure residents to maintain their place in local society.

The following example is from the spring of 1922. It comes from a case report filed by Sakae district chief commissioner Numata Ka’ichirō. The report clearly displays Numata’s desire to both prevent the eviction of local residents and placate the concerns of the landlord.

**Case Six: Sakae District Tenants**

In January 1922, a group of tenants from southern Osaka’s Nishihama neighborhood visited the Sakae District Office in order to seek assistance from the on-duty commissioner. According to the case report filed by Numata Ka’ichirō, the tenants were involved in a dispute with their landlord, who during the previous week had suddenly announced that he was raising rental rates. In addition, he threatened to promptly evict any residents that failed to comply with his order.

After hearing the news, the tenants immediately joined together in opposition. They rejected the proposed increase and demanded that he maintain rents at the current rate. Unwilling to grant their request, the landlord responded by reiterating his threat to

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evict tenants that refused to pay. It was at this point that the tenants actively sought the assistance of an external mediator.

As it happened, chief commissioner Numata Ka’ichirō was in the district office when the tenants arrived. After listening to their story, he informed them that he was actually an acquaintance of the landlord and would negotiate with him on their behalf. Although the specific details of the negotiation process are unknown, it appears that Numata quickly found a mutually acceptable solution. First, he convinced the landlord to temporarily abandon his current request for a rental increase. Second, he agreed to collect rents himself and to handle the day-to-day management of the landlord’s rental dwellings in Sakae. That, in turn, enabled the landlord, who lived outside the neighborhood, “to dismiss the on-site manager” and keep a larger percentage of the rents that he collected from his tenants each month.

Notably, Numata did not force the landlord to reject future increases. In fact, in order “to make it possible for the landlord to raise rents at a later date,” he enrolled all of the tenants involved in the dispute in the local “people’s trust association” (shōmin shinyō kumiai) and forced them to make an initial deposit of one yen. By compelling the tenants to save money, Numata believed that he could provide them with the economic wherewithal to withstand future rent increases and thereby prevent subsequent disputes.

(G) Employment Assistance and Economic Integration

In many of the cases that district commissioners handled, the primary cause of impoverishment was unemployment. As a consequence, commissioners were often forced arrange jobs for the individuals that they assisted. As a general rule, commissioners attempted to arrange employment for needy individuals in their district by
sending them to one of Osaka’s municipally administered Employment Introduction Centers (Shokugyō shōkaisho). Between 1919 and 1922, 11 such facilities were established around the city.663 Opened in the rapid succession in the aftermath of the Rice Riots, they were specifically intended to counter rising unemployment among the city’s lower and working classes. Employment Introduction Centers performed two basic functions. First, they helped unemployed city residents find work in the private sector that was suited to their age, gender, and skills. Second, they helped supplied day laborers and longer-term employees to local manufacturers and merchants.664

As the following example reveals, however, commissioners were not always able to depend on public resources when attempting to arrange work for needy district residents. Despite attempts to make use of available resources, in many instances, commissioners were compelled to employ both private resources and personal relationships in order to achieve their objectives.

The following example comes from a March 1923 case report.665 Hasegawa Shintetsu, the chief commissioner of northern Osaka’s Nagara district, filed the report.

Case Seven: Masakichi (Age 19)

On the evening of December 28, 1922, a young man by the name of Masakichi visited the Nagara District Office. Unemployed, penniless, and dressed in rags, he asked the on-duty commissioner to help him find a place to live and secure “some sort of

663 Ōsaka-shi, ed. Ōsaka-shi shakai jigyō gaiyō. Osaka: Ōsaka-shi, 1923. In addition to the Central Employment Introduction Center, which was established in Nishi Ward’s Awabori neighborhood, the municipal government opened centers in the Kujō, Nishi Noda, Imamiya, Kyōmachibori, Horie, Tenjinbashi 6-chō-me, Rōmatsuchō, Kyōbashi, Nankai, Umeda, and Tamatsukuri neighborhoods.


suitable employment.” According to Hasegawa’s report, Masakichi was “missing all of the fingers on his right hand and clearly disabled.”

After recording the details of Masakichi’s request, the commissioner asked the young man about the cause of his impoverishment. Masakichi responded that he had previously worked at Tōyō Seishi, a large paper factory based in Nagara. After working for several years as a factory hand, he was injured operating a piece of machinery on the factory floor and forced to enter the hospital. The company paid for his medical treatment, but he was unable to return to work after his release. With no job, he decided to go back to his home prefecture to recuperate and search for work. However, he was unable to find support at home and promptly returned to Osaka.

After returning to the city, Masakichi searched for work on his own. However, “because of his disability, he was unable to find a steady job.” With nowhere to turn, he decided to visit the Nagara District Office and seek assistance. After hearing Masakichi’s story, the on-duty commissioner indicated that he was willing to help. Unfortunately, it was late December and most local employers had closed their businesses for the season. After promising to help Masakichi find work after the New Year, he arranged temporary shelter for him at a nearby boarding house. Using money from the district’s emergency relief fund, the commissioner paid for Masakichi’s room and provided him with enough pocket money to survive through the New Year’s holiday.

In early January 1923, Nagara chief commissioner Hasegawa sent Masakichi to the city government’s Central Employment Introduction Center to find work. However, because of his disability, the Center struggled to find a suitable position for the young man, eventually informing that they would be unable to help. With nowhere to turn, he
returned to Nagara and once again sought assistance at the district office. Rather than sending Masakichi back to the Employment Introduction Center, commissioners in Nagara contacted dozens of local employers in an effort to find work for him. However, because of the young man’s injury, none of the companies they contacted was willing to offer him a job.

After their initial attempts failed, Hasegawa decided that the easiest option would be to find a job for the young man at his former place of work, Tōyō Seishi. In an effort to convince the company to rehire Masakichi, Hasegawa met with the heads of Tōyō Seishi’s personnel and general affairs departments. Initially, both men rebuffed Hasegawa’s advances. They claimed that Masakichi had been “insubordinate,” “lazy,” and “neglectful of his work” during his time at the company. To make matters worse, during “a labor dispute,” he had incited “hardworking factory hands” and turned them against the company. According to company representatives, these issues, rather than his disability, were the primary reasons that they could not hire him back.

Unwilling to give up, Hasegawa then arranged to meet directly with the company’s managing director. During his meeting, Hasegawa begged the director to take Masakichi back. In exchange, Hasegawa promised that he would personally monitor the young man’s behavior and work to ensure that he diligently executed his duties and refrained from engaging in further disruptive behavior. In fact, Hasegawa claimed that Masakichi’s injury and subsequent dismissal from the company had prompted the young man to “reevaluate his behavior” and “thoroughly change his ways.” From now on, Hasegawa pledged, Masakichi would become “a model factory hand.”

Hasegawa’s exhortations appear to have worked. On February 22, 1922, the
company officially agreed to rehire Masakichi as a full-time employee and to pay him a wage of “90 sen per day.” In addition, they pledged to raise his daily wage to “one yen” if he worked diligently for “a period of two months.”

According to Hasegawa’s case record, he checked with Masakichi on a daily basis during his first few months back at work. In addition, he made periodic visits to Tōyō Seishi to meet with Masakichi’s employer and discuss the young man’s performance. The case record indicates that he did in fact “work diligently” and shunned all “insubordinate or disruptive activities.”

In order to ensure that Masakichi used his wages responsibly, Hasegawa arranged for a clerk in the personnel office at Tōyō Seishi to manage his expenditures. The clerk recorded the specific amount that Masakichi earned each day in a ledger, disbursed the funds that he needed for rent, food, and other necessities, and placed the remainder in savings. This, Hasegawa believed, would help to teach Masakichi responsible financial practices and protect him during periods of future economic instability. By monitoring the young man’s progress and constantly working to reform his behavior, the district commissioners in Nagara helped to encourage his sustained reintegration into the urban labor force.

(VI) Conclusion

This chapter examined the character and function of Osaka Prefecture’s District Commissioner System. Established in the immediate aftermath of the 1918 Rice Riots, it was intended as both a system of poverty relief and a regulatory mechanism, which would enable the authorities in Osaka to exert a greater degree of control over the city’s most impoverished residential districts.
The District Commissioner System’s emergence marks an important turning point in the history of local poverty management efforts in Osaka. Unlike conventional relief policies, which attempted only to address the symptoms of poverty, the District Commissioner System was designed to prevent poverty’s occurrence by addressing both its individual and social causes.

Although commissioners were often able to draw on public resources when attempting to aid individuals in their district, as Fuku and Kiwa’s case indicates, there were instances in which such assistance was unavailable. In such cases, commissioners were forced to rely on a blend of personal relationships and private resources. In Fuku and Kiwa’s case, for example, he was able to secure financial assistance from Takakura Shinsaburō, a local philanthropist with whom he was acquainted.

As several of the above examples indicate, however, the role of district commissioners extended far beyond the provision of poverty relief. As Numata Ka’ichirō’s example indicates, commissioners were in some cases called upon to intervene in and help resolve local disputes. In addition, as Tōjirō’s case shows, they played a vital role in local governance, as well. By integrating impoverished urban dwellers into the household registration system, commissioners helped to ensure that they also attended school, underwent conscription examinations, and fulfilled the variety of other obligations required of Japanese citizens. In that sense, commissioners helped to advance the goals of the state and to bolster the existing political order. However, it is also essential to recognize that citizens actively sought the assistance of commissioners in times of need and often derived a direct benefit from the services that they provided. Therefore, commissioners were more than just agents of the state who were appointed to
regulate the poor. They also provided needy urban dwellers with access to basic resources and services, which helped to ensure their subsistence. When attempting to understand the role of Osaka’s district commissioners in local society, it is essential to consider both of these features.
CHAPTER 6. HOUSING REFORM AND URBAN GOVERNANCE IN MODERN JAPAN: A CASE STUDY OF OSAKA’S SUBSTANDARD HOUSING REFORM PROJECTS, 1927-1944

(I) Introduction

Between 1927 and 1944, the Osaka municipal government executed a series of large-scale housing reform projects targeting squalid and impoverished neighborhoods on the city’s south end.\(^{666}\) Officially designated as “substandard housing districts” (furō jūtaku chiku), the neighborhoods selected for reform had been identified since the early 1900s as a threat to public health and safety.\(^{667}\) Yet, until the late 1920s, fiscal restrictions had prevented the city authorities from moving forward with their comprehensive reform.

The situation changed dramatically in 1926. In June of that year, the Japanese Home Ministry unveiled a housing reform program targeting the built environment of the nation’s most squalid and densely populated urban slums.\(^{668}\) Under the program, the state pledged to provide a combination of “government subsidies” and “low-interest loans” to Japan’s six largest municipalities, including Osaka, to fund housing reform projects for “the poor” (saimin).\(^{669}\) During an initial ten-year phase, the Home Ministry planned to reconstruct a total of “15,000 substandard housing units.”\(^{670}\)


\(^{667}\) The Home Ministry defined a substandard housing district as one that was recognized as “to pose a danger or threat to public health and security.”

\(^{668}\) Osaka mainichi shinbun, “Musan kaikyū no jūtaku o jūnen keikaku de daisēri,” 14 June 1926. A special commission comprised of members of the Home Ministry’s Social Projects Survey Committee (Shakai jigyō chōsakai) formulated the initial reform plan. The commission met three times between July and September 1926. Its recommendations were then passed on to the Home Minister.


\(^{670}\) Osaka mainichi shinbun, “Musan kaikyū no jūtaku o jūnen keikaku de daiseiri,” 14 June 1926.
The program’s legislative framework was formally established in March 1927
with the passage of the Substandard Housing District Reform Law (*Furyō jūtaku chiku
kairyōhō*). Under the law, the Home Ministry received the authority to designate
substandard housing districts, approve the content of municipal reform plans, and
command city governments to initiate housing reform projects. At the same time,
however, municipalities were actively encouraged to select reform sites and plan housing
reform projects. Therefore, while the Home Ministry ultimately determined whether or
not a project was funded and implemented, the local authorities had a direct influence
over the content, timing, and pace of reform.

Home Ministry officials offered two main arguments in support of substandard
housing reform. First, they maintained that the presence of squalid and overcrowded
housing tracts inside major cities led to “increased mortality rates” and ultimately
diminished “the nation’s productive capacity.” Clean, orderly housing for “the lower
and working classes,” officials argued, was an essential precondition for the cultivation of
a healthy, industrious labor force and prosperous state. The lack of such housing, they
asserted, diminished the strength of Japanese laborers and ultimately restricted the
nation’s ability to compete with the imperialist powers of Western Europe and the United
States in what contemporary Home Ministry bureaucrat Ikeda Hiroshi termed “the
peacetime war for economic supremacy.” Therefore, by the late 1920s, slum reform

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671 The Substandard Housing District Reform Law was formally enacted in March 1927 during the
ordinary session of the Fifty-Second Imperial Diet. It took effect less than four months later in July 1927.
672 *Osaka mainichi shinbun*, “Furyō jūtaku kairyōhō: shikōrei no zenbun, 9 July 1927.
had come to be seen as a problem that intimately related to the prosperity and vitality of the Japanese nation.

Second, officials contended that housing reform would help to improve urban security and suppress incidents of social unrest. Speaking in February 1927 at a meeting of the Substandard Housing District Reform Law Investigatory Committee, Home Ministry Social Bureau chief Nagaoka Ryūichirō commented that substandard housing districts were “a source of crime and social instability” that, if neglected, could trigger the “the internal collapse of society.” By razing thousands of substandard housing units and replacing them with publicly administered apartments, Nagaoka argued that the state could project order and discipline into the nation’s slums and foster safer, more stable cities. Under the constant supervision of public officials, it was asserted that the urban poor would be less inclined to embrace “dangerous” ideologies, such as socialism, or engage in iniquitous or criminal acts. This convergence in the late 1920s of official concerns about the health of the Japanese labor force and the growing influence of radical ideologies among the urban poor no doubt prompted officials in the Home Ministry to move forward with efforts to reform large-scale slum districts in the nation’s six major cities.

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676 Dai-Nippon teikoku gikaishi kankōkai, ed. Dai-gojūnikai teikoku gikai kizokuin furryō jūtaku chiku kairyō hōan tokubetsu inkai giji sokkiroku dai-nigō. Tokyo: Dai-Nippon teikoku gikaishi kankōkai (1927), 5. The Substandard Housing District Reform Law Investigative Committee was established to draft a housing reform bill. It was composed in part of leading Home Ministry officials, including Deputy Minister Tawara Magoichi, Home Affairs Secretary Karasawa Toshiki, and Social Bureau chief Nagaoka Ryūichirō.

677 Dai-Nippon teikoku gikaishi kankōkai, ed. “Dai-gojūnikai teikoku gikai kizokuin inkai kaigiroku.” Dai-Nippon teikoku gikaishi, dai-jūnanakan, Tokyo: Dai-Nippon teikoku gikaishi kankōkai (1927), 8. This assertion is based on a statement by then Home Minister Hamaguchi Osachi, who argued that slum districts had a negative impact not only on public health, but also “popular ideology and law and order.”

