

# Problems with References to Historical Documents in J. M. Ramseyer, “On the Invention of Identity Politics: The Buraku Outcastes in Japan” / M. Ramseyer “On the Invention of Identity Politics : The Buraku Outcastes in Japan”における歴史研究への言及の問題点

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The Japanese version of this article follows the English translation. 日本語版が英語版の後に掲載されています。

I consider problems in the references to the history of Buraku in J. M. Ramseyer’s article, “On the Invention of Identity Politics: The Buraku Outcastes in Japan”, published in *Review of Law and Economics* in 2019. As a researcher on the history of those who had been subjected to discrimination in the early-modern era, mainly in East Japan, I would like to point out problems in the article, focusing on its references to and quotations from previous works.

The author calls the Suiheisha an organization that advocated for Buraku liberation, a “nominal human rights organization”, stating that he would trace “the creation of a largely fictive identity for Japan’s putative outcastes” and that “most burakumin are descended not from leather-workers, but from poor farmers” (1). And in chapter IV Pre-modern antecedents, he describes the history of Buraku by referring to and quoting from a number of previous works.

In the references to and quotations from the works of different Japanese researchers on the history of Buraku in this chapter, however, the author pulls out parts of the descriptions that suit his arguments ignoring their context including what these works shed light on in their totality and how they viewed the history of Buraku.

This kind of reference to previous works is, in my opinion, academically unfaithful and inappropriate. The author’s arguments, based on inappropriate references and quotations, hardly hold true. In the following, I comment on particularly problematic parts of inappropriate references to and quotations from previous works.

In his “Introduction” (30-31) to the chapter IV Pre-modern antecedents, the author states, “the vast majority of the ancestors of the modern burakumin never dealt with dead animals at all. Instead, they farmed” and quotes from Usui Hisamitsu (Usui 1991, 20):

“In Hyogo, the business of the buraku was agriculture. Overwhelmingly, the members of the buraku did the same work as the other townspeople and farmers.”

He also quotes from Fujisawa Seisuke, (Fujisawa 2018, 115):

“The earlier theory [that chōri and kawata were prohibited from being involved in farming] is clearly wrong.”

Both Usui and Fujisawa discuss, however, why chōri / kawata had status-specific duties, including the disposal of dead cattle and horses and had been subjected to discrimination in spite of the fact that they were involved in farming and had living conditions similar to farmers in some respects. Both thus stress that there must be a clear distinction made between how they earn their livelihood and their duties deriving from their status. On the same page from which the author makes the above-mentioned quotation, Usui states:

It is impossible to write a realistic history of Buraku (...) without providing historical descriptions on the basis of strict distinctions between their duties, which were imposed on them due to their status as outcastes and led to unique treatment with contempt and antagonism, and their actual businesses for livelihood. (Usui 1991 20)

In the article quoted by the author, Fujisawa also criticized previous work on Buraku history, in which “the involvement of chōri / kawata in productive pursuits including leather work has been regarded passively and negatively” and sought “to identify historical characteristics of the businesses and duties of chōri / kawata, with a view to considering their social positions in society”, having confirmed that those people were involved in different kinds of productive activities, including farming (Fujisawa 2018 115). The author ignores the academic intention of Usui and Fujisawa, simply picking

up the parts that can conveniently be “utilized” for his argument that “kawata were poor farmers”. Although it is necessary, as Usui and Fujisawa emphasize, to make “strict distinctions between those duties, which were imposed on them due to their status as outcastes and led to unique treatment with contempt and to antagonism, and their actual businesses for livelihood”, the author lacks such a perspective. Although some chōri / kawata were involved in agricultural management at a level comparable to farmers, they were nevertheless not regarded as being equal to farmers and were subjected to discrimination. This problem, which should be explored further, is completely ignored by the author.

