

Chrysanthemum, Pine and Crane—Female Names of Meiji Period Japan

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Chryzantéma, Borovica a Žeriav—ženské mená v Japonsku v období Meidži

Resumé Článek sa venuje menám, ktoré boli dávané ženám v období Meidži (1868–1912) predtým, než sa neskôr v 20. storočí stali rozšírenými mená s koncovým 子 *-ko*. Poskytuje celkový opis týchto mien, vrátane ich spôsobu zápisu, štruktúry a významu, a ponúka pohľad na aspirácie pre dievčatá tohto obdobia a iné kultúrne motivácie pre ich pomenovanie. Taktiež objasňuje pozadie, z ktorého vzišiel dobre známy fenomén *-ko* mien.

Abstract This paper looks at names that were bestowed to women during the Meiji period (1868–1912), before names with the final 子 *-ko* became widespread later in the 20th century. It provides an overall description of these names, including their orthography, structure and meanings, offering some insight into the aspirations for girls of that period and other cultural motivations for their naming, and also the background from which the well-known phenomenon of *-ko* names arose.

Key words Japanese female names · given names · *hentaigana* · *kana* · *kanji* · Meiji period · naming practices · two-mora names

Introduction

Throughout most of the 20th century, Japanese female names were dominated by names such as *Kazuko*, *Masako*, *Yukiko*, and other such three-mora names, usually written with one or two *kanji* followed by 子 *-ko*. This trend became popular in the Taishō period (1912–1926), peaked in the 1940s, and continued until the 1980s,

when new types of names emerged,¹ but actually had its roots in the social changes that took place after the Meiji Restoration (1868).

As part of the reforms of the new Meiji government, the system of four social classes based upon Confucianism, *shi-nō-kō-shō*, i.e. samurai, farmer, artisan, and merchant, was abolished in 1869, followed by the establishment of the comprehensive Family Registry (*Koseki*) in 1872. Until that time a person could be known by several names during their lifetime, but according to the new system every individual had to be registered under just one name, consisting of family name and given name.² Another important reform was the establishment of the first public school system in 1872 to provide elementary school education for all children regardless of gender and social status.³

The social developments stimulated by these and other reforms impacted female names in various ways, including the gradual disappearance of names with meanings seen as old-fashioned, and especially in the shift from *kana* to *kanji* and the almost correspondingly rapid rise in *-ko* names. These changes, however, were not immediate, and only became apparent towards the end of the Meiji period. For most of the period the names were not much different from those bestowed before the Meiji Restoration. The following sections describe these names from the point of view of their orthography and structure, and also as to their meanings, offering some insight into the naming practice and aspirations for the newborn, including the values and priorities that were considered important or desirable during this historic period of the formation of the modern Japanese state.

- 1 See, e.g., Ivona Barešová, *Japanese Given Names: A Window Into Contemporary Japanese Society* (Olomouc: Palacký University, 2016).
- 2 E.g., Tsunoda Bun'ei 角田文衛, *Nihon no josei-me: Rekisbiteki tenbō (3) 日本の女性名—歴史的展望 (下)* [Japanese Female Names (3): A Historical View] (Tōkyō: Kyōikusha, 1988), 305.
- 3 Benjamin Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education: Constructing the National School System, 1872–1890* (New Brunswick; New Jersey; London: Rutgers University Press, 2009), 97.

1 Description of the Data

The data used for this present study come from the data collection site *Nihon no chōjusha*,⁴ a database of Japanese centenarians born between 1854 and 1908, which provides, in addition to their full names, information such as their gender, date of birth and death (except if still alive), place of residence (town and prefecture), and some additional information, such as links to newspaper articles concerning these people. Although the data have been collected for a different purpose and merely as a hobby (as stated there), they provide valuable information that can be, with a few limitations, utilized to research names that were bestowed more than a hundred years ago, in the Meiji period.

Of the 1175 names of females listed in the database, 988 were of females born in the Meiji period, i.e. between October 23, 1868 and July 30, 1912. Since there were only two names representing the concerned part of 1868 and only one for 1908 (the last year available in the database), they were excluded, leaving each year in between represented by 10-39 names, forming a corpus of 985 names.