Following the announcement of the Home Ministry’s reform program, the Osaka municipal government promptly formulated a six-year, 7,103,000-yen plan targeting approximately a dozen long-standing slum districts in Osaka’s Nipponbashi neighborhood (Map 5). Unprecedented in its scope and aims, the plan called for the complete reconstruction of substandard dwellings and the redevelopment of basic infrastructure, including roads, sewers, and water delivery systems. Unlike the slum clearances executed in Tokyo, Osaka, and Kobe during the cholera wave of the late nineteenth-century, which were designed to permanently segregate the poor from the rest of the urban population, the housing reform projects initiated in the late 1920s were intended to encourage their controlled inclusion into urban society through the hygienic reconstruction of the districts in which they lived. Accordingly, the city government’s plan stipulated that all residents of substandard housing districts be allowed to return once reform projects were complete. From the outset, the municipal authorities wanted to ensure that substandard housing reform did not result in the permanent displacement of slum dwellers from the urban labor market.

This chapter focuses on the first substandard housing districts in southern Osaka’s Nipponbashi neighborhood targeted for reconstruction, including Hachijūken-nagaya

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679 Asahi shinbun, “Furyō jūtaku chiku no shitei,” 1 October 1926.
680 Mizuuchi Toshio. “Senzen daitoshi ni okeru hinkon kaisō no kamitsu kyojū chiku to sono kyojū kankyō seibi jigyō: Shōwa 2-nen no furyō jūtaku chiku kairyōhō o megutte.” Jinbun chiri 36:4 (1984), 16. As Mizuuchi notes, the Substandard Housing District Reform Project was a public social project of unprecedented scale. During the project’s first year, substandard housing reform funding accounted for 3.7 percent of the municipal budget.
(Map 6/Photo 1), and thereby seeks to elucidate the content, objectives, and course of the city’s Substandard Housing District Reform Project (Furyō jūtaku chiku kairyō jigyō).

Through an analysis of relevant legislation, municipal government records, and contemporary media coverage, the following aims to understand the local social impact of housing reform and the manner in which it transformed the relationship between the city authorities and the urban poor. Housing reform prompted a significant change in the internal composition of Nipponbashi’s slum districts and resulted in the permanent displacement of one of the area’s major social groups, private landlords. It also led to the emergence of a new residential arrangement under which the municipal authorities served as the direct purveyor of housing to former slum dwellers.

This chapter also seeks to understand how the residents of communities targeted for reform responded to the project. Although the authorities ultimately succeeded in completely reconstructing more than a dozen slum districts, their efforts did not go uncontested. Facing intense neighborhood opposition, city officials were forced to engage in a period of protracted negotiations with local residents, during which residents were able to extract a range of favorable concessions and slow the pace of reform. Focusing on the process of negotiation that followed the project’s announcement, this chapter seeks to illuminate the various forces that influenced the character and direction of housing reform in Osaka’s Nipponbashi neighborhood.

Lastly, in order to elucidate the housing reform project’s philosophical underpinnings, this chapter analyzes the writings of its chief architect, Osaka’s seventh mayor, Seki Hajime. A leading urban planning expert, Seki firmly believed that living
conditions in the city could be dramatically improved through aggressive housing regulation and the application of “rational” urban planning techniques. Seki’s ideas were heavily influenced by contemporary Euro-American scholarship. He studied abroad in Germany and Belgium and spent extended periods in France and the United Kingdom. His archive contains works on urban planning in English, German, and French and he cites the garden city movement pioneered by Sir Ebenezer Howard as his dominant influence.  

For Seki, the housing reform project initiated in 1927 was part of a broader vision for the remaking of Osaka as a “livable city” (sumigokochi ii toshi). That vision centered on the construction of a network of hygienic and orderly public housing estates for the lower and working classes and the establishment of a permanent mechanism specifically designed to monitor the quality of publicly and privately-administered rental housing throughout the city. Although a lack of political and financial support from the central government ultimately prevented Seki from fully realizing his vision, an examination of his writings on housing and social policy will help to illuminate the reform project’s logic and aims.  

(III) The Spatial Composition and Socio-Economic Structure of Nipponbashi’s Hachijūken-nagaya Slum  

(A) Hachijūken-nagaya’s Spatial Structure and Built Environment

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685 Shibamura Atsuki. Seki Hajime: toshi shisō no paioniā. Kyoto: Shōraisha (1989), 67-69. In his most influential work, Urban Planning and the Housing Problem, he called for the construction of a network of suburban working-class housing estates like those found in the vicinity of large British cities. That, he believed, would enable the authorities to simultaneously relieve congestion and overcrowding in the city center, provide the lower and working classes with a higher quality of life, and exert a greater level of control over the city's dangerous classes.


The first slum district targeted for reform was Hachijūken-nagaya (Osaka City, Tennōji Ward, Shimoderachō 3-50).\textsuperscript{689} Located on the southeastern edge of Osaka’s Nipponbashi neighborhood, the district formed in the mid-1890s following the dismantling of the massive Nagamachi slum.\textsuperscript{690} Driven from Nagamachi’s flophouses and back-alley tenements, thousands of former slum dwellers relocated to districts on the neighborhood’s southeastern and western peripheries. Several hundred displaced residents settled in Hachijūken-nagaya, where they sought shelter in a tract of recently constructed rental housing.\textsuperscript{691}

According to figures compiled by the city government, in 1924, Hachijūken-nagaya’s population was 504.\textsuperscript{692} In total, 129 resident households shared 79 dwellings. Notably, 50 resident households were classified as “subleasing households” (magari setai), or households that rented one or more rooms in a dwelling formally leased by a primary tenant (magashi setai). The practice of subleasing was particularly prevalent in low-income city neighborhoods, where economic necessity and housing scarcity compelled poor families to share single-family dwellings.\textsuperscript{693} Notably, by the mid-1920s, housing reform advocates across Japan, including leading figures in the Home Ministry,

\textsuperscript{689} Osaka-shi shakaibu chōsaka, ed. Ōsaka-shi jūtaku nenpō. Osaka: Ōsaka-shi shakaibu (1926), 173-178.
\textsuperscript{690} Osaka-shi shakaibu, ed. Mitsuji kyojūsha no rōdō to seikatsu. Osaka: Ōsaka-shi (1924), 11-15.
\textsuperscript{691} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{692} Ibid, 16-17.
\textsuperscript{693} Saga Ashita. Kindai Ōsaka no toshi kasō shakai. Tokyo: Nihon hyōronsha (2007), 294. For officials in the Home Ministry, subleasing was largely “the result” of a qualitative housing shortage. Despite the presence of “scores of unoccupied dwellings” in Osaka and other cities after World War I, working- and lower-class city residents continued to share single-family dwellings because they could not afford places of their own.
had come to identify “subleasing” as one of the key factors propelling the rise of slum
districts in the nation’s major cities.694

All but five of Hachijūken-nagaya’s 79 housing units were two-story tenement
flats, the majority of which were shared by at least two households.695 In addition, there
were four single-story front street dwellings and one large, unattached three-story
residence. While the vast majority of the dwellings in Hachijūken-nagaya were back-
alley tenements (ura nagaya), all five of the residences on the district’s western edge
abutted a well-trafficked front street (omote-dōri) and several contained attached shop
spaces. The on-site landlord, who owned and managed the neighborhood’s back-alley
tenements, lived in the largest front-street residence. The landlord’s dwelling had eight
individual rooms and a total floor space of 30 tsubo (99.18 square meters). It dwarfed the
neighborhood’s back-alley tenements, which had a median floor space of approximately
6 tsubo (19.836 square meters).

Considered in terms of size, Hachijūken-nagaya’s back-alley tenements can be
divided into two basic types: small and large. Smaller back-alley tenements had a total
floor space of 5.25 tsubo (17.36 square meters), whereas the larger units had a total floor
space of 7 tsubo (23.142 square meters). In total, there were 50 smaller tenements and 24
larger ones. City government records identify all 24 of the larger units as new structures
(shintate).696 Unlike the 50 smaller back-alley tenements, which were erected at the time
of Hachijūken-nagaya’s founding in the mid-1890s, all of the new structures were
constructed during the first decade of the twentieth century.

694 Dai-Nippon teikoku gikaishi kankōkai, ed. “Dai-gojūnikai teikoku gikai kizokuin furyō jūtaku chiku
kairyō hōan tokubetsu inkan gii sokkrioku, dai-nigō.” Dai-Nippon teikoku gikaishi, dai-jūnanakan,
As noted above, 50 households, or 39 percent of all resident households in Hachijūken-nagaya, subleased rooms in dwellings formally controlled by another tenant. As secondary tenants, subleasing households paid “room fees” (madai) each month to a primary tenant, who then paid the landlord. As of 1924, all 50 of Hachijūken-nagaya’s secondary tenant households lived in single-room dwellings on the upper floor of shared two-story tenement flats. In contrast, all of the neighborhood’s primary tenants lived in larger two-room units located on the bottom floor.\(^{697}\)

Generally, tenement rooms were extremely small, rarely exceeding 9 square meters in total floor space.\(^{698}\) Considering that in 1924 the median household size in Hachijūken-nagaya was 3.9 individuals and multiple households commonly shared single-family flats, dwellings in the district were no doubt extremely cramped.\(^{699}\) In extreme cases, residents of a single flat numbered as many as 15. Consequently, residents were often forced to eat, sleep, and labor in the same crowded room.\(^{700}\) Privacy was minimal and physical interaction with family and neighbors was virtually constant.

As of 1924, only the landlord’s dwelling had both a private water tap and personal well.\(^{701}\) The four other front-street dwellings on the neighborhood’s western edge had private water taps, but no wells. In contrast, the 124 households living in back-alley tenements had shared access to just three wells and four water taps. As for electricity, 58 percent of district households had one private light, 21 percent had two, and seven

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\(^{697}\) 47 households had private use of two rooms, 22 households had private use of three, and 4 households had private use of four. Therefore, 39 percent of the neighborhood’s households lived in single-room units, while 61 percent lived in multi-room units.


\(^{699}\) Ibid, 34. As of 1924, 38 local households in Hachijūken-nagaya had at least 7 residents and six had at least 11.

\(^{700}\) Osaka mainichi shinbun, “Ōsaka no hinmin,” 4 November 1916.

percent had at least three. At the same time, 18 households were forced to share a single electric light with one or more of their neighbors.\textsuperscript{702}

Additionally, the landlord’s dwelling and all 24 of the newer tenements had private toilets. In contrast, households residing in the 50 older tenement units had to share just two communal toilets. Remarkably, none of the households in Hachijūken-nagaya had a bath of its own.\textsuperscript{703} Instead, most local residents used a bathing facility on the district’s southern edge. Persons who wished to bath were required to pay a small kindling fee to purchase the wood necessary to heat the bath. However, because it was small and often crowded, more affluent local residents chose to travel to larger private baths outside the neighborhood. During the early 1920s, 318 of the neighborhood’s 504 local residents bathed once a day, while 135 bathed once every two days, and 30 bathed once every three days.\textsuperscript{704}

\textbf{(B) The Social Structure of Early Twentieth-Century Hachijūken-nagaya}

Understanding how housing reform was negotiated and eventually achieved in Hachijūken-nagaya requires a basic understanding of the neighborhood’s social structure. At the top of that structure was Sumitomo Company Chief Executive Sumitomo Kichizaemon.\textsuperscript{705} He owned all of the land in Hachijūken-nagaya and controlled significant holdings in surrounding neighborhoods, as well. However, Kichizaemon did not reside in the district. Rather, he leased all of his property in Hachijūken-nagaya to an on-site landlord, who lived in a large eight-room dwelling on the district’s western edge. Behind his dwelling, the landlord constructed a series of two-story, row house tenements,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{702} Osaka-shi shakaibu, ed. \textit{Mitsui kyojūsha no rōdō to seikatsu}. Osaka: Ōsaka-shi (1924), 43.
\item \textsuperscript{703} Ibid, 92.
\item \textsuperscript{704} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{705} Saga Ashita. \textit{Kindai Ōsaka no toshi kasō shakai}. Tokyo: Nihon hyōronsha (2007), 350.
\end{itemize}
which he rented to hundreds of local residents. One of Hachijūken-nagaya’s wealthiest residents, during the early 1920s, he earned a median monthly income of 240 yen.706 Although the landlord also engaged in money lending and various other side businesses, his primary source of income was the rental payments that he collected each month from local tenants.

Hachijūken-nagaya’s tenant stratum can be divided into two main groups. First, there was a small group of four relatively affluent tenants who rented “front street dwellings” (omote danna) on the district’s western edge. All four of the households in this category earned monthly incomes that placed them squarely in the urban middle class.707 In addition, there was a second, much larger group of tenants who lived in back-alley tenements (ura nagaya). Less affluent than front-street tenants, most of the individuals in this stratum worked in low-paying, unskilled occupations, such as rubbish collector and day laborer.708

It is possible to subdivide the residents of Hachijūken-nagaya’s back-alley tenements into two sections. First, there was a group of 73 primary tenants (honshotai), who paid rent directly to the on-site landlord. Many primary tenants subleased the upper floor of their dwelling to a secondary tenant household (dōkyo setai). As of 1924, there were 50 such households in Hachijūken-nagaya. Primary and secondary tenants were bound to one another by a relationship of economic interdependence. In many cases, primary tenants were only able to rent a dwelling in Hachijūken-nagaya because they

707 Ōsaka-fu keisatsubu eiseika, ed. Ōsaka-fu hoken eisei chōsa hōkoku dai-sanpen. Osaka: Ōsaka-fu keisatsubu, 1921. Other than the on-site landlord, the most affluent neighborhood residents included a barber (165 yen/month), two junk wholesalers (127 yen/month, 126 yen/month), and a city maintenance worker (104.1 yen/month).
708 Ibid. The majority of the individuals in this stratum earned monthly incomes of less than 60 yen and earned income as peddlers, junk collectors, street cleaners, tinkers, and rickshaw pullers.
leased part of it to a secondary household. Unable to pay the entire rent on their own, many primary households depended heavily upon the money they received each month from secondary tenants. In terms of social class and economic standing, primary and secondary tenants were virtually indistinguishable. What differentiated the two groups was their relative proximity to the on-site landlord and legal tenancy status. While the primary tenant interacted directly with the landlord, secondary tenants related with the landlord only indirectly through the primary tenant. In addition, secondary tenants were formally excluded from all legal agreements concerning tenancy.

Thus, while many of Hachijūken-nagaya’s residents were from similar socio-economic backgrounds, the neighborhood was by no means internally homogeneous. Despite one-dimensional official representations of Hachijūken-nagaya as a “slum” (saimin chiku) or “substandard housing district” (furyō jūtaku chiku), the area was marked by a diversity that belies the suitability of such representations. Even inside of so-called “urban slums,” there was a significant income disparity between residents of “front-street dwellings” and those residing in “back-alley tenements.”

(C) Household and Community Relations

Household and community relations in Hachijūken-nagaya were similarly complex. As of 1924, more than 70 percent of the district’s 129 households were nuclear. In contrast, only 8 percent were comprised of a single person. The prevalence of nuclear households distinguishes Hachijūken-nagaya from other slum districts, such as the Kamagasaki day laborer district in Osaka’s Imamiya neighborhood. During the 1920s and 1930s, there were very few nuclear households in Kamagasaki. Unlike Hachijūken-

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nagaya, most residents of Kamagasaki were single men, who lived in shared rooms in one of approximately 50 area flophouses.