In addition, the author argues that “[t]he pre-modern antecedents to the buraku were not a guild of leather workers” (31) on the basis of an erroneous premise. While the author uses the word “guild” in general terms without indicating particular definitions, the concept of “guild” has been addressed in academic studies of Buraku history in the context of the exploration of how chōri / kawata in pre-modern times were theoretically conceptualized in relation to Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*. This is pointed out in the work of Minegishi Kentarō (Minegishi 1996, 224-229), which is quoted by the author in his article. The group of chōri / kawata in pre-modern times cannot be seen simply as a “guild”, or a craft association involved in leather work. However, leather work (in particular, skinning of dead cattle and horses for the production of the hide) was only undertaken by chōri / kawata, and farmers in general were not involved in such work.

The author attempts to regard the relationship between chōri / kawata and the leather industry as extremely weak, linking with his argument that “[t]he pre-modern antecedents to the buraku were not a guild of leather workers” (*italics added*). Building on this point,

he states that skinning rights did not inhere to the chōri / kawata as a group but was bought, sold and pledged as “shares” (34). This is not wrong in itself. The author also states, however, that “shares could be - and occasionally were - transferred to commoner villagers” (34). Could commoner villagers have obtained skinning rights?

One of the sources relied upon by the author on this issue is Usui Hisamitsu (Usui 1991, 205). While Usui states that “in this period between the end of the medieval and early modern ages (...), the right to [danna-ba] (an area under the charge of a group of chōri / kawata where they perform their status-specific duties) was widely bought and sold across social status”, he also writes, immediately before this sentence, “In the early modern ages, this right to [danna-ba] was uniquely attributed to kawata and never transferred to those belonging to other statuses”. In other words, Usui states that the transfer of the right to danna-ba to those who were not kawata occurred only in the period between the end of the medieval and early modern ages. In addition, Minegishi Kentarō and Nobi Shōji point out that there is room for consideration as to what constituted “the right to danna-ba” that was bought and sold in this particular period (Minegishi 1996, 250; Nobi 2007, 48-56). “The right to danna-ba” did not consist only of the skinning right. Attention should be paid to this aspect, which the author does not do.

The author refers to several studies other than Usui 1991 as sources for his argument. These works do not state, however, that “the shares [to the skinning right] could be - and occasionally were - transferred to commoner villagers”. One of the sources relied upon by the author, Matsuoka Hideo (Matsuoka 1975, 24-25), does not substantiate the author’s argument. Matsuoka states, “Kyūemon [who pledged his shares of danna-ba as security for a loan] did not relinquish his shares of the skinning rights; he kept his shares, continued

to dispose of dead cattle and horses and gave all the products to the lender”. Kyūemon thus kept his shares of danna-ba. In addition, his lender was “Ikedaya Tōgorō, of a kawata village called Watanabe Village”, who was a trader of leather products made in kawata villages and not one of the “commoner villagers”. Skinning of dead cattle and horses as well as sales of the disposed skins were duties uniquely attributed to chōri / kawata, and farmers in general did not and could not take part in this business. Proof to the contrary has not been submitted in the academic works on Buraku history so far; the author is not successful in providing counterevidence to the common view on this issue, either. The author’s argument does not hold water.

The non-involvement of “commoner villagers in the skinning of dead cattle and horses and hide production was related to the issue of “ritual uncleanness” (31), a concept denied by the author. In *Hyōgo no Burakushi 1*, which is often quoted by the author, Usui Hisamitsu refers to the “intensive perception of uncleanness”, which had continued since before the early-modern age, as the reason why kawata were regarded as outcastes, distinct from common craftsmen, even though the former had many characteristics in common with the latter (Usui 1991, 442-443). The author’s argument that “[t]he pre-modern antecedents to the buraku were not a guild of leather workers” and that they were “farmers” thus does not hold water, because it is a misdirected response to an out-of-focus question by way of inappropriate references to and quotations from previous works.