As mentioned above, several limitations to the data had to be considered. First, Japanese names written in Chinese characters can have more than one phonological form. For example, the female name 定子, which is present in the corpus, can be read at least in two different ways, as *Sadako* and *Teiko*. The data do not, however, include the readings of the names, and thus some of the names were not analyzed in this respect. Second, the latest names are from 1907, which means that the last four and half years of the Meiji period are not covered. And third, the town and prefecture listed with each name is apparently not the place of the person's birth, but the place in which they lived as centenarians. Although it can be expected that most of these women, who had lived much of their productive lives before the end of World War Two, had not moved further than to neighboring prefectures, it is not possible to statistically examine preferences for certain names in relation to particular areas, which might have yielded interesting results.

4 »Nihon no chōjusha 日本の長寿者« [Japanese Centenarians] <datacollectionsite.web.fc2.com/> (last retrieval July 18, 2017).

2 *The Graphic Form of the Names*

Before the Meiji Restoration, the majority of female names were written in *kana*. *Kanji* were used in names of females in the Imperial and aristocratic families, and in the Edo period (1603–1868) also in samurai families and by the educated class, but for lower-class women they were somewhat taboo.⁵ According to Jugaku, in the Meiji period this situation quickly started to change.⁶ Table 1 shows the overall number of names in the corpus written in *kanji*, and this number is still quite low, only slightly exceeding 11 percent.

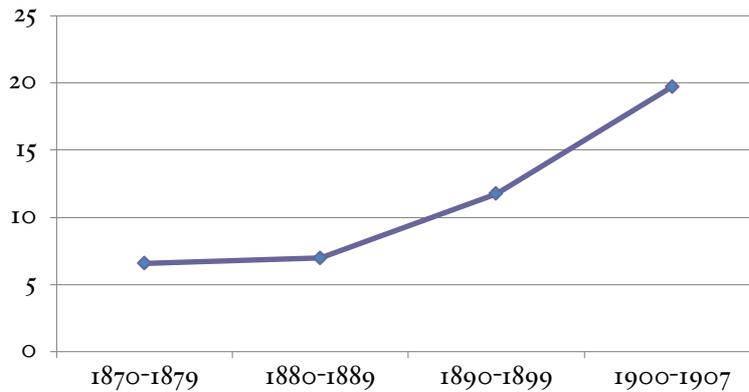
Katakana	Hiragana	Kanji	Other
48.93 %	34.52 %	11.27 %	5.28 %

Table 1
Graphic Forms of the Names.

However, the following graph shows a dramatic increase during the examined period, and by the end of the Meiji period (the examined data do not cover the remaining four and half years) the percentage would be even higher.

5 Jugaku Akiko 寿岳章子, *Nihonjin no namae* 日本人の名前 [Names of the Japanese] (Tōkyō: Taishūkan Shoten, 1979), 48.

6 *Ibid.*, 52.



Graph 1
Kanji names.

Nearly 49 percent of the names in the corpus are written in *katakana* and almost 35 percent in *hiragana*. The last category of Table 1 includes names combining *hiraganakatakana* and *kanji*, and names using *hentaigana*. *Hentaigana* are variants of *hiragana*, which are now considered obsolete, but were still used prior to the 1900 script reform,⁷ and in names they stayed in use until 1947.⁸ While nowadays each mora is, with a few exceptions, represented by only one *hiragana* character, traditionally there were generally several characters used for each mora, each based on the cursive form of a different *kanji*. *Hentaigana* characters are usually typed as the *kanji* from which they were derived (*jibo* 字母, ‘parent characters’), and thus it was not always clear whether a particular name in the corpus was originally written in *kanji* or *hentaigana*. Although it would make sense to categorize *hentaigana* together with *hiragana*, for the above reason they were