Notably, more than 70 percent of local “heads of household” (setainushi) in Hachijūken-nagaya were born outside of the city of Osaka. Although the vast majority were from communities in the Kansai region, a small number came from as far away as southern Kyūshū, Hokkaidō, and the Korean Peninsula. In contrast, more than 80 percent of the children living in Hachijūken-nagaya in the early 1920s were born inside the city and approximately 40 percent were born in the neighborhood.

It is possible to discern the following pattern from the above data: the majority of local heads of household migrated to Osaka during the late-nineteenth or early-twentieth century, started a family upon arrival in the city, and settled permanently in one of Hachijūken-nagaya’s back-alley tenements. Therefore, while many first generation tenement residents were from outside of Osaka, the vast majority of second- and third-generation Hachijūken-nagaya residents were born and raised inside the city.

By the early 1920s, the behavior of local residents had come to suggest that many intended to remain permanently in Hachijūken-nagaya. According to one city government report, as of 1924, 38 households had planted bonsai trees and other plants around their dwellings. In addition, an increasing number had begun to purchase durable household furnishings, such as tea shelves, clocks, tables, and cupboards. As of

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711 Osaka-shi shakaibu, ed. *Mitsujū kyojūsha no rōdō to seikatsu*. Osaka: Ōsaka-shi (1924), 18
712 Ibid.
713 Ibid, 41.
1924, 71 percent of district households owned a tea shelf, 63 percent owned a wall-mounted clock, and 52 percent owned a large wooden cupboard.\textsuperscript{714}

An examination of tenants’ residency patterns also indicates that by the early 1920s a large segment of the local population had come to treat Hachijūken-nagaya as a permanent home. As of 1924, 43 percent of district households, including both primary and secondary tenants, had resided in the area continuously for a period of at least 10 ten years.\textsuperscript{715} If we limit our focus only to primary tenants, that figure rises to 56 percent.

In addition, official reports suggest that by the early 1920s local residents had begun to work proactively to maintain the neighborhood’s appearance. For example, a team of city officials who visited the area in 1924 reported with some surprise that there “were no longer visible piles of refuse” in the district’s back alleys and that the “sewer ditches” running behind each household “were now clean and free of refuse.” In contrast, official reports compiled in the same area just a decade earlier lament the “numbness” and neglect of local residents regarding matters of public health and hygiene.\textsuperscript{716}

Furthermore, they emphasize the insalubrious condition of the neighborhood’s built environment and severe “underdevelopment of local infrastructure.”\textsuperscript{717} Clearly, however, by the 1920s, a change had begun to take place, as local residents began working independently to improve environmental conditions in Hachijūken-nagaya.

What is more, by the time that the municipal government announced a plan to reform the district, many local residents had developed intimate relations of friendship.

\textsuperscript{714} Osaka-shi shakaibu, ed. Mitsujū kyojūsha no rōdō to seikatsu. Osaka: Ōsaka-shi (1924), 41.
\textsuperscript{715} Ibid, 26-27.
\textsuperscript{717} Ibid.
and mutual assistance with their neighbors.718 Those bonds provided local residents with stability during times of personal tragedy and financial hardship and protected them from homelessness and starvation.719 In addition to sharing dwellings and the burden of rent, contemporary records indicate that there were many instances in which residents provided their neighbors with monetary assistance and essential goods, such as lamp oil and charcoal.720 When back-alley tenement residents fell sick, their neighbors commonly assumed collective responsibility for their care. This included not only providing them with food and medicine, but also, if the individual died, pooling resources to pay for the funeral and casket.721

Although contemporary observers praised slum dwellers for engaging in the “beautiful custom of mutual assistance” (rinpo fujo no bifū), many also viewed the practice as an anachronistic curiosity that served to distinguish the urban poor from more affluent urban social groups.722 Rapid industrialization and rising middle-class affluence, observers charged, led to a natural dissolution of local bonds of mutual assistance. Possessing the financial wherewithal to independently care for the members of one’s household, middle-class city dwellers no longer had to depend upon periodic assistance from their neighbors in order to survive. Yet, at the same time, the practice did not disappear entirely. According to contemporary newspaper reports, it remained prevalent among low-income social groups that were “excluded from general society.”723

Therefore, by the 1920s, the once widespread custom of mutual aid among neighbors had

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723 Ibid.
come to be seen as the exclusive domain of the city’s poor and a manifestation of their failure to fully integrate into modern urban society.

As a resident of Hachijūken-nagaya, access to the neighborhood’s mutual assistance network was not guaranteed. Rather, local residents were obliged to spend a part of their income each week on food and drinks, which they shared with their neighbors. According to contemporary journalist Murashima Yoriyuki, the money that residents spent functioned as “an insurance payment” ensuring that they would receive necessary assistance during times of economic distress. On the contrary, residents that neglected to participate in neighborhood social relations risked isolation. When necessary, such assistance included “covering for the crimes of their neighbors” and refusing to speak to police when they “entered the neighborhood to search for criminal suspects.” Urban historian Nogawa Yasuharu has demonstrated that slum dwellers caught “secretly passing information to the police” were “shunned by their neighbors” and, in extreme cases, “driven from their homes.”

Close-knit bonds between residents ultimately appear to have fostered a relatively closed society in Hachijūken-nagaya. According to one city government report, despite the fact that “there were many people in neighboring communities in a similar economic condition,” residents of Hachijūken-nagaya “hardly interacted with individuals from outside the neighborhood.” According to official reports, they preferred instead to spend time with neighbors and friends. Contemporary officials complained that the

726 Ibid.
closed nature of local society in low-income areas, such as Hachijūken-nagaya, made them difficult to penetrate and police.\footnote{Nōgawa Yasuharu. “Nichiro sengo Ōsaka-shi ni okeru ‘hinmin gakkō’ no setsuritsu.” Buraku mondai kenkyū 135 (1996), 46.}

Relations of mutual assistance extended beyond the neighborhood’s back alleys. For example, the on-site landlord in Hachijūken-nagaya commonly permitted tenants, who had fallen behind on their rent, to remain in their dwellings for months without paying.\footnote{Osaka-shi shakaibu, ed. Mitsujū kyojūsha no rōdō to seikatsu. Osaka: Ōsaka-shi (1924), 41.} Furthermore, the landlord regularly failed to collect the full monthly rent from local tenants. For example, in 1924, he collected an average of just 74 percent of total rental fees each month.\footnote{Ibid, 40.} While the landlord refused during times of economic instability to lower rents, he also neglected to pursue sanctions against tenants who failed to pay rent on time.\footnote{Ibid.}

However, the landlord’s income and relative economic standing depended upon his ability to extract revenue from the households to which he provided housing. Excessive non-payment of rent could ultimately lead to eviction. Consequently, relations between Hachijūken-nagaya’s landlord and the neighborhood’s large tenant stratum were characterized by a constant underlying tension. While there were no doubt many instances in which the landlord chose to demonstrate lenience towards his tenants, it was also in the landlord’s interest to obtain as much money as possible from them. Occasionally, however, the landlord’s efforts sometimes led to direct conflict with tenants.\footnote{Osaka mainichi shinbun,“Yachin hikisage no chokusetsu danpan,” 14 September 1911. For example, in the neighboring Kizu slum district, an on-site landlord by the name of Yamamoto Kinjirō, who refused to temporarily lower rents during “a period of broader economic instability,” was driven from his dwelling by...}
Therefore, while Hachijūken-nagaya was officially classified as a “substandard housing district,” from the perspective of local residents, the area’s historical character was clearly more complex. By the time that efforts began in the late 1920s to reform Hachijūken-nagaya’s tenements, many local residents had lived in the area for several generations and developed personal bonds with their neighbors. Those bonds in turn formed the basis of a network of mutual assistance and served to bind local residents to the neighborhood. Consequently, it is not difficult to understand why residents collectively resisted official efforts to remake the neighborhood’s built environment. However, local residents were motivated by more than simply a desire to preserve the communal bonds that they developed with their neighbors. As the following section describes, the economic interests of Hachijūken-nagaya’s residents also served to bind them to the area and no doubt prompted them to resist government-led reform efforts.

(D) Hachijūken-nagaya’s Economic Structure

Focusing on relations of employment and production, this section seeks to outline the basic features of Hachijūken-nagaya’s economic structure. Table 1 lists the occupations of 250 local residents (94 heads of household and 156 dependents). Examining the table, one immediately notices a preponderance of occupations related to the collection, circulation, and exchange of waste and recycled goods. In fact, 38 percent of all occupations listed fall under this category. Also, numerous industrial occupations, including tin manufacturing and glassmaking, account for approximately 40

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percent, “day laboring” accounts for half, while commercial and transportation-related jobs account for the other 10 percent.

Further exploration of Hachijūken-nagaya’s economic structure requires closer examination of the neighborhood’s two most common employment types: waste-related...
occupations and industrial jobs. First, the term “waste-related occupations” refers to a diverse array of jobs related to the collection, circulation, and exchange of waste. In this context, the term “waste” refers to all rubbish items possessing a monetary value, including paper, metal, and textile scraps. In early twentieth-century Osaka, individuals known as *kuzu hiroi*, or “rubbish collectors,” wandered the city each day collecting rubbish. Writing in 1917, journalist Murashima Yoriyuki noted that individual collectors frequently specialized in the gathering of a specific type of rubbish. He identifies eight basic types of collector: *futsū batashi* (normal waste collectors), *yoroku hiroi* (construction waste collectors), *yonageshi* (river scavengers), *kajiba kasegi* (fire scene scavengers), *wata hiroi* (cotton scrap and textile collectors), *tawarabiroi* (straw bag collectors), *sekitan hiroi* (coal collectors), and *bafun hiroi* (horse manure gatherers).

For some individuals, the position of rubbish collector represented a secondary occupation that one could engage in when work as a day laborer was unavailable. Yet, there were also many individuals whose primary occupation was rubbish collector. According to a survey conducted in Tokyo in the mid-1930s, full-time collectors fell into two categories. First, there were rubbish collectors known as *hiroiko* who worked for a particular “boss” (*oyakata*) and lived in a dwelling that he or she provided. Second, there were collectors known as *jikabata*, who were unaffiliated with a particular boss. Unlike

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734 Murashima Yoriyuki. *Donzoko seikatsu*. Kyoto: Bungadō (1918), 81-82. While most of the categories mentioned above are self-explanatory, several require additional explanation. First, *futsū batashi* refers to individuals who gathered “paper scraps and other items of monetary value” from garbage heaps and roadside ditches. Second, *yoroku hiroi* specialized in the collection of “copper wire, lead piping, and bits of charcoal, rubber, and iron” from construction sites. Third, *yonageshi* collected items of monetary value from local rivers and canals. As Murashima notes, many *yonageshi* carried around bamboo sticks with nails or screws affixed to the end. They used the sticks to fish coins and scraps of cloth from the city’s rivers and canals.

hiroiko, jikabata were allowed to live anywhere that their limited financial resources permitted.

Most of the rubbish collectors in Hachijüken-nagaya were likely of the latter type. Namely, while many worked full-time as rubbish collectors, few were affiliated with a specific boss. Rather than living in a “room” (heya) under the supervision of a fixed employer, local rubbish collectors resided in one of the district’s back-alley tenements.

At the same time, however, all of the rubbish collectors living in Hachijüken-nagaya entered exclusive supply relationships with one of nine Nipponbashi-area waste wholesalers, or yoseya.736 Rubbish collectors who concluded such relationships were required to sell all the items that they gathered each day to a specific wholesaler.737 In exchange, the wholesaler provided them with a police-issued license (kansatsu) and the equipment they needed to collect rubbish, including bamboo tongs and a wagon or pull-cart.738

The presence of numerous wholesalers in the immediate vicinity of Hachijüken-nagaya no doubt made the neighborhood an attractive place for rubbish collectors.739 In addition to providing collectors with a stable, albeit often limited source of income, local wholesalers also granted them access to the materials that they needed to perform their work. As such, it is understandable why so many residents worked in professions related to the collection and sale of waste products and why locals in Hachijüken-nagaya fiercely resisted the city government’s efforts to carry out a housing reform project there. For waste collectors, estrangement from Hachijüken-nagaya and neighborhood waste

wholesalers, even in the short term, resulted in an immediate loss of livelihood. As a consequence, the economic relationships that Hachijūken-nagaya’s rubbish collecting residents maintained with local wholesalers served to bind them closely to the neighborhood.

It should be noted that there were also instances in which rubbish was sold directly to local “shōdoku kaisha,” or companies that specialized in disinfecting waste in order to prepare it for domestic resale or export. Upon the arrival of a load of rubbish, “sorters” (senbetsu ninpu) inspected the rubbish and selected out items of value. In 1924, there were 40 “rubbish sorters” residing in Hachijūken-nagaya. Frequently, the work of sorting was carried out collectively in the home. In some instances, multiple households from the same tenement block collected and sorted rubbish together. Once items of value had been identified, they were then passed on to “sterilization workers” (shōdokuin), who supervised their disinfection. Once sterilization procedures had been completed, items were packaged and shipped to a designated buyer.

While domestic manufacturers consumed a significant portion of the nation’s recycled waste, during the Taishō and early-Shōwa periods large amounts of paper waste and iron and textile scraps were exported to mainland East Asia. The early 1920s, in particular, saw a dramatic increase in Japanese waste exports. In 1921, exports valuing 607,000 yen were shipped from Japan to consumer markets in East Asia. By 1927 that

741 Ibid.

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figure had risen to 5,213,000 yen.\textsuperscript{745} As economic historian Kiso Junko has noted, waste became so valuable that its export to overseas markets “ultimately contributed to Japanese acquisition of foreign currency.”\textsuperscript{746} Furthermore, the waste materials collected and sold by Hachijūken-nagaya’s residents were used in the production of a range of important domestic commodities including items as varied as paper, cotton fabric, wool, rubber, boot soles, rope, waste cloth for wiping machinery, wax, platinum, perfume, glass, children’s toys, and gelatin.\textsuperscript{747}

In addition to waste collectors and buyers, Hachijūken-nagaya’s population also included 25 “hygiene workers” (\textit{eisei ninpu}).\textsuperscript{748} Although little factual information is available about Taishō-era hygiene workers, it is likely that they were similar in character to contemporary public maintenance workers. Namely, they performed a range of public maintenance duties at the behest of the city authorities, including collecting and transporting garbage, maintaining sewers and drainage ditches, and taking care of public toilets. For 19 of Hachijūken-nagaya’s 25 hygiene workers, the position represented a form of seasonal or casual employment.\textsuperscript{749} According to a 1924 municipal government report, during the summer each year, many local hygiene workers changed professions and began peddling ice and candies instead.\textsuperscript{750}

Three of the neighborhood’s residents worked as “\textit{ninpu ukeoi}” (labor contractors), who specialized in supplying manual laborers to a range of employers.\textsuperscript{751}

\textsuperscript{745} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{747} Ibid, 70.
\textsuperscript{748} Osaka-shi shakaibu, ed. \textit{Mitsujū kyojūsha no rōdō to seikatsu}. Osaka: Osaka-shi (1924), 45-49.
\textsuperscript{750} Osaka-shi shakaibu, ed. \textit{Mitsujū kyojūsha no rōdō to seikatsu}. Osaka: Ōsaka-shi (1924), 45-49.
\textsuperscript{751} Ibid, 45-49.
All three of the individuals in this category earned incomes far in excess of most tenement residents.\textsuperscript{752} Official records identify one of the contractors as a “city hall contractor” (\textit{shiyakusho ukeoinin}).\textsuperscript{753} Although specific details are unavailable, it is likely that he arranged employment at city hall for other residents of Hachijūken-nagaya.