Moreover, the author apparently does not pay particular attention to “danna-ba” when he discusses the rights of chōri / kawata with regard to the skinning of dead cattle and horses and hide production. “Danna-ba” is “an area under the charge” of a group of chōri / kawata when they perform their status-specific duties. Status-specific “duties” of chōri /

kawata, such as disposal of dead cattle and horses, execution-related works, prison guards and village guards, were performed in specific areas called “danna-ba”. This is an important issue in the examination of the social character of chōri / kawata in the pre-modern age, which cannot be ignored. The author makes few references to “danna-ba”, however, and apparently has not consulted recent academic works (for example, Okuma Tetsuo et al, *Danna-ba* (Okuma et al. 2011). While the phrase “a designated area” (34) seems to refer to “danna-ba”, this expression is not appropriate because “danna-ba” were not “designated” by farmers or rulers.

The author argues that it was possible for chōri / kawata to become farmers or commoners and vice versa (“commoners could acquire kawata status” and “some kawata exited their status and became commoners”, 32), implying that there was mobility in social status in the Edo period (the Tokugawa period). Is this a sound argument?

In this regard, the author relies upon Hatanaka Toshiyuki, (1977, 110-111), in which he takes up a case in which a commoner in an Osaka town moved into a kawata village. Nobi Shōji criticized Hatanaka’s interpretation of the case (Nobi 1997), pointing out that the commoner who moved into a kawata village in this case lived in a rented house and was involved in the setta [leather-soled sandals] industry in Osaka, where the production and sale of setta developed in the late pre-modern period. Given the fact that setta workers in general were treated with contempt, Nobi continues, the case cannot be treated as a basis for the argument that there was mobility in pre-modern social status in general and that there were no obstacles to a change of status. Other sources cited by Hatanaka (1977, 69-80) and Watanabe Hiroshi (1977, 127) do not substantiate the author’s argument. Hatanaka (1977 69-80) cites a case in a kawata village, which had been annexed to a farming village

and sought independence from that village; this is not a case of status mobility. Watanabe (1977, 127) discusses how pre-modern disadvantaged social status was formulated and, in this context, refers to reports in the *Zenkoku Minji Kanrei Ruishū* [National Compilation of Civil Customs], compiled in 1880 by the Ministry of Justice (based on hearings concerning local civil customs across the country, which were relied upon in the absence of the national civil code), indicating that some local customs permitted “eta” to become commoners if they had not been involved in skinning for three generations or there were areas composed of hinin only in the absence of people called “eta”. These are exceptional cases and cannot be generalized. The author’s argument that there were no obstacles to a change of status is thus groundless.

Relying primarily upon Saitō and Ōishi (1995), the author argues that it is not correct to talk of the pre-modern “class hierarchy” in terms of the “four-plus-outcaste class structure” (samurai, farmer, artisan, merchant, and eta-hinin, 36).

Saitō and Ōishi criticized the expression “samurai, farmer, artisan, merchant, and eta-hinin” as a way of explaining the social status system in the Edo period because they consider it “inadequate to perceive the social status system in the Edo period simply through a form of hierarchy” in order to understand why disadvantaged groups in the Edo period, including chōri / kawata, were subject to serious forms of discrimination (1995, 40). Saitō and Ōishi also state that, in the Edo period, “discrimination penetrated the society as a whole” and “no one could be free from discrimination” (ibid, 48). The Edo period was characterized as “the status-discrimination society”, where differences in social status and the hierarchy of family status were highlighted in different settings. Saitō and Ōishi seek to shed light on these forms of discrimination,

prevalent in every nook and cranny of society in the Edo period, focusing on those who were subject to status-based discrimination. They criticize the expression “four-plus-outcaste class structure” because they consider it impossible to have an accurate understanding of the “truth of the status-discrimination society” on the basis of terms that do not reflect reality. (This is the implication of the title of their book.) They do not argue that the class hierarchy was not a major issue and there was no discrimination in the Edo period or that outcastes did not exist in the Edo period.

The author ignores the academic intention of Saitō and Ōishi and simply “utilizes” their argument that the pre-modern “class hierarchy” composed of the “four-plus-outcaste class structure” lacked substance for his own argument that the antecedents to Burakumin were not “outcastes”.