7 See, e.g., Christopher Seeley, *A History of Writing in Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1991).

8 Takada Tomokazu 高田智和, Yada Tsutomu 矢田勉 and Saitō Tatsuya 齋藤達哉, *Hentaigana no kore made to kore kara: jōbō kōkan no tame no hyōjunka* 変体仮名のこれまでとこれから—情報交換のための標準化 [The Past, Present, and Future of Hentaigana: Standardization for Information Processing], *jōbō kanri* 情報管理 58,6 (2015), 441. <doi.org/10.1241/johokanri.58.438>, (last retrieval July 20, 2017).

treated separately. Nonetheless, the prevalence of names in *katakana* is obvious. This might be explained by the fact that at that time common people used *katakana* more often than *hiragana*, which is also supported by the fact that the first elementary school textbooks published by the government in 1903 taught *katakana* before introducing *hiragana*.⁹

In addition to *bentaigana*, the historical *kana* orthography was still in use. Compared to the present orthography, it included two *kana* characters which are now obsolete: ゐ (*hiragana*)/ヰ (*katakana*) and ゑ/ヱ (originally read as /wi/ and /we/, later as /i/ and /e/, and thus now written using い/イ and え/エ, respectively). Interestingly, the old forms ゑ/ヱ can be found in the corpus more frequently than え/エ, but ゐ/ヰ are not present at all. The *kana* character を/ヲ, which is now also obsolete outside of its use as a grammatical particle, was in some words used to represent the /o/ sound (now written using お/オ). It appears in names such as *Oto* ヲト, *Nao* ナヲ, or *Misao* ミサヲ.

The *kana* characters は/ハ and へ/ヘ, which were used in some words to represent the sounds /wa/ (now わ/ワ), and /e/ (now え/エ), respectively, can be found in names such as *Iwa* イハ, *Chie* チヘ, and *Sue* すへ.

Yōon sounds (palatalized or labio-velarized syllables) such as しよ/シヨ *sho* and きよ/キヨ *kyo* were written with full-sized *kana* as しよ/シヨ *shioyo* and きよ/キヨ *kiyo*. The name *Sbun* was written, for example, as シユン (now シュン), *Hyaku* as ヒヤク (now ヒャク) and *Ryō* as リヨウ (now リョウ).

The *kana* づ/ヅ *zu* and ぢ/ヂ *ji*, in modern *kana* usage replaced (except for some special cases) with the identically-pronounced ず/ズ and じ/ジ, can likewise still be found in names: e.g., *Shizu* しづ/志づ, *Tazuyo* たづよ, *Tsuji* ツヂ, etc.

While the variety of graphic forms of current names is caused by the variety of *kanji* that can be used to accompany a chosen phonological form, with each graphic form creating a different meaning, in the examined period the variety of

9 Katō Mami 加藤麻美, »Josei no namae no hensen kara miru hondo to Okinawa no ishikisa 女性の名前の変遷から見る本土と沖縄の意識差« [Differences in Mentality between the Mainland and Okinawa as Seen from the Changes in Female Names], in *Okinawa firudo risāchi* 沖縄フィールド・リサーチ [Okinawa Field Research], ed. by Shimamura Takanori 島村恭則 and Hidaka Mizuho 日高水穂 (Akita: Akita Daigaku Kyōiku Bunka Gakubu, 2007), 133.

graphic forms was mainly a result of the historical *kana* orthography and *bentaigana* used. For example, the simple two-mora name *Sue* was found in the corpus written in *katakana* as スエ and スヱ, in *hiragana* (*bentaigana*) as すへ, すゑ and す江, and in *kanji* as 末.

3 The Name Structure

The corpus names are quite uniform in their structure and phonological length. As Table 2 shows, seven out of ten are two-mora long. The rest are three-mora names and an insignificant number of four-mora names. Several names categorized as *Not clear* are written in *kanji*, and their reading could be either two or three-mora long.

2 morae	3 morae	4 morae	Not clear
70.86 %	28.02 %	0.41 %	0.71 %

Table 2
Phonological Length of the Names in the Corpus.