The second most common employment type in Hachijūken-nagaya was in industrial occupations, which employed more than 40 percent of the 256 individuals surveyed by the city authorities in 1924.\textsuperscript{754} Local residents worked in more than 30 different industries, including glass, tin plating, brass, iron, machinery, cast metal, toy, knitwear, tool, soap, cosmetics, box, and pharmaceutical manufacturing. The highest single concentration of local residents worked in occupations related to the manufacture and processing of tin. 33 individuals, or 13 percent of all local residents with occupations, were employed in jobs related to the production of tin plating. According to a 1924 city government report, the primary tasks performed by workers in this category included “compressing and truncating used scraps of tin.”\textsuperscript{755}

The above category also included approximately a dozen tin toy makers. There were four small-scale toy factories in the immediate vicinity of Hachijūken-nagaya, all of which specialized in the production of tin toys.\textsuperscript{756} While the precise scale of production and number of employees at each factory is unknown, it is likely that some of the tin workers living in Hachijūken-nagaya worked in neighboring factories. According to a city government report from the mid-1930s, all four of the toy factories in the vicinity of

\textsuperscript{752} Saga Ashita. \textit{Kindai Ōsaka no toshi kasō shakai}. Tokyo: Nihon hyōronsha (2007), 316. According to figures from 1920, one labor broker earned 300 yen per month.
\textsuperscript{753} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{754} Osaka-shi shakaibu, ed. \textit{Mitsujū kyojūsha no rōdō to seikatsu}. Osaka: Ōsaka-shi (1924), 45-49.
\textsuperscript{755} Ibid, 46.
Hachijüken-nagaya were small-scale operations with a limited number of employees.\textsuperscript{757} In order to keep production costs low, they tried to limit the use of skilled labor to an absolute minimum, choosing instead to hire apprentice child workers and low-paid female workers.\textsuperscript{758} As a rule, wages were calculated by the day and paid twice a month. “Skilled laborers” (jukurenkō) earned “between 2 and 3 yen per day,” while “apprentice workers” (minaraikō) earned “between 70 sen and 1 yen 20 sen per day.”\textsuperscript{759} Regardless of experience, female factory hands (jokō) “generally earned a daily wage of 70 or 80 sen.” As the wages of all of the Hachijüken-nagaya residents who worked in tin-related employment were less than 35 yen per month, it is likely that most earned daily incomes equivalent to those paid to apprentice and female workers.\textsuperscript{760}

Generally speaking, the residents of Hachijüken-nagaya that worked in industrial occupations, including the tin-related employments, were not the primary breadwinners in their households. On the contrary, most were dependents and the wages that they earned were used to supplement household income.\textsuperscript{761} Furthermore, many of industries in which local residents worked, including soap, wine, and box production, were cottage industries. Accordingly, the work of production was carried out in the home, rather than in a factory. In some cases, entire families engaged in production collectively and sold the items that they produced on their own. In other instances, however, residents were contracted by a local wholesaler to produce a specific number of units and received a fixed payment per unit.

\textsuperscript{757} Osaka-shi sangyōbu chōsaka, ed. \textit{Ōsaka no buriki seihin kōgyō}. Osaka: Ōsaka-shi sangyōbu chōsaka, 1935.
\textsuperscript{758} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{759} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{760} Ōsaka-shi shakaibu, ed. \textit{Mitsujū kyojūsha no rōdō to seikatsu}. Osaka: Ōsaka-shi (1924), 73-81.
\textsuperscript{761} Ibid.
Not all of the Hachijūken-nagaya residents who worked industrial occupations earned low wages. A small number earned monthly wages in excess of 65 yen per month. For example, two local steel workers earned monthly wages of 90 to 95 yen, while the neighborhood’s lone brass maker earned 85 to 90. Therefore, while many residents earned extremely low wages, the district’s population was by no means uniformly impoverished. It also contained members whose wages placed them in the urban middle class.

Children played a vital role in the local economy in Hachijūken-nagaya. According to figures from 1924, more than 50 percent of local children aged 11 to 15 were employed in some sort of occupation. Even after the Factory Law took effect in 1916, children from Hachijūken-nagaya continued to work in a range of industries, including glass, match, and toy manufacturing. In the mid-1920s, 90 percent of all child workers in the neighborhood earned daily wages of less than a yen. In contrast, only three minors earned a daily wage in excess of one yen. While their daily wages were relatively low, the income generated by child workers and other household dependents played an essential role in ensuring the survival of local households, as Kiso Junko has shown. A comprehensive examination of Hachijūken-nagaya’s economic structure must consider the economic activities of such groups.

The foregoing analysis examined the basic features of Hachijūken-nagaya’s occupational structure. While the majority of the neighborhood’s residents worked in low-paying waste management and industrial occupations, that structure was

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763 Ibid, 45-46.
764 Ibid, 73-81.
characterized by a distinct internal diversity of both wages and job types. The local population contained three labor contractors, each of whom earned average incomes well in excess of the median income earned by back-alley tenement residents. For many of Hachijüken-nagaya’s residents, local social relations and employment relations overlapped. That overlap is most clearly apparent in the case of the district’s labor contractors, who brokered employment for their neighbors.

Furthermore, as the example of waste-related occupations indicates, there was a connection between the types of industries that developed in the Nipponbashi area and the sort of occupations performed by Hachijüken-nagaya’s residents. By the early 1920s, a complex network of relationships concerning the collection, circulation, and transfer of waste had developed in and around Hachijüken-nagaya. Those relations, in turn, provided local residents with a livelihood, while binding them to the neighborhood.

(III) The Osaka City Government’s “Substandard Housing District Reform Project”

(A) The Content and Course of Housing Reform

Efforts to implement a housing reform project in Osaka began following the promulgation of the Substandard Housing District Reform Law (Furyō jūtaku kairyōhō). Enacted in March 1927, the law called for the reform of “residential districts with heavy concentrations of substandard housing, which are recognized to pose a danger or threat to public hygiene, morality, and security.” While the state offered a set of basic reform guidelines and agreed to provide a portion of the funding necessary to pay for the projects, primary responsibility for their design and execution was delegated to the local and

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regional authorities. In the case of Osaka, responsibility fell to the municipal government, which was charged with selecting reform sites and overseeing the implementation of reform projects. Officials from the city government’s Social Department began investigating sites in the summer of 1927. By late November, they had formulated a comprehensive six-year plan calling for the reform of approximately a dozen slum districts in southern Osaka’s Nipponbashi neighborhood. The plan was submitted to the city council on December 2 and quickly won approval. It was then sent on to the Home Ministry, where it promptly secured Home Minister Suzuki Kisaburō’s official sanction.

In accordance with Home Ministry guidelines, the municipal government’s plan called for the temporary relocation of local residents and mandated that they be allowed to return to their districts once housing reform projects were complete. This was intended to prevent the long-term displacement of slum dwellers from the urban labor market. Residents of the slum districts in Osaka’s Nipponbashi neighborhood, including Hachijūken-nagaya, worked close to home and their survival depended upon the maintenance of a network of neighborhood-level socio-economic relationships. By encouraging former slum dwellers to return to reformed areas, officials believed that they

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768 Ōsaka jiji shinpō, “Furyō jūtaku kairyō Ōsaka-shi no keikaku naru,” 29 November 1927. The slum districts selected for reform were located in Shimoderachō 3-chō-me, Shimoderachō 4-chō-me, Kita nittōchō, Minami nittōchō, Higashi sekiyamachi 1-chō-me, Higashi sekiyamachi 2-chō-me, and Hirotamachi.
769 Asahi shinbun, “Chikaku mitsujūgai ga bunkagai to naru: Ōsaka no furyō jūtaku kairyō iyoiyo chakushu,” 1 February 1928.
770 Ibid.
771 Dai-Nippon teikoku gikaishi kankōkai, ed. “Dai-gojūnikai teikoku kizokuin furyō jūtaku chiku kairyō hōan tokubetsu innai gii sokkiroku, dai-nigō.” Dai-Nippon teikoku gikaishi, dai-jūnanakan, Tokyo: Dai-Nippon teikoku gikaishi kankōkai (1927), 5. From the outset, the program’s architects in Home Ministry, including Nagaoka Ryūichi, indicated that steps needed to be taken to prevent the permanent displacement of substandard housing district residents.
could ensure their future economic stability and guarantee local employers continued access to their labor power.\textsuperscript{772}

Home Ministry plans called for the execution of reform projects in five other major cities, including Tokyo, Nagoya, and Kyoto.\textsuperscript{773} However, as urban geographer Mizuuchi Toshio has noted, the central government neglected to provide a specific set of standards by which substandard housing districts were designated.\textsuperscript{774} As a consequence, the type of districts selected for reform varied widely from one city to the next. For example, while the authorities in Kyoto chose to focus exclusively on the city’s “outcast communities” (hisabetsu buraku), the Osaka municipal government chose to ignore such areas in favor of long-standing slum districts closer to the city center.\textsuperscript{775}

Following the enactment of the 1927 Substandard Housing District Reform Law, officials from the city’s Social Department promptly began working to formulate a reform plan.\textsuperscript{776} In accordance with Home Ministry directives, they started by securing a tract of land in the vicinity of the reform site and constructing a temporary housing tract there for residents that would be driven from their homes as a result of the project.\textsuperscript{777} Completed in February 1929, the site was located just south of Nipponbashi in Osaka’s impoverished Imamiyachō neighborhood.\textsuperscript{778} More than just a makeshift structure, the

\textsuperscript{772} \textit{Asahi shinbun}, “Genzai iru mono o zenbu soko ni sumaseru yō ni: mizu to benjo to gomi akuta no shobun o dai-ichi ni,” 5 March 1927.
\textsuperscript{775} Ibid, 11.
\textsuperscript{777} \textit{Asahi shinbun}, “Kaizen ni chakushusuru furyō jūtaku chiku,” 29 March 1927.
steel-reinforced concrete facility eventually came to serve as a permanent place of residence for hundreds of individuals evicted from the Nipponbashi area.\textsuperscript{779} It was the largest of five such facilities constructed by the city government between February 1929 and December 1935.\textsuperscript{780} Needless to say, this contrasts sharply with the slum clearance carried out in the early 1890s in Osaka’s Nagamachi slum. Although there were discussions about building an enclave outside the city for persons displaced from Nagamachi, in the end, residents were forced from their homes without any sort of alternative accommodation or financial compensation.\textsuperscript{781}

During the reform project’s initial stage, the municipal government planned to demolish “1,227 dwellings” spread over an area of “18,796 tsubo” (62,206 square meters).\textsuperscript{782} In their place, the authorities intended to construct “58 three-story, steel-reinforced concrete apartment blocks.”\textsuperscript{783} Steel-reinforced concrete structures were selected because Home Ministry officials believed that they would be less fire prone than wooden tenements and easier to maintain.\textsuperscript{784} In order to ensure that there was sufficient housing for all former residents, city government plans called for the construction of “1,662 housing units” possessing “a total capacity of 6,072 occupants.”\textsuperscript{785} Each new dwelling was to contain a private toilet, kitchen, closet, and nook. Monthly rents were to

\textsuperscript{779} Ibid, 46-49.
\textsuperscript{780} Between 1929 and 1935, the municipal government constructed five temporary residential tracts containing a total of 221 single-family housing units. The largest facility was located in Imamiyachō and contained 77 housing units. Of the remaining four facilities, two were located just west of Hachijūken-nagaya in Minami nittōchō, one was located in Shimoderachō, and one was located just to the south in Miyazuchō.
\textsuperscript{781} Osaka mainichi shinbun, “Fuketsu nagaya kaichiku,” 24 April 1891.
\textsuperscript{782} Osaka jiji shinpō, “Furyō jūtaku kairyō Ōsaka-shi no keikaku naru,” 29 November 1927.
\textsuperscript{783} Osaka asahi shinbun “Chikaku mitsujūgai ga bunkagai to naru: Ōsaka no furyō jūtaku kairyō iyoioyochakushu.” Osaka asahi shinbun. 1 February 1928.
\textsuperscript{785} Ibid.
be fixed at “9 yen 50 sen” per month, or three yen less than the contemporary rate for a back-alley tenement in the Nipponbashi area. By keeping rents low, the authorities believed that they could prevent the permanent exclusion of former slum dwellers.

Spatial restrictions meant that newly constructed apartments had to be kept small. Accordingly, the city government’s plan called for the construction of apartments with a median floor space of 4.5 tsubo (14.85 square meters). Although this meant that newly constructed dwellings were often smaller than conventional back-alley tenements, the authorities believed that they could reduce housing density by strictly prohibiting multiple households from sharing newly constructed dwellings. They appear to have been successful in their efforts. Despite the fact that dwellings were smaller than before, post-reform housing density in Hachijūken-nagaya and other former slum districts declined sharply.

The projected budget for the six-year project was 7,103,000 yen. In accordance with article five of the Substandard Housing District Reform Law, the Home Ministry agreed to provide the city authorities with government subsidies equivalent to half the project’s total projected cost (3,102,477 yen). The remaining funds would be supplied in the form of a 30-year, low-interest loan from the Ministry of Finance (3,293,000 yen). Under the city government’s plan, the loan was to be paid back in

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786 Ōsaka jiji shinpō, “Tekkin konkuritto suido gasu senyō de yachin kyūen gojūsen nari: Ōsaka meibutsu no hinningai o iyoio yarikaeru,” 12 October 1928.
787 Ibid.
788 Ibid.
790 Ōsaka jiji shinpō, “Furyō jūtaku kairyō Ōsaka-shi no keikaku naru: mazu Tennnōji Shimoderachō ittai kara kaishi tekkin sankaidate no shūgō jutaku kenchiku chikaku shikai e teishutsu,” 29 November 1927.
791 Ibid.
792 Ibid.
annual installments using the rental fees that the authorities collected each year from the residents of newly constructed “reformed housing” (kairyō jūtaku).

The first two districts targeted for reform were Hachijūken-nagaya and neighboring Shinhachijūken-nagaya. Both areas were located just east of Nipponbashi Boulevard in Osaka’s Minami Ward. Efforts to move forward with the project began in October 1928, when representatives of the municipal government entered negotiations with local residents. Although specific details are unknown, the negotiation process appears to have lasted for more than a year. A settlement was eventually reached in the fall of 1929 after residents consented to the city government’s proposed compensation package.

According to contemporary newspaper reports, the authorities then quickly moved to relocate local residents. Evictions began in November 1929 and were completed by the end of December. While some residents privately secured housing elsewhere in the city, hundreds were relocated to the temporary shelter constructed by the city authorities in Imamiyachō. Once all local residents had temporarily vacated the district, substandard housing tracts were razed and prepared for construction. The city authorities broke ground on the new public housing tracts in January 1930. In total, the project took less than a year to complete. By December 1930, the authorities had completed a total of 264 new single-family apartments and residents had begun to return to the area.