In the section “Making sense of kawata” (38), the author states that “kawa” in kawata might come from “river” instead of “hide” or “leather” (all of which are pronounced “kawa” in Japanese) on the basis of his argument that the antecedents to Burakumin were “poor farmers”. He goes on to state, “several Tokugawa era impoverished families decided to leave their homes. ... Migrants looking for unclaimed land ... would have found it on the river banks. ... As the migrants settled in the dry river bed (called kawara) or along the river banks, they became “kawara mono” – people of the river bed”. The term “kawara mono” refers to leather workers in the medieval ages, however, and the references relied upon by the author (Watanabe 1977, 257-258; Usui 1991, 63; Saitō and Ōishi 1995, 64-66) do not discuss the Edo period. The author’s descriptions are totally groundless.

In addition, the author states that seventeenth century peasants were rarely able to write and that “kawata” was not a written term for them, also suggesting that the description of the word

“eta” in the Chinese characters indicating “uncleanliness” was not common by referring to Kida Sadakichi, (1919). In his article, Kida discusses different peoples who had been discriminated against in the medieval ages and who might have links to eta (chōri / kawata) in later ages. While he states at the beginning that “I feel very uncomfortable about the use of the characters indicating ‘uncleanliness’ when the word ‘eta’ is written in Chinese characters”, Kida does not question the use of “an obscure 18-stroke character” by farmers in the 17th century as the author argues.

The author’s claim that “Seventeenth century peasants were rarely able to write” raises a suspicion that he might have developed his historical views without reading historical documents written by commoners of those days at all. It is well-known that the literacy rate was high among commoners in the Edo period. Yoshida Tsutomu highlights the fact that some chōri had not only literacy but also high levels of culture and education in a volume JMR claims to have read (Yoshida 2018). It is incomprehensible that the author appears to ignore this and other academic findings.

I have to say that the author’s argument in the section “Making sense of kawata” is nothing but groundless casual notions. Although one may be free to say such things in literary jottings or chatting while drinking, I do not think it appropriate that they constitute part of an academic article.

In light of what I have pointed out above, I have to say that the author’s argument about Buraku history is not developed on the basis of sufficient understanding of the previous works or reliable historical documents; rather, the author arranged his loose notions into an academic format by arbitrarily quoting parts of previous works that seem to fit his own views. Such an approach raises doubts not only about the reliability of the author’s work in his primary specialty but also about the academic



journal that published it in terms of a peer review process which may impair its authority.

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2019年の**Review of Law and Economics** に掲載された**J. M. Ramseyer**による表記の論文において、被差別部落の歴史について言及されている部分には問題があると考えます。東日本を中心に近世の被差別民の歴史を研究してきた立場から、特に、この論文の先行研究の参照・引用の仕方を中心に問題点を指摘したい。

著者は、部落の解放を標榜する団体を「名前だけの人権団体“nominal human rights organization””と呼び、その「日本におけるカースト外の存在であるとの架空のアイデンティティの創造“creation of a largely fictive identity for Japan’s putative outcaste””を明らかにする、と述べ、「多くの『部落民』の先祖は、皮革の仕事をしていたものではなく、貧しい農民であった“most burakumin are descended not from leather-workers , but from poor farmers”」と述

べる (p.1)。そして、IV Pre-modern antecedents (30-39) において、被差別部落の歴史について、多くの先行研究を参照・引用しつつ叙述されている。

しかし、この節におけるさまざまな日本の部落史研究者の業績の参照・引用は、それらの先行研究が全体としてどのようなことを明らかにしているか、また、その研究が部落史研究の中でどのような位置づけにあるか、といった文脈を無視して、自分の主張に都合のよい記述だけを部分的に抜き出している

このような先行研究の参照の仕方は、研究者の姿勢として誠実さを欠き、不適切なものであると考える。そして、不適切な参照・引用にもとづく著者の主張は成り立ちがたいものである。