Despite their short length, the two-mora names are quite rich in variety. The corpus contains 253 different phonological forms among the 698 two-mora names. The most frequent name, *Kiku* ('chrysanthemum'), has only 15 occurrences (1.52 %).

When addressing or referring to female commoners, the prefix *o*¹⁰ was often added to a two-mora name, but when addressing or referring to a woman of high social status, the honorific suffix *-ko* was added (cf., *O-Tsuru – Tsuru-ko*, *O-Haru – Haru-ko*). Three-mora names received neither *o*- nor *-ko*.

The majority of three-mora names were created by attaching a one-mora suffix to an already existing two-mora name. For example, in addition to the name *Matsu* ('pine'), which is another of the most frequent names in the corpus, names

10 This suffix was used especially with two-mora names to express respect and affection. When written in *kanji* it was usually written as 御, but sometimes also as 阿 or 於. Tsunoda Bun'ei 角田文衛, *Nihon no josei-me: Rekisibiteki tenbō* (2) 日本の女性名—歴史的展望 (中) [Japanese Female Names (2): A Historical View] (Tōkyō: Kyōikusha, 1987), 45–46.

such as *Matsue*, *Matsui*, *Matsuno*, *Matsuo*,¹¹ and *Matsuyo* can be found as well (Table 3). These names consist of what I shall call the ‘semantic core’, i.e. the part carrying the meaning the name givers chose for the child, in this case *matsu* (‘pine’), which symbolizes longevity, and a suffix, which gives the name its final phonological form.

Matsu	Matsue	Matsui	Matsuno	Matsuo	Matsuyo
13	6	1	4	2	3

Table 3
Names with the Semantic Core ‘matsu’.

The suffixes have various graphic realizations in both *kana*, which are more frequent, and *kanji*. The final *-e* is written using the characters 枝 (‘branch’), 江 (‘inlet’) and less frequently 恵 (‘blessing, grace, kindness’), *-i* is represented by the character 猪 (‘boar’), *-no* by the characters 野 (‘field, plain’) and 乃 (‘namely’, ‘in the past’, possessive particle), and *-yo* by 代 (‘age, generation’). The final *-o* is written only by *kana* in the corpus.¹²

Looking at the meanings of these *kanji* it is obvious that although the meaning of a particular character might have been in some cases also considered in combination with the semantic core, the sound of the name was of primary importance. While the *kanji* combination by which the name *Matsue* is written, 松枝 (‘pine + branch’), seems meaningful, the same cannot be said about, for example, *Miyae* 宮枝 (‘shrine + branch’).

The three-mora structure patterns under discussion appeared in the Nara and Heian period (8–12th century), but there is no documentation of their continuous use.¹³ They appeared again in the early Edo period (17th century) and their use

11 Names with the final *-o* sound masculine, as *-o* was very common in male names.

12 Tsunoda (»Nihon no josei-meï (3)«, 309) also lists 伊 (‘that one’) and 以 (‘by means of’, ‘because’, ‘in view of’, ‘compared with’) to represent *-i*, 尾 (‘slope at the foot of a mountain’), 緒 (‘cord, strap’), and 雄 (‘male, man’) for *-o* and 世 (‘age, generation’) for *-yo*, but these were not found in the corpus.

13 Tsunoda, *Nihon no josei-meï* (3), 204.

gradually increased in the late Edo period, but it was limited to certain areas at that time. In the Meiji period these patterns spread throughout the country.¹⁴

Table 4 at the end of this section summarizes their occurrence and graphic variants of the suffixes as found in the corpus. The most frequent types are those with the final *-e* and *-no*, followed by *-yo*. These three types account for more than two thirds of all the three-mora names in the corpus.

Another two suffixes that can be found in female names in this period are *-ko* and *-mi*. The former is the same *-ko* (子) that was being attached for honorific purposes to two-mora names. It was first used in female names¹⁵ in the Imperial family, probably in the Nara period (the 8th century).¹⁶ Prior to the Meiji period its use was limited to the high aristocracy, thus serving as a kind of social status marker. Unlike the other suffixes, *-ko* has significantly more occurrences written in *kanji* than *kana* (22:6), which is also related to the fact that it was used in names of higher social class, where *kanji* in female names were more common.