After construction had been completed in Hachijūken-nagaya, the authorities then set their sights on three slum districts in the Nittōchō area (Mononoki-ura, Getaya-ura,
and Kantekiya-ura), which was located immediately to the west.\textsuperscript{797} In 1931, city officials purchased all of the land in each district from a group of fourteen local landholders, including Sumitomo Kichizaemon, and then entered negotiations with area tenants.\textsuperscript{798} However, officials once again faced fierce resistance from local residents who ardently refused to abandon their homes. Although the authorities eventually obtained their consent, their opposition delayed the project several years. As of November 1935, the authorities had only completed 796 units, or only 40 percent of the intended total.\textsuperscript{799}

After construction was completed in Nittōchō, city authorities then attempted to carry out a similar series of housing reform projects on Nipponbashi Boulevard’s western side.\textsuperscript{800} Once again, however, citizen opposition in Higashi-sekiyachō neighborhood delayed the project’s progress. In fact, the pace of reform was so slow that the authorities were required to present a revised housing reform plan in December 1933.\textsuperscript{801} Following another extended period of negotiation, which lasted into the late 1930s, the authorities at last succeeded in winning the approval of local residents and were able to move ahead with reforms on the western side of Nipponbashi Boulevard, as well. Construction projects continued on in Higashi sekiyachō and surrounding slum districts until 1942.\textsuperscript{802}

Entering the 1940s, however, the authorities began to face severe shortages of essential

\textsuperscript{798} In addition to Sumitomo Kichizaemon, the group also included Toyota Jisuke, Itō Chōbē, Nakagawa Ai, Nagamura Yoshinori, Nakata Tasaburō, Kokubun Minosuke, Oginō Naojirō, Ōe Shinjirō, Ōura Gorōbē, Sugita Iwamatsu, Yamaguchi Tamenosuke, Sanada Kichinosuke, and Takada Heisuke. Of the area’s 14 landholders, only two actually lived in the Nittōchō area, Kokubun Minosuke and Takada Heisuke.
\textsuperscript{799} Ōsaka-shi shakaibu. \textit{Kairyō jūtaku ni okeru kyojūsha no jōkyō}. Osaka: Ōsaka-shi shakaibu (1937), 3-4. As of December 1935, the authorities had constructed five public housing tracts. Three were located in Minami nittōchō, one was located in nittōchō, and one was located in Shimoderachō (Hachijūkennagaya/Shinhachijūkennagaya). With a total of 264 housing units, the tract in Shimoderachō was the largest, followed closely by the largest tract in Minami nittōchō, which contained 260 units.
\textsuperscript{801} Ibid.
construction materials. Lacking the materials that they needed to move forward with construction projects, the city government was forced to suspend and ultimately abandon its housing reform program in 1944. In total, reform projects were completed in 13 individual districts, all of them located along the eastern and western sides of Nipponbashi Boulevard, in the vicinity of the old Nagamachi slum.

During the project’s 17-year span, the authorities spent a total of 7,414,677 yen. Approximately 60 percent of the money (4,470,555 yen) was spent during the project’s first six-year stage. The largest amount of funding, or 4,822,205 yen, was used to pay for construction costs. In addition, 1,708,578 yen was spent to purchase land in the slum districts targeted for reform, 620,162 yen was used to purchase the tenement tracts targeted for demolition, and 262,132 yen was used to compensate the thousands of residents displaced as a result of the project. Notably, the project’s expense structure reflects the social structure of the communities that were targeted for reform. Namely, in addition to the money paid to absentee landlords, such as Sumitomo Kichizaemon, it was also necessary to provide money to the on-site landlords, whose tenements were targeted for reform, and to the local residents temporarily evicted from each slum district.

(B) The Logic and Aims of Substandard Housing Reform

An examination of the writings of Osaka’s seventh mayor, Seki Hajime, elucidates the project’s logic and objectives. A prolific urban policy scholar and leading housing reform advocate, Seki served as the chief architect of Osaka’s Substandard Housing District Reform Project. An analysis of Seki’s positions on housing policy will

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804 Ibid.
805 Ibid, 369.
help to reveal the project’s underlying philosophy and illuminate the arguments offered by the city government in support of housing reform.

For Seki, substandard housing reform was part of his broader vision for the remaking of Osaka as a “livable city.” That vision centered on the expulsion of “dangerous” and “insalubrious” elements of the built environment, including slums, and the construction of a series of hygienic, orderly housing tracts for the working and lower classes, which were linked to the urban core by a network of public trains and subways. Furthermore, through the application of strict zoning regulations and constant surveillance of the urban housing supply, Seki believed that the authorities could prevent the future appearance of substandard housing districts.

Echoing the logic of officials in the Home Ministry’s Social Department, Seki offered two main justifications for housing reform. First, he contended that housing conditions had a direct bearing on national economic vitality and future competitiveness. In order for Japan to “develop at the same pace as the imperial powers of Western Europe and the United States,” he argued that it was essential to provide laborers and the members of other low-income social groups with stable access to orderly and salubrious housing. According to Seki, if the authorities failed to do so, future generations of Japanese workers would be forced to continue living in cramped back-alley tenements, where they were surrounded by squalor and faced the constant danger of infectious

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diseases, such as tuberculosis. Squalor and disease, in turn, undermined the health of workers and ultimately weakened the nation.

Second, Seki contended that housing reform would enable the authorities to foster more secure and political stable cities. In a 1923 essay, he noted that the presence of slum districts along the city’s bustling thoroughfares represented an urgent to public order and safety. According to Seki, the narrow tenement rows lining the back alleys of Osaka’s slums were a major source of urban conflagration and a breeding ground of petty crime, violence, and political unrest. Therefore, it was essential that such districts be removed from the city and replaced with a series of publicly administered housing tracts. In addition, he argued that the fire-prone wooden tenement blocks conventionally found in urban slum districts should be replaced with a series of mid-rise, steel-reinforced concrete apartment blocks.

At the same time, Seki asserted that public housing tracts should function as semi-autonomous micro-communities, which contained all of the resources and institutions that humans required for daily survival. Accordingly, he advised that newly constructed housing tracts should include “a market where residents could purchase foodstuffs and other daily necessities, shops, a school library suited to persons of elementary and intermediate education, and a meeting hall with room for 200 to 300 occupants.”

Ultimately, Seki believed that housing reform would enable the public authorities to intervene more directly in the daily lives of the urban poor. Enhanced intervention was

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810 Ibid, 28.
811 Ibid.
812 Ibid.
necessary, he argued, because the poor lacked a steady livelihood and vested interest in the existing socio-political system. Consequently, they were part of an excluded class that exploited periods of social instability, such as the [1918] Rice Riots, to rise up against the established order. The best way to prevent future instances of large-scale unrest, Seki maintained, was to provide the urban poor with an improved quality of life and a secure place in local society. In his understanding, that meant granting the poor stable access to safe, affordable housing and providing them with an eventual path to ownership. Seki believed that slum dwellers would naturally abandon extremist or anti-state ideologies once they had secured a small place of their own. In short, Seki viewed access to safe, affordable housing and potential homeownership as vital bulwarks against socialist revolution and an effective means of suppressing future instances of social unrest.

Unlike officials affiliated with the Home Ministry’s Social Bureau, such as Nagaoka Ryūichirō, who advocated a narrow vision of housing reform focusing only on the nation’s most insalubrious and overcrowded slum districts, Seki called for the establishment of a comprehensive housing policy, which also addressed the underlying causes of Japan’s post-World War I housing shortage. In a document submitted to the Home Ministry’s Social Projects Survey Committee in September 1926, Seki asserted that effective housing reform had to go beyond the reconstruction of a limited number of

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815 Ibid.
816 Ibid., 67.
817 Ibid.
existing substandard housing districts. He noted that preventative measures needed to be taken to eradicate the underlying factors driving the formation of urban slums.

For Seki, that meant the establishment of stringent residential construction and zoning laws, the creation of incentives to spur investment in land and housing development, and the formation of a new regulatory mechanism known as the Housing Supervision System (Jūtaku kantoku seido). That mechanism would “monitor the condition of the urban housing supply, identify and arrange for the reform of vacant dwellings falling into dilapidation, and encourage the construction of new housing units.”

Staffed by public officials, the system would also perform an educational function, teaching the city’s poor how to properly care for their homes. According to Seki, it was essential to educate the poor proper about cleaning and home maintenance techniques because substandard housing resulted largely from their “misuse” and neglect. At the same time, however, he cautioned that officials needed to avoid being

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820 Seki Hajime. “Furyō jūtaku misshū chiku no kaizen ni kansuru ikensho.” Furyō jūtaku ni kansuru shiryō, 1927. This document is currently held in the Seki Archive on the seventh floor of the Osaka City University Library.

821 Seki Hajime. Jūtaku mondai to toshi keikaku. Tokyo: Kobundō shobō (1923), 37. According to Seki, the system was designed to (1) “survey the condition of housing and, in cases in which there are dwellings that pose a threat to public morality or health or possess structural flaws, arrange for their demolition or reform,” (2) “prevent well constructed dwellings from transforming into substandard dwellings as a result of misuse,” (3) “teach residents that housing is the foundation of human life and has important implications for health, hygiene, and a range of other issues; to educate residents about housing,” (4) “prevent the physical degradation of housing and eradicate any factors that could adversely affect not only individual dwellings but also other dwellings in the same district or neighborhood,” (5) “eradicate unhygienic factors, which directly or indirectly contribute to housing condition-related problems, such as the outbreak of infectious diseases, such as tuberculosis, and infant mortality,” and (6) “investigate the state of supply and demand for housing, identify dwellings fall into dilapidation, and encourage their proper reconstruction.”


823 Seki Hajime. “Furyō jūtaku misshū chiku no kaizen ni kansuru ikensho.” Furyō jūtaku ni kansuru shiryō, 1927. This document is currently held in the Seki Archive on the seventh floor of the Osaka City University Library. According to Seki’s memo, the specific type of misuse was often related to the occupations performed by substandard housing district residents. For example, he notes that many of the residents of substandard housing districts in Nagamachi collected waste and sorted it in the home. That in turn degraded the quality of the housing found in such districts.
excessively “heavy-handed or bureaucratic” when interacting with city residents. The point was to encourage residents to proactively engage in the maintenance of their dwellings, not to compel them to do so by force.

In the case of economically vulnerable social groups, Seki also believed that sustained public intervention into the urban housing market was necessary in order to regulate rental prices. As he recognized, economic circumstances frequently compelled groups of low-income city residents to share cramped single-family dwellings. Over-occupancy, Seki argued, placed an excessive burden on the physical structure of such dwellings, resulting in their dilapidation. Yet, in Seki’s understanding, previous efforts to counter over-crowding and dilapidation through low-income housing reform had been mostly ineffective. The reason for this, he maintained, was that previous efforts had placed the funding burden for construction primarily on private landlords, who then raised rents in an attempt to defray expenditures. As a consequence, poor residents were often priced out of newly reconstructed dwellings and ultimately displaced. In order to prevent this from happening in the future, Seki argued that the city government should instead serve as the direct purveyor of housing to the poor. By placing low-income housing under government ownership and administration, he believed that the authorities

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827 Ibid.
could keep rents low and guarantee thousands of slum dwellers access to housing that was hygienic, orderly, and secure.  

Although Seki never succeeded in enacting the sort of comprehensive housing policy that he envisioned, he was able to put his ideas into practice on a small scale with the Substandard Housing District Reform Project. Each of the apartment complexes constructed in Osaka as part of the project was directly administered by the city government and contained an on-site office staffed by a group of full-time officials, whose primary duties included monitoring the condition of newly constructed apartments, seeing to their upkeep, collecting rents, and regulating the behavior of residents.

While Seki claimed to be motivated in his efforts by a desire to “advance the welfare” of Osaka’s poor, housing reform plans failed to take into account the perspective of substandard housing district residents. Despite Seki’s one-dimensional portrayal of such districts as dangerous and impoverished spaces that posed an imminent threat to the health and stability of urban society, the actions of residents whose homes were targeted for reform tell a different story. The following section examines how they reacted to the city government’s efforts and how their actions influenced the reform project’s course.

(IV) Contesting Housing Reform: Local Opposition from the Residents of Nipponbashi’s Substandard Housing Districts

(A) The Logic, Tactics, and Results of Resident Opposition

The city government’s reform efforts did not go uncontested. At nearly every stage in the process, the authorities faced fierce opposition from Nipponbashi-area

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residents, who were unwilling to accept passively the level of compensation proposed by the municipal government and took offense at official characterizations of their neighborhoods as substandard housing districts. In an effort to win more favorable compensation, residents engaged in lengthy periods of direct negotiation with city officials. While they were ultimately unable to stop reform projects from moving forward, local residents did succeed in delaying evictions and extracting a range of concessions from the authorities. In that sense, residents were not completely without agency. On the contrary, they had an influence over both the timing and content of reform projects.

During many disputes, residents also engaged in separate negotiations with both on-site landlords and landowners. The city authorities had to wait for residents to conclude negotiations with both parties before moving forward with temporary evictions. As in the case of their negotiations with the city authorities, residents were ultimately able to extract additional compensation from local landowners and their opposition served to significantly delay the execution of reform projects. Focusing on the series of negotiations that took place in the slum districts lining Nipponbashi Boulevard’s eastern side, this section attempts to illuminate the tactics through which residents attempted to oppose housing reform projects and the results of their efforts.

Hachijūken-nagaya was the first slum district in Nipponbashi targeted for reform. On October 9, 1928, the Osaka asahi shinbun newspaper reported that local residents had “held an opposition meeting” during which they denounced the project and vowed to

resist the city government’s efforts. According to the article, the approximately 120 households residing in Hachijūken-nagaya had two basic grievances. First, they were concerned about the level of compensation that the city authorities were attempting to provide to displaced households. Residents noted that while city officials were providing landowner Sumitomo Kichizaemon with 120 yen per tsubo (3.3 square meters), an amount they considered exorbitant. In contrast, the authorities were offering to provide local tenants with only 25 yen per household. As a consequence, Hachijūken-nagaya’s residents complained that the city-led housing reform project was a social project in name only. According to local residents, “it was actually a scheme that exploited proletarians in order to enrich the propertied classes.”

Second, local residents felt strongly that one-dimensionally negative characterizations of Hachijūken-nagaya as a slum or substandard housing district were inappropriate. For many residents, the area’s identity was more complex. Official portrayals and newspaper reports, which focused only on the condition of the neighborhood’s housing and infrastructure, tended to obfuscate that complexity. According to the above report, many residents felt that conditions in Kita nagara and Imamiya’s Kamgasaki district were in fact much worse. Therefore, they asserted that reform was more urgently required in those districts. Employing the above arguments, the residents of Hachijūken-nagaya demanded both increased compensation for local residents and a postponement of evictions.

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833 Osaka mainichi shinbun, “Furyō jūtakugai no jūmin ga hantai no enzetsukai o hiraki kisei o ageru,” 9 October 1928.
834 Ibid.
835 Osaka mainichi shinbun, “Furyō jūtakugai no jūmin ga hantai no enzetsukai o hiraki kisei o ageru,” 9 October 1928.
Local resistance to the proposed reform project remained strong throughout the month of October. In an effort to strengthen their collective negotiating position and present a united front, local residents formed the “Relocation Conditions Improvement League” (Iten jōken kaizen kisei dōmei). Newspaper reports indicate that on October 16, “a group of 80 local residents from Hachijūken-nagaya and surrounding neighborhoods forced their way into city hall and demanded that the authorities postpone the project, raise eviction compensation, and change the proposed relocation site to somewhere other than Imamiyachō.” Following several hours of intense negotiations with city officials, the municipal government offered increased compensation totaling 50 yen per household. However, local residents felt that this figure was excessively low and immediately broke off negotiations.