以下、こうした問題のある先行研究の参照・引用につき、特に問題があると考えられる部分について、具体的に述べる。

IV Pre-modern antecedents の冒頭の A Introduction (30-31) において、「近代の部落民の圧倒的多数の先祖は死んだ動物を取り扱ってはいなかった。そうではなく彼らは農業をおこなっていた。“The vast majority of the ancestors of the modern burakumin never dealt with dead animals at all. Instead, they farmed.”」と述べ、臼井寿光『兵庫の部落史』1 (Usui 1991 20) を引用する

兵庫県域では、部落の生業は何よりも農業であり、他の町人・百姓と類似のものが圧倒的だったのである。」

“In Hyōgo, the business of the buraku was agriculture. Overwhelmingly, the member of the buraku did the same work as the other townspeople and farmers.”

また、同様に藤沢靖介「長吏・かわたの生業と役割」(『東日本の部落史』Ⅲ・Higashi 2018 115) も引用されている。

「今日では(長吏・わかたは農業を禁じられたという)旧説の間違いは明瞭になっている。」

“The earlier theory is clearly wrong”

しかし、臼井も藤沢も、長吏・かわたは、農業をおこない、ある面では農民同様の生活実態があったにもかかわらず、死牛馬の処理をはじめとする身分固有の役割を持ち、差別をされたことの原因を問題として論じている。そのため、臼井も藤沢も、生活の糧を得るための生業 (business) と身分にともなう役割 (duty) を明確に区別しなくてはならないとしている。臼井は、著者が引用文を引いた同じページで、次のように述べている。

「賤民身分ゆえに強制された独特の賤視や対立を生み出す役負担と、彼らの生業を厳密に区別し歴史的に描かなければ、(中略) 生きた部落史を書くことはできないのである。(Usui 1991 20)

また、藤沢も、これまでの部落史研究においては「皮革業や様々な生産的営みへの長吏・かわたのかかわりは、消極的・否定的にみられていた」ことを批判し、農業も含め、さまざまな生産的活動にかかわった事実を確認した上で、「長吏・かわたの生業と役割の歴史的特質を取り出し、その社会的位置を検討」することを著者が引用した論文の課題として設定していた (Higashi 2018 115)。著者は、こうした臼井や藤沢の研究の意図を無視して、「かわたは貧しい農民である」という自分の主張の論拠につごうよく「流用」できる言葉を切り取っているにすぎない。臼井と藤沢が強調するように「賤民身分ゆえに強制された独特の賤視や対立を生み出す役負担と、彼らの生業を厳密に区別」することが必要なのだが、著者にはそのような視点が欠落している。長吏・かわたのうち、ある者は百姓と遜色ない農業経営を行っていたが、それにもかかわらず、百姓と同様とはみなされず差別をうけた。この問題が問われなくてはならないが、著者はこのことを全く無視している。

また著者の「前近代における部落の先祖は皮革業者の「ギルド」ではなかった (The pre-modern antecedents to the buraku were not a guild of leather workers.)」(31) という主張は、その前提が誤りである。著者は「ギルド」という言葉を、特に定義せず、一般名詞として用いているが、部落史の研究で「ギルド」が問題とされるのは、前近代の長吏・かわたを、マルクス＝エンゲルスの『ドイツ・イデオロギー』とのかかわりにおいて、理論的にどのように位置づけるか、という文脈の中でのことである。この点については、著者も引用する峯岸賢太郎

の著書でも述べられている (Minegishi 1996 224-229)。前近代の長吏・かわた集団を、単純に「ギルド」すなわち、皮革業にかかわる同業者の組合と見なすことはできない。しかし、皮革業、特に死んだ牛馬の皮を剥いで原皮を生産することは、長吏・かわただけがおこなった仕事であり、一般の百姓たちはそれをおこなわなかった。