The latter suffix, *-mi* (美, 'beautiful'), first appeared in the late Edo period,¹⁷ and in the Meiji period this type of name was still rather scarce.

Another less frequent structure pattern that was identified in the corpus consists of the semantic core (which is again an existing two-mora name) prefixed with *ko-*. This *ko-* means 'little' (小) and was written in *kana* (as in *Kobaru* コハル, *Koshige* コシゲ or *Komatsu* こまつ), less frequently in *kanji* (*Koito* 小イト, *Komume* 小梅, *Kozuru* 小鶴). This pattern had been used since the Heian period, often to mark the relationship between a mother and her daughter or an older and younger sister.¹⁸ For example, a baby girl was named *Kobaru* ('little + spring') after her mother, whose name was *Haru* ('spring').

Four three-mora names in the corpus utilize the prefix *o-* (*Osada* オサダ, *Omatsu* オマツ, *Osugi* オスギ, and *Otei* オテイ), which was, as explained above,

14 *Ibid.*, 309.

15 Originally, the character 子 carried the meaning of 'man'. In ancient China, it meant 'respected man, *sensei*' and was used in names such as 孔子 (Confucius) or 孟子 (Mencius). In Japan, it was first used as a naming element in male names of the upper class.

16 Yamaguchi Yōji 山口 謠司, *Namae no angō* 名前の暗号 [Encryptations within Names] (Tōkyō: Shinchō Shinsho, 2013), 42.

17 Tsunoda, *Nihon no josei-me* (3), 205.

18 *Ibid.*, 204–205.

used with two-mora names (*O-Sada*, *O-Matsu*, *O-Sugi*, *O-Tei*), but in this case became an integral part of the name.

The remaining less than ten percent of the three-mora names, which do not correspond with any of the above patterns, are either a simple word or a compound. The former include, for example, names denoting plants, such as *Azusa* 梓 ('catalpa tree'), *Sakura* さくら ('cherry blossoms'), or *Sumire* すみれ ('violet'), and a few others, such as *Misao* ミサヲ ('chastity'), *Aguri* あぐり, and the Okinawan *Kamado* (the last two mentioned will be explained later). Several of the latter, dithematic¹⁹ names, have the meaning 'a thousand of...' or 'beautiful ...', such as *Chibaru* チハル ('thousand + spring'), or *Mibaru* ミハル ('beautiful + spring').

Structure pattern	Variants of the prefix/suffix	% of 3-mora names
〇〇- <i>e</i>	エ, エ, え, ゑ, 枝, 江, 恵	27.54
〇〇- <i>i</i>	イ, い, 猪	1.81
〇〇- <i>no</i>	ノ, の, 野, 乃	27.54
〇〇- <i>o</i>	ヲ, お	1.45
〇〇- <i>yo</i>	ヨ, よ, 代	13.41
〇〇- <i>ko</i>	コ, こ, 子	10.14
〇〇- <i>mi</i>	ミ, み, 美	2.54
<i>Ko</i> -〇〇	こ, コ, 小	5.07
<i>O</i> -〇〇	オ, ヲ	1.45
other		9.06

Table 4
Types of the Three-mora Names in the Corpus.

4 *The Meanings (and Behind the Meanings) of the Names*

Japanese is a language with a very large number of homonyms. *Hashi*, for example, can have as different meanings as 'bridge', 'end/edge', and 'chopsticks'. Actually,

19 A name composed of two elements or 'themes'.

these three words differ in their pitch accent, and when written in *kanji* (橋, 端, 箸), the meaning is immediately clear. However, when written in the phonographic *kana* characters, they cannot be distinguished from one another. As described above, over eighty percent of the examined names are written in *kana*, and therefore their meanings can only be guessed. For example, it is clear that the name *Miyuki* written as 美雪 means ‘beautiful snow’, but when written in *katakana*, i.e. ミユキ, it could just as well mean ‘deep snow’ (深雪). Similarly, depending on the *kanji* by which it is represented, the name *Yoshi* could mean ‘good, pleasing’ (良), ‘virtue’ (淑), ‘fondness’ (好), ‘good luck, fortune’ (吉), ‘fragrance’ (芳), etc. On the other hand, the *kana* rendering can evoke all of these meanings.