On the following day, a group of representatives from Hachijūken-nagaya met with city officials at the Tennōji Citizens’ Center. Once again, the two sides engaged in a series of intense negotiations. Despite repeated demands from local residents for increased compensation, the authorities refused to go higher than 50 yen. At the same time, local residents refused to engage in individual negotiations (kobetsu kōshō), which is what the city authorities wanted. In addition, they collectively resolved to reject any attempt to relocate residents to Imamiyachō.

Furthermore, in an effort to publicize their plight, representatives from Hachijūken-nagaya also visited each of the major newspaper outlets in the city. On October 19, the Osaka mainichi and Osaka asahi newspapers published a statement

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836 Asahi shinbun, “Hachijūyomei ga shiyakusho ni oshikaku,” 17 October 1928.
837 Asahi shinbun, “Shimoderachō 4-chō-me, 5-chō-me no jūmin hachijūyomei ga shiyakusho ni oshikakeru,” 19 October, 1928.
entitled “The Representatives’ Account.” In that statement, local residents claimed that the homes in which they had grown accustomed to living were being wrested from their control. Describing the proposed relocation site of Imamiyachō as “a squalid slum,” the statement claimed that even if temporary apartments were constructed there residents of Hachijüken-nagaya would refuse to move. Asserting that Imamiyachō was “poorly suited to residents’ occupations and way of life,” it proclaimed that relocation there would serve only to separate local residents from their employers and rob them of their livelihoods. After decrying the compensation package proposed by the city authorities as insufficient, the statement concluded by reiterating that local residents would oppose the municipal government’s efforts to the bitter end.840 In short, residents were unwilling to abandon their dwellings in order to move to a neighborhood that they considered more insalubrious and impoverished than their own. At the same time, they refused to consider leaving their homes at all unless the authorities were willing to provide additional compensation.

After this statement was published, reports about the situation in Hachijüken-nagaya and surrounding areas stopped appearing in the newspaper. Therefore, it is unclear how the dispute between the city authorities and local residents was resolved. However, by December 1929, the city authorities succeeded in evicting all local residents from the area.841 All of the neighborhood’s tenements were demolished and in their place the authorities constructed new two- and three-story, steel reinforced city-run housing developments.842 After the reform project was complete, the city government replaced

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840 Asahi shinbun, “Daihyōsha no dan,” 19 October 1928.
842 Ibid.
the Sumitomo House as owner of all the land in Hachijūken-nagaya and the on-site landlord as the manager of local housing. This arrangement, which was gradually replicated in 12 other slum districts on the eastern and western sides of Nipponbashi Boulevard, enabled the city authorities to exert direct control over a significant portion of the city’s underclass, which during the period in question was viewed as a key threat to urban stability and security.\footnote{Saga Ashita. \textit{Kindai Ōsaka no toshi kasō shakai}. Tokyo: Nihon hyōronsha (2007), 372-378.}

Immediately after articles about the dispute in Hachijūken-nagaya ceased appearing, local newspapers began to cover a second dispute occurring immediately to the west in the Kita-nittōchō and Minami-nittōchō neighborhoods. By the time that coverage began to appear in local newspapers, the dispute between city authorities and local residents was already under way. In an October 19 article entitled “The Nittōchō Eviction Dispute,” the \textit{Osaka mainichi} newspaper reported that Sumitomo Kichizaemon, the owner of all of the land in Nittōchō, was involved in an ongoing clash with local residents over eviction compensation.\footnote{Ibid, 329.} Despite several requests from local residents for increased compensation, he staunchly refused to pay.

On the same day that the above article was published, “several dozen local residents” from Nittōchō sent a written request to Imakita Jisaku, an influential underworld figure with intimate ties to Osaka’s Matsushima Pleasure Quarter, in which they asked for his assistance in resolving their dispute with Sumitomo. During the 1920s and 1930s, Imakita was called upon to intervene in a range of major disputes, including the 1922 Osaka Gas Company Iwasakichō Gas Tank Relocation Dispute, 1923 Konoike-
Before entering a discussion about Imakita’s role in the eviction dispute that occurred in Nittōchō, it is first necessary to discuss the content of the dispute itself.\footnote{\textit{Saga Ashita}. \textit{Kindai Ōsaka no toshi kasō shakai}. Tokyo: Nihon hyōronsha (2007), 329.}

According to contemporary newspaper coverage, the dispute centered around one key issue. Namely, residents wanted Sumitomo Kichizaemon to “provide them with financial compensation” because they were “being forced to move out of their homes.”\footnote{Ibid.} Initially, residents attempted to negotiate directly with the Sumitomo House. However, company representatives rebuffed their demand on the grounds that “another individual” owned “the dwellings” in Nittōchō and was therefore responsible to compensate evictees.\footnote{Ibid.} As in the case of Hachijūken-nagaya, much of the land in Nittōchō’s Mononoki-ura and Getaya-ura slum districts was leased to a single on-site landlord, who owned and operated rental housing in the area. Therefore, while Sumitomo Kichizaemon owned the land in Nittōchō, he had no relationship to the dwellings targeted for reform under the city government’s plan.

After their initial efforts failed, residents then sought the assistance of Imakita Jisaku. Although specific information about Imakita’s role in the Nittōchō-district dispute is limited, newspaper coverage indicates that he had an almost immediate impact. According to a November 3 article from the \textit{Osaka mainichi} newspaper, during a private meeting with Sumitomo Kichizaemon, Imakita convinced him to provide evictees with

\footnote{Ibid.}
“sealed envelopes containing a small amount of cash.”Residents readily accepted the compensation, bringing a swift conclusion to the dispute.

Once the initial dispute in Nittōchō had been resolved, Imakita was then called upon to intervene in the ongoing conflict in Hachijūken-nagaya. Newspaper reports suggest that Imakita once again met with representatives of the Sumitomo House and convinced them to provide residents with a lump sum of cash. They accepted his advice and promptly offered small payments to each of the households targeted for eviction. As in Nittōchō, local residents appear to have immediately accepted the payments. In both cases, therefore, this strategy enabled Sumitomo representatives to prevent an escalation of the conflict and control the terms of compensation. According to a newspaper report from December 1928, the total amount of compensation provided to residents of both Hachijūken-nagaya and Nittōchō was 5,000 yen.

Following a ten-month period of calm, disputes once again erupted in the fall of 1929. In September of that year, “a group of approximately 200 residents [from Minami-nittōchō] forced their way into city hall” and met with Yamaguchi Tadashi, the head of the city’s Social Department. During the meeting, residents demanded that the municipal authorities “make public the eviction date, the price that the government intended to pay for the land in Nittōchō, and all other parts of the reform plan.” Yamaguchi responded that plans for housing reform in the Minami-nittōchō area were still being debated. In an effort to placate the concerns of local residents, he noted that,

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849 *Asahi shinbun*, “Kin ippū,” 3 November 1928.
once a plan had been finalized, he would do his best “to promptly apprise residents of the details.”

Also in the fall of 1929, residents of Minami-nittōchō’s Kanteki-ura district became involved in a separate dispute with Sumitomo Kichizaemon. Although few details are known about the incident, newspaper reports indicate that it was resolved promptly and without external intervention. As in the cases mentioned above, the dispute was concluded after Kichizaemon agreed to provide displaced households with small monetary gifts. According to one article from the Osaka asahi newspaper, residents received “40 yen per household from the Sumitomo House as eviction compensation.”

The winter of 1930 saw residents embroiled in a yet another dispute, this time with a group of five on-site landlords, including Nakagawa Kōzō. According to contemporary newspaper reports, the dispute persisted for several months but was resolved when the landlords agreed “provide each household in Kanteki-ura with 85 yen in compensation, forgive all unpaid rent, and to return all deposits.”

In sum, a series of disputes occurred in slum districts on Nipponbashi Boulevard’s eastern side following the announcement of the city government’s substandard housing reform plan. Although the authorities eventually succeeded in carrying out reform projects in each district, they were unable to do so without consideration of the opinions of local residents. By refusing individual negotiations and engaging in the tactic of collective bargaining, residents were able to win concessions in increased compensation.

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852 *Asahi shinbun*, “Tachinokiryō toshite jinushi no sumitomoke kara kaku ikko ni yonjūen,” 2 December 1930.
853 Ibid.
855 Ibid.
from not only the city authorities, but also local landowners, and on-site landlords. Therefore, while substandard housing district residents were ultimately displaced from their homes, they were not powerless. Through organized resistance, they were able to influence the timing and conditions of their temporary dislocation.

Notably, the structure of the disputes reflects the social structure of the communities involved. Negotiations were carried out simultaneously on three separate levels. In addition to the city authorities, who were directing the housing reform efforts, residents also entered separate negotiations with local landholders and landlords. The disputes, therefore, were more than just a conflict between the city authorities and substandard housing district residents. They were events that both reflected and impacted the entire social structure of the districts involved.

(B) Imakita Jisaku’s Role in the Disputes

Considering the role of Imakita Jisaku enables one to gain a comprehensive understanding of the process of negotiation described above. Imakita intervened in several of the disputes that occurred in Nipponbashi. Notably, in each case, residents actively sought his assistance. It is therefore important to consider his role and the historical conditions that supported his intervention.

During the period in question, Imakita served as an advisor (kōmon) to the Osaka headquarters of the Dai-nippon kokusuikai, a powerful national criminal syndicate founded in 1920.\(^{856}\) Imakita resided in Nishi Ward’s Honden neighborhood near the Matsushima Pleasure Quarter.\(^{857}\) Although Imakita’s business interests were wide-ranging, his primary source of income came from real estate and his involvement with the

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sex trade in Matsushima. He rose to prominence as a mediator after World War I and was called to intervene in dozens of local disputes in Osaka in the 1920s and 1930s.

His involvement in substandard housing reform negotiations began in 1928 during the initial dispute between Nittōchō residents and absentee landowner, Sumitomo Kichizaemon. Acting on behalf of local residents, he helped to bring a swift resolution to the dispute by convincing Sumitomo to provide a small cash payment to each of the households temporarily displaced from the Nittōchō area. Notably, Imakita convinced Sumitomo to make the payments even though he was not legally obligated to offer compensation.

Immediately after he helped resolve the dispute between Nittōchō residents and the Sumitomo House, the Osaka mainichi published an essay by Imakita entitled “Humanity over Rights.” In that essay, he briefly explained his philosophy on conflict resolution. According to Imakita, the envelope of cash that the Sumitomo paid to the residents of Nittōchō was a mechanism that helped to prevent a lengthy and potentially damaging dispute. For wealthy individuals, such as Sumitomo Kichizaemon, strategic cash payments functioned as a sort of insurance payment that enabled them to protect their interests and reputation when they came under threat. At the end of the statement, Imakita proudly noted that his advice to the Sumitomo—namely that they show magnanimity (garyō) to the residents of Nittōchō—had helped to mollify the anger of

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858 During the 1920s and 1930s, Imakita served as an advisor to the chief executive of Osaka’s Daitō Land Company.
861 Ibid.
862 Osaka mainichi shinbun, “Kenri yorimo ningenmi,” 28 November 1928.
local residents, thereby enabling the Sumitomo to avoid an unnecessary intensification of hostilities.\(^{863}\)

So, why then did the residents of Nittōchō and other substandard housing districts call on Imakita for assistance? By the late 1920s, Imakita had helped to resolve a number of prominent labor disputes and had won a reputation as an effective negotiator.

However, that was not the only reason that local residents sought his help. As Saga Ashita has noted, hundreds of associates of the Kokusuikai crime syndicate, an organization with which Imakita was intimately affiliated, lived in the “substandard housing districts” in Nipponbashi.\(^{864}\) According to data compiled by the Osaka Prefectural Police in 1925, associates of all of the major syndicates operating on Osaka’s south side maintained residences in many of the substandard housing districts along Nipponbashi’s eastern side, including Hachijūken-nagaya, Shinhachijūken-nagaya, Kanteki-ura, Momonoki-ura, and Sha-no-ura.\(^{865}\) In some cases, more than a dozen members of a single syndicate lived as neighbors in the same district. For example, Hosokawa Sakutarō, a subordinate of the underboss of the Kokusuikai’s Osaka headquarters, lived together with his brother Nobuyoshi in a tenement in Kita-nittōchō’s Momonoki-ura district.\(^{866}\) Both Sakutarō and Nobuyoshi were influential gangsters. In total, the two brothers managed 58 subordinates.\(^{867}\) Of those subordinates, four lived in the Hachijūken-nagaya and Shin-hachijūken-nagaya substandard housing districts in Shimoderachō 3-chō. In addition, two lived in neighboring Shimoderachō 4-chō-me, 19

\(^{863}\) Ibid.
\(^{866}\) Ibid.
lived in Minami-nittōchō, and 11 lived in Kita-nittōchō. Therefore, there was a distinct concentration of individuals affiliated with the Kokusuiikai organization in the neighborhoods where disputes occurred. The presence of so many individuals directly associated with the Kokusuiikai suggests another reason why residents may have enlisted Imakita’s assistance in mediating local disputes.

Lastly, despite the fact that it was always residents who sought Imakita’s assistance, the resolutions that he helped to achieve ultimately enabled Sumitomo Kichizaemon to achieve his main objectives. Namely, while Imakita helped to ensure that local residents in Shimoderachō and Nittōchō received a small amount of monetary compensation, his efforts also resulted in their prompt eviction and relocation to Imamiyachō. Although the Sumitomo House had to make a one-time cash payment to evictees, with Imakita’s assistance, they were also able to expeditiously unburden themselves of their landholdings in the Nipponbashi area. At the same time, by enabling the Sumitomo House to quickly transfer ownership of their landholdings to the city government, Imakita made it possible for them to extricate themselves from any future eviction-related entanglements. In short, Imakita played a vital role in preventing a further escalation of disputes and in facilitating the smooth execution of the city’s substandard housing reform project.

(C) Disputes between Local Residents and the City Government

In order to understand the negotiation process in its entirety, it is also essential to examine the third basic type of disputes: those that occurred between local residents and city officials. Unlike the disputes mentioned above, negotiations were carried out
directly between the two parties, rather than through an intermediary, such as Imakita. The residents who participated in disputes with the city government had two basic grievances. First, they felt that the compensation that the authorities offered to provide was insufficient. During the Hachijūken-nagaya dispute, the authorities initially planned to provide each evicted household with 25 yen in compensation. Second, residents were dissatisfied with the location of the temporary housing that the authorities planned to provide to persons displaced from their dwellings as a result of the reform projects. Namely, the authorities intended to construct housing units immediately to the south in Osaka’s Imamiyachō neighborhood, an area that many residents of Hachijūken-nagaya considered more insalubrious than their own. Notably, residents did not seek to stop the reform projects entirely. Rather, they sought to obtain improved compensation from the authorities and to set the terms of relocation.