著者は、「前近代における部落の先祖は皮革業者の「ギルド」ではなかった」という主張と関連させて、長吏・かわたと皮革業の関係を非常に小さいものと評価しようとしているようである。そのような観点から、長吏・かわた集団の全員が、死牛馬の皮を剥ぐ権利を持っていたのではなく、その権利は「株 ("shares")」として質入れや売買されたと述べる (34)。このこと自体は誤りではない。だが著者は「一般の百姓身分の者の手に (皮革を扱う権利である) 「株」が移動することがあった (the shares could be - and occasionally were - transferred to commoner villagers)」とも述べる (p.34)。死牛馬の皮を剥ぐ権利は、一般の村の住人も持つことができたのだろうか。

このことについて、著者が典拠とする文献のひとつは、白井寿光『兵庫の部落史』1 (Usui 1991 205) である。白井は、ここで、「中世末～近世初頭のこの時期には (略)、 (旦那場の) 権利は身分を超えて広く売買されていた。」と述べてはいるが、この文のすぐ前の部分では「近世ではこの (旦那場の) 権利は皮田独自の所有として、決して他身分に渡ることがなかったが、」と書いている。白井はここで、かわた以外の身分の者が旦那場の権利を手に入れることがあるのは、中世末～近世初頭に限定される、と述べている。また、この時期に売買される「旦那場の権利」の内容が何か、検討の余地があることについては峯岸とのび しょうじの指摘がある (Minegishi 1996 250・Nobi 2007 48-56)。「旦那場の権利」は、死牛馬の皮を剥ぐ権利だけではない。このことには注意が必要であるが、著者はこの点についての配慮が欠けている。

著者は Usui 1991 のほかにも複数の文献を自分の主張の典拠としてあげている。しかし、これらの文献は「一般の百姓身分の者の手に株 (皮革を扱う権利) が移動することがあった (the shares could be - and occasionally were - transferred to commoner villagers)」とは述

べていない。著者が典拠とした文献の一つ、松岡秀夫「部落保護政策批判」が引用する旦那場の株の質入れについての史料 (Matsuoka 1975 24-25) は、著者の主張を裏付けるものではない。松岡は、「 (旦那場の株を担保に借金をした) 久右衛門は斃牛馬処理の権利株を手離した訳ではなく、株を所有して斃牛馬の処理は行ないながらその製品はすべて貸主へ差し出す」こととしたもの、と述べている。旦那場の株は、久右衛門が保持し続けている。また、久右衛門に金を貸したのは「渡辺村 池田屋藤五郎」つまり、かわたの村の皮革を扱う商人であり、「一般の百姓身分の者 "commonervillagers"」ではない。死牛馬の皮を剥ぐこと、剥いだ皮を売買することは長吏・かわたの身分に固有の役割であり、一般の百姓は手を出さない・出せない領域であった。このことに対する反証は、現在までの部落史研究成果の中では提出されていない。また、著者もこの問題について通説への反証を提示できてはいない。著者の主張は成り立たない。

そして、一般の百姓身分の者たち "commoner villagers" が、死牛馬の皮剥ぎ、原皮の生産にかかわらなかったことは、著者が否定する「ケガレ "ritual uncleanliness"」の問題 (31) とかかわっている。白井寿光は、著者が度々引用する『兵庫の部落史』1 において、かわた身分の者たちが職人と多くの共通点をもちながら、一般の職人と異なる賤民と見なされた理由を、近世より以前から続く「強烈な不浄観」であった、と述べている (Usui 1991 442-443)。著者の「部落民の先祖は皮革業のギルドではなく、農民である」という主張は、先行研究を不適切に参照・引用しながら、誤った設問に的外れに答えているものであり、成り立たない。