At the same time, however, residents’ demands were intimately bound up with concerns about temporary loss of income and social displacement. Also implicit in their demands was a critique of the destructive effects of the city’s approach to housing reform, which led to the dissolution of previously vital social relationships, including both those that existed between landlords and residents and those that existed among groups of residents. In the case of Hachijūken-nagaya, residents clearly considered the neighborhood their permanent home. The demands of local residents were premised on the notion that they had a right, secured through decades of continuous residence, to live in Hachijūken-nagaya and that even temporary violation of that right entitled them to compensation from the actor responsible for that violation. As Mizuuchi Toshio has shown, this was also the case in Nagoya’s Shimoda district, where residents based their
demands for improved compensation on claims related to their right of residence. In other words, as residents of Shimoda district, they felt it was within the scope of their rights to demand improved compensation from the authorities.\textsuperscript{869}

Importantly, the reform project’s trajectory reflects and was influenced by the social structure of the districts targeted for reform. For instance, the reason that disputes took place simultaneously on three levels was linked to the fact that the social structure of many substandard housing districts, including Hachijūken-nagaya, included both an on-site landlord and absentee landowner. Moreover, as we observed in the case of Nittōchō, the presence of large numbers of associates of the Kokusuikai no doubt made it possible for local residents to seek the assistance of Kokusuikai advisor Imakita Jisaku in resolving their disputes with the Sumitomo House.

While the details of the compensation provided by the authorities to residents of Hachijūken-nagaya and Nittōchō are unknown, there is one record from a slightly later period that sheds light on the specific sort of compensation provided to evicted residents by the authorities. The record in question is a set of contracts provided in 1938 by the city authorities to the residents of Gokaiato minami-ura, a substandard housing district located immediately to the west of Nipponbashi Boulevard in the Sekiyachō neighborhood.\textsuperscript{870} The area was targeted for reform in the late 1930s following the completion of the first wave of reform projects in Hachijūken-nagaya and Nittōchō.

\textsuperscript{870} Osaka-shi keirkyoku yōchika. Gokaiato minami-ura furyō jūtaku tachinoki hoshō keiyakusho, 1938-1939. This document is currently held at the Osaka Municipal Archives in Osaka’s Nishi Ward.
The document was prepared by the city government’s Accounting Bureau (Keirikyoku) and is currently held at the Osaka Municipal Archives. It contains 156 contracts listing the relocation sites of displaced households and the compensation packages that they received. All of the contracts were concluded between October 1938 and December 1939. First, they indicate that only 72 of the 156 households targeted for eviction were able to move into temporary housing units provided by the city government. Also, they show that 40 of the remaining 84 households were forced to relocate to dwellings outside the Nipponbashi area. The situation was similar in the Hachijūken-nagaya and Shinhachijūken-nagaya districts where only 67 percent of the 206 households targeted for eviction were able to move into designated temporary housing provided by the city government. However, in the case of Gokaiato minami-ura that percentage is even lower.

Second, the record indicates the specific amount of financial compensation provided to each household. Two things stand out in these figures. First, households that relocated to temporary housing provided by the city government received less compensation than households that relocated to alternative forms of temporary accommodation. Namely, households that entered city-run temporary housing received standard payments of 40 yen per household, whereas households that were unable to do so received standard payments totaling 70 yen per household.

871 Ibid.
872 Ibid.
874 Osaka-shi keirikyoku yōchika. Gokaiato-ura furyō jūtaku tachinoki hoshō keiyakusho, 1938-1939. This document is currently held at the Osaka Municipal Archives in Osaka’s Nishi Ward.
The second feature is that total compensation amounts varied widely. The smallest amount of compensation paid to a single family was 19 yen 50 sen, while the neighborhood’s wealthiest tenant household received 900 yen. In 19 instances, residents of the neighborhood’s front-street dwellings (omote-dana) received payments of more than 300 yen. Notably, only one of the households in this category moved to city-run temporary housing. The majority possessed sufficient economic resources to seek alternative dwellings elsewhere in the city. In addition, there was one factory in the area. The operator of that factory was provided with 3,300 yen in compensation. Excluding the 20 households that received more than 300 yen in compensation, the median for the remaining 135 households was 64 yen. Even adjusted for inflation, that figure is significantly higher than the figure of 50 yen that the authorities offered to provide to each of the households in Hachijūken-nagaya in 1928.

The record also indicates that 102 of the 155 households in Gokaiato minami-ura received “property relocation payments” (bukken itenryō) in addition to eviction compensation. The payments were intended to help residents pay the cost of moving their tatami mats and furniture out of the district. If we combine both the initial compensation and relocation payments, the median amount paid to the 135 households that received less than 300 yen in total compensation rises to 75 yen. The rise in total compensation from the originally proposed amount of 50 yen can no doubt be attributed to the efforts of residents targeted for eviction. In short, organized opposition on the

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875 Ibid.
876 Ibid.
877 Saga Ashita. *Kindai Ōsaka no toshi kasō shakai*. Tokyo: Nihon hyōronsha (2007), 334. As Saga Ashita has demonstrated, even if one adjusts for inflation, 75 yen marks a significant increase over the amount originally proposed by the cities authorities in the fall of 1928.
part of substandard housing district residents compelled the authorities to offer improved financial support to evictees.

At the same time, resident opposition also served to significantly delay the Substandard Housing Reform Project’s implementation.878 Before the city authorities could move forward with reform projects in each district, three separate sets of negotiations—the first involving the authorities themselves and local residents, the second involving landholders and local residents, and the third involving the on-site landlords and local residents had to be completed. In the case of Hachijūken-nagaya, for example, resident opposition delayed reform efforts by more than a year.

The same was true in other slum districts as well. Delays resulting from protracted periods of negotiation significantly slowed the execution of construction projects. Initially, the city government’s reform plan called for the redevelopment of a dozen public housing developments over a period of six years. As of late 1931, however, they had only achieved 40 percent of their intended objective.879

With the projects moving more slowly than expected, in 1933, the city authorities were compelled to fundamentally overhaul their original plan. In December of that year, municipal official submitted a revised plan to the city council and the plan was quickly approved. Thereafter, however, the city’s reform projects continued to be plagued by delays. As of late 1938, the authorities had spent only 39 percent of the funds earmarked for housing reform under the revised 1933 plan.880 As a consequence, the city authorities were forced to revise their plan for a second time. Yet, while projects continued into the

early 1940s along the western side of Nipponbashi Boulevard, negotiations in Higashi-sekiyachō between local residents and on-site landlords continued to delay reforms. Ultimately, these delays prevented the authorities from completing the project. Lacking the financial resources and materials to continue with reforms, the project was officially abandoned in 1944. By that time, the authorities had only completed the reform of 13 of the 18 districts they intended to target.

(VI) Conclusion: The Historical Impact of Housing Reform

This chapter concludes by examining the socio-economic impact of the city government’s housing reform project. Focusing once again on the case of Hachijūken-nagaya, this section aims to elucidate the material impact of housing reform on the district’s built environment and socio-economic structure.

In the winter of 1930, the authorities demolished all 79 of the dwellings in Hachijūken-nagaya. They then promptly began construction on a series of three-story, steel-reinforced apartment buildings. Completed in December 1930, the buildings contained a total of 264 single-family apartments. Each individual housing unit, with the exception of a small number of single-room dwellings constructed for unmarried residents, had a private kitchen, toilet, water tap, and gas valve. As we observed in section one, none of these features were present in Hachijūken-nagaya’s back-alley

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882 Ibid.
tenements. In addition to lacking a private kitchen, toilet, and gas valve, residents were forced to get their water from one of a small number of communal water taps or wells.  

At the same time, housing reform led to reduced housing density in all of the districts where reforms were carried out. In 1924, the average number of households per dwelling in Hachijūken-nagaya was 1.54. However, after the project’s completion that figure fell sharply to 1.12. That decrease was due in large part to a rule established by the city government banning multiple households from sharing newly constructed public apartments. As a result, the total percentage of single-family households in Hachijūken-nagaya jumped from 54 percent to more than 90 percent. Accordingly, the average number of residents per household fell from 5.9 to just 4.5. All of the above figures indicate a marked improvement in residential conditions in Hachijūken-nagaya. Before the reform housing was constructed, acute overcrowding plagued the neighborhood. The city government’s reform projects helped to significantly mitigate that issue.

Despite significantly improved dwellings, monthly rental rates changed little. As of 1937, the rental rate for a dwelling in one of the newly constructed public apartments ranged from 6 yen 70 sen to 16 yen. At the same time, however, the percentage of residents who paid the full amount of rent each month rose dramatically after the projects had been executed. In 1924, only 13 percent of all households residing in the substandard housing districts along Nipponbashi Boulevard’s eastern side paid the full

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887 Ibid.
888 Ibid, 15-16.
rental rate each month.\textsuperscript{889} By the late 1930s, that figure had risen to more than 39 percent.\textsuperscript{890}

Collectively, these data suggest an overall improvement in housing conditions. While rents remained relatively low, housing density fell significantly, reducing overcrowding in Hachijūken-nagaya and other former substandard housing districts.\textsuperscript{891} In addition, many former slum dwellers were able for the first time to move into apartments with electricity, indoor plumbing, and a gas stove.

How, then, did housing reform projects affect Hachijūken-nagaya’s occupational composition and income structure? According to figures compiled by the Osaka city government, as of 1936, there were 279 households residing in the public apartments that were constructed in Hachijūken-nagaya as part of the reform project.\textsuperscript{892} 71 percent were former resident households that returned to the area after the project’s completion. At the same time, nearly 30 percent of former residents never returned. It is likely that many remained permanently in the temporary housing that was constructed in Imamiyachō or took up residence elsewhere in the city.\textsuperscript{893}

Let us now turn to the question of income. As historian Kadota Kosaku has noted, the post-reform period was marked by reduced income disparity and increased standardization of wages.\textsuperscript{894} While the proportion of low- and high-income households

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\begin{itemize}
  \item $^{889}$ Osaka-shi shakaibu, ed. \textit{Mitsujū kyojūsha no rōdō to seikatsu.} Osaka: Ōsaka-shi (1924), 39-40.
  \item $^{890}$ Ōsaka-shi shakaibu, ed. \textit{Kairyō jūtaku ni okeru kyojūsha no jōkyō.} Osaka: Ōsaka-shi shakaibu (1937), 15-16.
  \item $^{891}$ Ibid.
  \item $^{892}$ Ibid, 22-24.
  \item $^{894}$ Ibid.
\end{itemize}

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declined, the proportion of middle-income households increased significantly. As a result, the neighborhood’s median income fell steeply from 70 yen to 51 yen. During the post-reform period, the percentage of residents earning 40 to 70 yen per month jumped from 37.4 percent to nearly 47.3 percent. In contrast, the percentage of residents who earned monthly incomes of 80 yen or more fell dramatically from 26.1 percent to 18.7 percent and those earning less than 30 yen fell from 35.5 percent to 31.8 percent.

One possible reason for the above transformation is that many higher-income residents, including former on-site landlords, abandoned the neighborhood after housing reforms were complete. No longer the owner and operator of rental dwellings, on-site landlords lost their connection to former substandard housing districts. In addition, a small percentage of low-income households also failed to return to Hachijūken-nagaya after reforms were finished. Some no doubt decided to remain in temporary city-run housing or seek a dwelling elsewhere in the city. At the same time, however, the disappearance of subleasing arrangements no doubt made it financially unfeasible for many to return to the area. As before, many poor households lacked the economic wherewithal to lease an entire unit on their own.

The disappearance of low-income households from Nippobashi’s former substandard housing districts is also reflected in the changing character of the neighborhood’s occupational structure. Although the basic features of that structure remained unchanged, figures compiled in the Hachijūken-nagaya area clearly indicate a

896 Ibid.
897 Ibid.
898 Ibid.
decrease in the number of persons employed as casual laborers and in employments related to the collection and sale of waste and second-hand articles. In contrast, the percentage of residents employed in industrial occupations increased. In addition, the arrival of new residents from outside of the Nipponbashi area led to an increase in the number of public workers, white-collar workers, and shop clerks. At the same time, the total percentage of employed residents in Hachijūken-nagaya fell from 50 percent during the pre-reform period to approximately 40 percent in post-reform period. As Saga Ashita has demonstrated, however, that was not the result of a rise in unemployed residents. Rather, it was due to the fact that an increasing number of children between the ages of 11 and 15 were attending school rather than working.

In summary, after the reform projects were complete, a large number of higher-income residents from the Hachijūken-nagaya district chose not to return to the area. While this led to an overall decline in median income, it also resulted in a leveling (heijunka) of residents’ wages. While it is less clear what happened to the neighborhood’s low-income stratum, it is likely that many were unable to return to the area because they lacked the financial resources to secure a dwelling of their own. In other words, the dissolution of local subleasing relationships made it impossible for many to continue residing in the Hachijūken-nagaya area. It is likely that some relocated to back-alley tenements in neighborhoods where housing reforms had not yet been executed and it was still possible to sublease a room. As a result of the departure of low-income residents, the total percentage of employed residents in Hachijūken-nagaya fell from 50 percent during the pre-reform period to approximately 40 percent in post-reform period. As Saga Ashita has demonstrated, however, that was not the result of a rise in unemployed residents. Rather, it was due to the fact that an increasing number of children between the ages of 11 and 15 were attending school rather than working.

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901 Ibid.
902 Ibid.
903 Ibid.
905 Ibid.
residents, the neighborhood’s occupational structure changed somewhat. Namely, the total percentage of residents employed as day laborers and in jobs related to the collection and sale of waste fell. At the same time, the arrival of middle-class residents from outside the area led to an increase in the number of public employees, shop clerks, and white-collar workers.

An analysis of local health and educational standards will help to elucidate the local social impact of the city government’s housing reform projects. Once again, the focus is limited to the Hachijūken-nagaya area. In 1924, the city authorities examined the health of 374 Hachijūken-nagaya residents. Of those 374 individuals, more than 57 percent (213) had some sort of disease. The most common afflictions were trachoma (113 residents) and conjunctivitis (32 residents). During the post-reform period, health standards appear to have improved dramatically. According to figures compiled in 1936, only 2 percent of local residents were identified as invalids and only 7 percent were afflicted with diseases. Notably, of the 787 individuals surveyed, only 5 were suffering from eye-related diseases. That figure stands in stark contrast to the pre-reform figure for trachoma.906

These figures indicate a dramatic improvement in the health of local residents. In a period of just 12 years, eye diseases, such as trachoma, had been all but eradicated.907 The reduction in trachoma was due in large part to the efforts of officials at the Tennōji Citizens’ Center, a welfare institution located immediately to the north of Hachijūken-nagaya.908 Following the institution’s establishment, officials at the center worked

907 Ibid.
aggressively to provide trachoma treatment to local children. In addition, as Yamaguchi Tadashi noted in 1933, the post-reform period also saw reduced rates of infant mortality and fetal death. According to Yamaguchi, conditions improved so much in the area that by the early 1930s rates of infant mortality were lower than the city average.909

Similarly, the post-reform period brought improved rates of education. According to figures compiled in 1924, 52 percent of the 430 school-aged children residing in Hachijūken-nagaya had never attended school, and 171 school-aged children were completely illiterate.910 In contrast, by 1936, the percentage of local children enrolled in school rose to 67 percent. What is more, a small number (10) had even completed their elementary studies and matriculated to middle school.911 These figures indicate an increased local emphasis on education and suggest that increasing numbers of local youths, who were formerly forced to labor each day in order to provide their families with additional income, were choosing school over work.

Notably, the municipal government’s reform projects also resulted in a number of dramatic changes to Hachijūken-nagaya’s social structure. First, all of the newly constructed city-run housing units were single-household dwellings.912 Municipal regulations prohibited resident households from leasing part of their dwellings to another household. As a consequence, the practice of subleasing disappeared and the relationship between main and secondary households were abolished. While this helped to ease overcrowding, it also destroyed one of the foundations of Hachijūken-nagaya’s pre-reform social system. Previously, subleasing relations had enabled low-income residents

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911 Ibid.
to remain in one of the neighborhood’s back-alley tenements, even during periods of economic hardship. As a consequence of the city government’s ban on subleasing, former residents lacking the economic wherewithal to pay for a dwelling of their own were effectively driven out of the area.

In addition, the bifurcated relationship between land and housing ownership disappeared, as the city government assumed control of both the newly constructed dwellings and the tracts of land on which they stood. Replacing both the landholder (Sumitomo Kichizaemon) and the on-site landlord, the municipal authorities entered a direct relationship with local residents. On the basis of that relationship, city officials were able to exert an increasing level of control over the daily lives of Hachijūken-nagaya’s residents. As housing owner and manager, the authorities were now able to set rental rates, determine the conditions of residence, and regulate housing standards.913 Together with the growing network of public social institutions established in the aftermath of the 1918 Rice Riots, city-run housing in low-income urban districts such as Hachijūken-nagaya enabled the city government to directly engage previously inaccessible and economically vulnerable sectors of the urban population.

At the same time, the execution of housing reform projects enabled the municipal authorities to rid the city of a number of its most acutely overcrowded and insalubrious residential districts, which were viewed at the time as a breeding ground of crime, infection, and immorality.914 In the minds of many city officials, the demolition of such districts would help to foster a more sanitary built environment in the city, reduce crime rates, and improve public morality. As the example of Hachijūken-nagaya demonstrates,

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914 Ibid.
the authorities were at least partially successful in that effort. After reformed housing was constructed in the area, standards of health and education increased dramatically. At the same time, the rising percentage of local households who were able to pay their full rental rate each month suggests growing economic stability. As noted above, however, housing reform also led to the dissolution of vital social relationships, which previously served to guarantee the welfare of the neighborhood’s poorest residents. For those residents, housing reform meant exclusion from Hachijūken-nagaya. In order to comprehensively grasp the social impact of Osaka’s substandard housing district reform projects, it is necessary to consider both the constructive and destructive effects of the projects.

The city government’s housing reform projects had a distinctly authoritarian character. While fierce local opposition made it necessary for officials to negotiate the terms of eviction and relocation, districts were selected unilaterally without consulting local residents. In the process of executing housing reform projects, therefore, the authorities violated the residential rights of residents living in the districts selected for reform.

It is also essential to note that the city government’s housing improvement projects did not result in the comprehensive reform of all of Osaka’s substandard housing districts. As indicated in the previous section, the authorities succeeded in executing reform projects in 13 areas. However, according to city government figures from the late 1930s, there were at least 14 additional districts on the eastern and western sides of Nipponbashi Boulevard where urgent housing reform was required. Moreover, citywide

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there were more than 300 residential districts officially characterized as unhygienic and overcrowded.\footnote{Osaka-shi shakaibu. *Honshi ni okeru mitsujū chiku chōsa.* Osaka: Ōsaka-shi shakaibu (1939), 1-27.} However, the reform of those districts, including the massive Nagara slum, would have to wait for the large-scale housing reform programs initiated in Osaka in the early 1950s. Considered in a broader context, therefore, the 13 districts where housing reform was actually carried represented something akin to model housing districts.

The completion of reformed housing in Hachijūken-nagaya also marked the emergence of a new system of local governance in the neighborhood. Replacing the neighborhood’s landlord class, city officials assumed direct control of the neighborhood’s governance and the regulation of its population. In the aftermath of the 1918 Rice Riots, the authorities worked aggressively to improve the living standards of local residents in the Nipponbashi area and thereby facilitate greater governmental intervention into the neighborhood’s poorest residential districts. Viewed from that perspective, the execution of housing reform in the area and subsequent emergence of a new, direct system of local governance represented the conclusion of a process of local social reform initiated in response to the dramatic social instability of 1918.
CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSION

This dissertation examined the relationship between urban poverty and local governance in modern Osaka. It has attempted to elucidate the strategies and institutional mechanisms through which the authorities in Osaka attempted to regulate the urban poor from the immediate aftermath of the Meiji Restoration to the Pacific War. It began by examining the dissolution of early modern Osaka’s beggar fraternity, the kaito nakama, and considering the impact of the Restoration and subsequent dismantling of the early modern status system on the practice of poverty management and the lives of the urban poor.

During the five years immediately following the Restoration, the mechanisms through which the authorities in Osaka attempted to regulate the poor underwent a dramatic transformation. That transformation was paralleled by an equally significant shift in official attitudes about the place of the poor in urban society and the manner in which they should be permitted to obtain their subsistence. Specifically, the authorities rejected the notion that a certain segment of the urban population should be allowed to survive by begging for alms. By the early 1870s, officials had come to view begging as a socially deleterious practice that encouraged idleness and dependence and stripped otherwise able-bodied individuals of their desire for self-sufficiency. According to the prefectural authorities, if the practice were permitted to persist, it would ultimately undermine the economic vitality and social stability of the fledgling Meiji state. In order for Japan to compete economically and militarily with the comparatively affluent and technologically advanced states of Western Europe and the United States, officials came to believe that it was necessary to mobilize the entire populous, including the members of
economically disadvantaged social groups previously permitted to subsist on the margins of the urban economy. Accordingly, officials came to argue that it was essential to transform the city’s beggars and vagrants into productive urban subjects capable of supporting themselves without external assistance.

That effort entailed the creation of a range of publicly administered disciplinary institutions, such as the Osaka Poorhouse, which were explicitly designed to dissuade impoverished urban dwellers from engaging in the practice of begging by teaching them a marketable vocation, such as brick making or textile spinning, and reforming their attitudes towards labor. That dual focus on the internal reform and socio-economic integration of the urban poor distinguishes the poverty management policies implemented after the Meiji Restoration from those that preceded it. Whereas the early modern city authorities strived merely to ensure the day-to-day survival of impoverished city dwellers and were willing to permit a certain segment of the population to subsist by gathering alms, after the Restoration, officials began working to remake former beggars and vagrants in order to facilitate their active participation in the urban economy.

Despite the existence of a wide array of policies and institutions designed to encourage the transformation and socio-economic integration of impoverished urban dwellers, much of the foregoing research on urban poverty in modern Japan, including studies by leading historians Ambo Norio and Harada Keiichi, has focused exclusively on the repressive and exclusionary aspects of the relationship between the state and the urban poor. For Ambo and Harada, the Meiji Restoration ushered in an age of intensified discrimination for the poor, who came to be considered a key threat to public health and security and whose communities emerged as the primary target of a range of government-
led slum clearance and reform projects.

While moments of repression and social exclusion are certainly a vital part of the story, a singular focus on those themes has prompted many foregoing scholars to treat the urban poor as an internally homogeneous and universally despised social group that was forced, as a result of discriminatory state policies, to exist apart from mainstream Japanese society. Research conducted from this perspective commonly neglects to examine the internal structure of the nation’s vast and internally diverse urban lower class and fails to consider the role that destitute city dwellers played in the urban socio-economic system. In contrast, this dissertation has demonstrated that the survival of impoverished urban dwellers depended on the maintenance of a network of social relationships, which bound them not only to their neighbors, but also to local landlords, merchants, and employers. Even at the height of the wave of cholera epidemics that struck Osaka during the late nineteenth-century, the residents of slum districts, such as Nagamachi, continued to play a vital role in local society and the urban economy. In fact, by the second half of the 1880s, impoverished city dwellers had emerged as a key source of low-cost labor power for a range of burgeoning export industries, including matchmaking and textile manufacturing. In other words, just as the prefectural authorities and leading police officials were working to segregate the urban poor in the name of epidemic eradication, they were becoming increasingly integrated into the urban labor force. The growing economic importance of the poor as a vast, readily exploitable pool of low-wage labor power no doubt served to undermine efforts initiated in 1886 to permanently segregate the residents of Osaka’s slums outside the city.

Furthermore, as the analyses carried out in chapters two, three, and five indicate,
the city’s slum districts were neither socially homogeneous nor uniformly impoverished. Although low-income neighborhoods, such as Hachijūken-nagaya, were populated by scores of unskilled laborers, petty merchants, and rubbish collectors, they were also “home” to a significant number of relatively affluent landlords and “front-street merchants” (omote-dana eigyōsha), whose financial fortunes and social position depended upon their sustained ability to extract wealth from impoverished city dwellers. Whereas previous scholars have ignored the internal diversity of urban slum districts, this dissertation has attempted to understand the way in which higher-income residents interacted with the poor and influenced their daily lives.

At the same time, unlike urban geographer Katō Masahiro and other foregoing scholars whose work has focused on poverty and infectious disease in modern Japan, this study has attempted to avoid depicting the city’s poor as passive subjects who were unilaterally acted upon by an oppressive state that sought only their domination. As the analysis carried out in chapters two and five demonstrates, the residents of slum districts in Osaka’s Nipponbashi neighborhood strongly resisted government-led efforts to remake their communities. Through the employment of a range of tactics, including collective negotiation, slum dwellers were able to extract a range of favorable concessions from the authorities and significantly influence the course of reform projects during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. By analyzing the manner in which slum dwellers responded to government-directed reform efforts, this dissertation has tried to recast them as agents who proactively worked to protect their socio-economic interests and ensure the perpetuation of their communities.

Despite their opposition, however, the residents of Osaka’s slum districts never
succeeded in compelling the authorities to completely abandon reform efforts. By the 1880s, leading prefectural officials, including Governor Tateno Gōzō, had come to view the city’s slums as a major threat to public health and security and a key impediment preventing Osaka’s emergence as a “civilized city” (bunmei toshi).917 They argued that a citywide slum clearance would help not only to eradicate the twin evils of crime and infectious disease, but also to improve Osaka’s appearance. During the period in question, officials were particularly concerned about how the city appeared to foreign observers. With Japan still suffering under the yoke of the “unequal treaties” (fubyōdō jōyaku) that it had entered in the mid-nineteenth century with the great powers of Europe and the United States, the authorities were eager to convince Western observers of their growing civilization and enlightenment.918 As historian T. Fujitani has shown, cities played an important role in that effort. After the Restoration, the Meij state worked to transform the built environment of the nation’s major urban areas into a concrete manifestation of “Japan’s progress and prosperity.”919 In Osaka, the slum clearances initiated in the second half of the 1880s can be seen as part of that effort. While the authorities were primarily motivated by a desire to improve urban public health and safety, reform efforts were also prompted by a desire to eliminate visible traces of squalor and thereby project an outward image of order and salubrity.

918 Iokibe Kaoru. Jōyaku kaisei-shì: hōken kaifuku e no tenbō to nashonarizumu. Tokyo: Yūhikaku, 2010. The term “unequal treaties” refers to a series of international agreements that Japan concluded between 1854 and 1875 with the United States, United Kingdom, France, Holland, Prussia, Portugal, Italy, and Russia. Although the specific terms of each treaty varied, they generally granted foreign nationals the right of extrerritoriality and called for the establishment of treaty ports and foreign concessions.
Entering the twentieth century, officials in Osaka also came to view slum reform as an essential prerequisite for the cultivation of a healthy and productive labor force. Reformers, such as Osaka’s seventh mayor Seki Hajime, argued that Japan would never be able to compete with its industrial rivals in the West, if the nation’s unskilled laborers and factory hands were forced to live in squalid and overcrowded urban slum districts. Poor housing conditions, Seki asserted, diminished the strength of the Japanese labor force and reduced its total productive capacity. Accordingly, he and other city officials began to call for the demolition and hygienic remaking of such districts. They argued that privately managed back-alley tenements should be replaced with publicly administered apartment blocks. This, officials believed, would make it possible to guarantee that low-income city residents had stable access to housing that was both affordable and hygienic. This arrangement, the authorities claimed, would make it possible to directly monitor the physical condition and behavior of the city’s poor, a group that continued throughout the first half of the twentieth-century to be viewed as a serious threat to urban security and political stability.

Many of these ideas were put into practice in the late 1920s as part of the Home Ministry-directed Substandard Housing District Reform Project. Unlike the slum clearances carried out in Tokyo, Osaka, and Kobe in the late-nineteenth century, which were designed to permanently displace the urban poor, the project was intended to encourage their controlled socio-economic integration through the hygienic reconstruction of the communities in which they lived. Between 1928 and 1944, the city government reconstructed a total of 13 slum districts on the city’s south end. Although they planned to carry out the reform of at least a dozen more, funding restrictions and a
lack of construction materials forced the authorities to suspend the project indefinitely at the end of the Pacific War. Although they succeeded in remaking some of the city’s largest and longest-standing slum districts, hundreds of small-scale slums continued to dot the city periphery. Although many such districts were destroyed during the Allied bombing raids carried out over Osaka in the spring and summer of 1945, the reform of those that remained in place would have to wait until the era of postwar reconstruction.

As Mizuuchi Toshio has shown, the reform of prewar slum districts moved forward rapidly during the late 1950s and early 1960s as Japan began to reemerge from the devastation of the Pacific War. At the same time, dramatic economic growth during the late 1950s and 1960s significantly raised the living standards of most of the Japanese population. In the process, poverty shifted from a widespread condition affecting a broad swath of the national population to one associated only with groups on the margins of society, such as urban day laborers (hiyatoi rōdōsha).

During the early 1960s, in an effort to concentrate all visible traces of poverty in a single controlled district, the authorities in Osaka moved to create what Professor Mizuuchi has termed the Airin taisei, or “Airin System.” Airin is the official name for postwar Osaka’s large-scale day laborer district, Kamagasaki. City officials attempted to encourage the city’s destitute to seek residence in Airin by relocating many of Osaka’s major social welfare institutions, including the Osaka Municipal Welfare Center, to the area and by permitting hundreds of low-cost boarding houses known as doya to operate with limited governmental interference. Although this system enabled the authorities to

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921 Ibid.
prevent the spread of poverty around the city area, it also transformed Airin into one of Japan’s most volatile urban districts. Beginning with the first Kamagasaki street riot in 1961, the area came to serve as the site of some of postwar Japan’s most violent labor riots. Since the 1990s, the area has also emerged as the focal point of two relatively recent urban problems: homelessness and methamphetamine (kakuseizai) addiction. In a future study, I plan to examine the development of poverty management policy in postwar Osaka leading up to and including the formation of the Airin system. In an era in which urban poverty is once again returning to the mainstream in Japan, such a study will no doubt help to reveal the historical causes and character of contemporary impoverishment.
MAP 1. THE CITY OF OSAKA AND SURROUNDING COUNTIES (1886)

Naimushō chirikyoku zusekika, ed. Ōsaka jissokuzu. Osaka: Naimushō chirikyoku zuseika, 1886.
MAP 2. OSAKA’S FOUR WARDS AND HIGASHINARI AND NISHINARI COUNTIES (1872)

MAP 3. NAGAMACHI (1872)

MAP 4. SOUTHERN OSAKA AND NISHINARI COUNTY (LATE-NINETEENTH CENTURY)

Map 5. THE NIPPONBASHI AREA (1918)

MAP 6. HACHIJŪKEN-NAGAYA (1924)

FIGURE 1. THE HACHIJÛKEN-NAGAYA SLUM (1928)

This photo is property of Osaka Nakanoshima Prefectural Library.
FIGURE 2. POST-REFORM HACHIJŪKEN-NAGAYA (1931)

This photo is property of Osaka Nakanoshima Prefectural Library.
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