また、著者は長吏・かわたの死牛馬の皮剥ぎ、原皮の生産にかかわる権利について論じる際、「旦那場」に特に注意を払っていないようである。「旦那場」は、長吏・かわたが身分に固有の役を務める際の「受持ち区域」である。長吏・かわたが行う身分にともなう「役」、すなわち死牛馬の処理や処刑にかかわる業務、牢屋の番、村の警備といったことは、「旦那場」という区域を限って行われた。「旦那場」は、近世における長吏・かわたの社会的性格を検討するとき、重要な論点であり、無視することはできない。しかし、著者は「旦那場」について特に言及せず、最近の研究成果 (例えば、大熊哲雄ほか『旦那場』Ookuma et al 2011) も参照していな



いようである。34ページにおいて“a designated area”と書いているのが「旦那場」を意味していると思われるが、「旦那場」は百姓や支配者から「指定される」ものではない。この表現は不適切である。

著者は、長吏・かわたが百姓・町人になることも、その逆も可能であった (“commoners could acquire kawata status.” “some kawata exited their their status and become commoners” 32)、と述べ、江戸時代の身分は流動的であったかのように述べている。この指摘は妥当だろうか。

身分の移動に関して著者が依拠している畑中敏之『「かわた」と平民』(Hatanaka 1977 110-111)があげている、大坂で町人がかわた村に移住している事例の解釈については、のび しょうじによる批判がある(Nobi 1997)。近世後期、雪駄の製造販売業が展開した大坂で、雪駄にかかわる仕事をしてきた借家住まいの町人がかわた村内に移住したという事例であり、雪駄職全体が賤視されていたという状況があったことをふまえると、これをもって一般的に近世の身分は流動的で身分の変更には障害はなかったことの根拠にはできない、という批判である。また、このほかに、典拠としてあげている畑中(Hatanaka 69-80)と、渡辺広『未解放部落の形成と展開』(Watanabe 1977 127)には、著者の主張の裏付けとなるようなことは書かれていない。Hatanaka 1977 69-80で検討されているのは、百姓の村落の「枝村」となっていたかわた村が、百姓村からの独立を求めた事例で、身分の移動の問題ではない。Watanabe 1977 127では、近世の被差別身分がどのように形成されてきたか、を論じる中で、1880(明治13)年に、政府の司法省が編纂した『全国民事慣例類集』(民法に代わるものとして、全国各地の民事にかかわる慣例を聞き取り調査し、まとめた書物)の中に、「えた」が三代にわたって皮剥ぎの仕事をしなかった場合に平民となることを認める慣例のある地方や、「えた」と呼ばれる人々が存在せず非人ばかりであった地方がある、という報告があることに触れているだけである。これらは、例外的な事例であり一般化はできない。「身分の変更には障害はなかった」という主張は、根拠のないもので成り立たない。

また、主に斎藤洋一と大石慎三郎『身分差別社会の真実』(Saitō and Oishi 1995)に依拠し、いわゆる「士農工商・えた一非人」という言葉

で近世の身分の序列“class hierarchy”を表現することが正しくないと述べる(p.36)。

斎藤・大石が、「士農工商・えた一非人」という言葉で江戸時代の身分制度を表現することを批判したのは、長吏・かわたを始めとする江戸時代の被差別民がきびしく差別された理由を明らかにするには、「一つの序列だけで江戸時代の身分制度をとらえるのでは不十分」(Saitō and Oishi 1995 40)と考えるからである。また、斎藤・大石は、江戸時代においては「社会全体が差別によってつらぬかれて」おり、「差別から自由であることはだれにもできなかった」(ibid 48)と述べている。江戸時代は、さまざまな場面で身分の違いや家格の上下が問題にされる「身分差別社会“the status-discrimination society”」であった。斎藤・大石は、このような江戸時代の社会のあらゆるところにある差別について、被差別身分とされた人々に焦点をあてつつ、明らかにしようとしている。斎藤・大石が「士農工商一えた・非人“four-plus-outcaste class structure”」という言葉で批判するのは、実態と異なる言葉を用いているのは、「身分差別社会の真実“The Truth about the Status-discrimination society”」を明らかにできないと考えるからである。(これが、斎藤・大石の著書のタイトルに込められた意味である。)斎藤・大石は、江戸時代において、身分の序列は大きな問題ではなく差別はなかった、とか、江戸時代にアウトカーストは存在しなかった、と言っているのではない。

著者は、斎藤・大石のこうした研究の意図を無視し、「士農工商・えた一非人」という近世の身分の序列“class hierarchy”が実体をともなったものでないことを、部落民の先祖は「アウトカースト」ではないという、自分の主張の論拠に「流用」しているにすぎない。

著者は、「かわたの意味を理解する“Making sense of kawata”」という節(p.38)において、「部落民の先祖は貧しい農民であった」という自説を踏まえ、「かわた」の「かわ」は「皮・革」ではなく「川」に由来するのではないかと述べる(日本語では、「皮・革」も「川」も、“Kawa”と発音する)。「江戸時代に貧困に陥った家族は家を捨てることを決意した、移住者たちは河原に持ち主のいない土地を見つけた、河原に住んだ者たちは「河原者」と呼ばれた“several Tokugawa era impoverished families

decided to leave their homes. …Migrants looking for unclaimed land…would have found it on the river banks. …As the migrants settled in the dry river bed (called kawara) or along the river banks, they became “kawara mono”—people of the river bed.”」等と書いている。だが、「河原者」とは中世に皮革の生産をおこなった者たちをさす言葉で、著者が依拠している文献 (Watanabe 1977 257-258、Usui 1991 63、Saitō・Oishi 1995 64-66) も、江戸時代について述べたものではない。著者の記述は、まったく根拠がない。

さらに、17世紀の農民たちは、めったに文字を書くことはなく、「かわた」という言葉は書き言葉ではなかったといい、さらに喜田貞吉「エタ源流考」(Kida 1919)を参照しつつ、「穢多」という漢字表記も一般的ではなかったのではないかと、とも述べる。喜田貞吉の論考は、えた(長吏・かわた)につながるさまざまな中世の被差別民について検討したもので、冒頭で「えたと漢字で表記する際に「けがれ」を表す漢字が用いられることは大変に不快である」と述べているが、著者が言うように、17世紀の農民が「18画もあるよくわからない漢字“an obscure 18-stroke character”」を用いたことに疑問を呈しているわけではない。

「17世紀の農民は、めったに文字を書くことはなかった (Seventeenth century peasants rarely wrote.)」という記述からは、著者は当時の庶民が書き残した史料(古文書)を全く読まずに歴史に関する自説を組み立てたのではないかと、という疑念を生じさせる。江戸時代の庶民の識字率の高さはよく知られており、著者が藤沢清介のことは引用した『東日本の部落史』Ⅲ (Higashi 2018)には、吉田勉の論考「長吏・非人の村落文化と手習い・学問・教養」(Yoshida 2018)も収録されている。吉田は、長吏たちの中には識字能力だけでなく、高い文化・教養を身に付けていた者がいたことを紹介している。著者が、こうした研究成果を無視しているように見えるのは不可解である。

この「かわたの意味を理解する“Making sense of kawata”」という節における著者の主張は、根拠のない思い付きと言わざるを得ない。こうした議論はエッセイや酒でも飲みながらの雑談であればともかく、学術論文の一部を構成することが適切とは思われない。

以上、いくつかの点について指摘したことを踏まえれば、著者の部落史に関する議論は、これまでの先行研究を十分に理解した上で、確実な史料の裏付けをもって組み立てられたものではなく、粗雑な思い付きを、先行研究からの自説に都合のよい切り貼りによって体裁を整えたものといわざるをえない。このような論文の構成からは、著者の本来の専門領域における業績の信頼性にも疑念が生じるだけでなく、このような論文を掲載した学会誌についても、論文の審査のあり方に疑念を生じさせ、その権威が損なわれるのではないかと、との懸念を持つものである。

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弘文館

吉田勉「長吏・非人の村落文化と手習い・学問・

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See also, a special issue on [The 'Comfort Women' as Public History edited by Edward Vickers and Mark R. Frost](#).

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