While it is clear that unless the name is written in *kanji* a particular intended meaning cannot be determined with certainty,²⁰ an attempt was made to identify the meanings that are likely to have been meant when bestowing the particular name. When considering the possible meanings, the names and their translations presented in the following works, published in the Meiji or Taishō era, were consulted: »Japanese Female Names« by Lafcadio Hearn²¹ published in 1900, »Japanese Female Names of To-day« by Suzuki Sakaye²² from 1916-1917, written in criticism of Hearn’s essay, and *Japanese Names and How to Read Them: A Manual for Art Collectors and Students* by Albert J. Koop and Hogitarō Inada, published in 1923.²³

The corpus names originate in words denoting abstract notions as well as concrete objects. Based on meaning they were divided here into the following semantic groups: 1) Human virtues and other personal qualities, 2) Life conditions, 3) Numerals and order, 4) Time, 5) Plants, 6) Animals, 7) Materials and related

20 There are some cases, though, when a particular variant of the historical *kana* orthography determines the meaning of the word. For example, *Fuji* could refer either to Mount Fuji or wistaria, but Mount Fuji was rendered in historical orthography as フジ/ふじ, and wistaria as フヂ/ふぢ.

21 Lafcadio Hearn, »Japanese Female Names«, in *Shadowings* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & CO., Ltd., 1905), 105–153. Originally published in 1900.

22 Suzuki Sakaye, »Japanese Female Names of To-day«, *Transactions and Proceedings of The Japan Society* 15, 26th session (1916–1917), 1–24.

23 Albert J. Koop and Hogitarō Inada, *Japanese Names and How to Read Them: A Manual for Art Collectors and Students* (London: The Eastern Press, Limited, 1923).

activities, 8) Geographical names and features of the landscape, 9) Household and other objects, 10) Art and literature, and 11) Miscellaneous. Some names are listed in more than one category, while names with no discernible meaning are not included.

The words used as given names are of various parts of speech, most frequently nouns. Many are, however, only roots of words. For example, the root *shizu* 静 (used as the name *Shizu*) forms the adjective *shizuka* ‘quiet, peaceful’ and the verbs *shizumaru* ‘to quieten down, to calm down’ and *shizumeru* ‘to appease, to calm’. These roots will be translated here usually as abstract nouns or adjectives describing the particular quality desired for the child.

The names in the below categories are given in alphabetical order and organized based on their semantic core, accompanied by the corresponding *kanji* and English translation. Each name is listed with the graphic variants found in the corpus. Thus names denoting, for example, the above quality, are given in the following way: *shizu* (静, ‘quiet, peaceful’): *Shizu* (しづ, 志ず, 志づ, 静), *Shizue* (シズエ, 志づゑ, 志づ江, 静枝), *Shizuko* (しづこ, 静子), *Shizuno* (シズノ).

1. *Human virtues and other personal qualities*

This largest group contains names expressing various personal qualities and character traits the name givers wished for the newborn girls to possess. As was already pointed out by Hearn²⁴, there were actually few names expressing or implying physical charm. As can be seen from the list, many names expressed Confucian virtues and moral values, such as righteousness, faithfulness, virtuousness, chastity, modesty, goodness, respect and filial piety.

ai (愛, ‘love, affection’): *Ai* (アイ, 愛), *Aiko* (愛子)

chie (知恵, ‘intelligence, wisdom’): *Chie* (チヘ)

chika (親, ‘near, closely dear’): *Chika* (ちか), *Chikao* (チカヲ)

dai (大, ‘great’): *Dai* (だい)

en (艶, ‘charm, beauty’, also 圓, ‘roundness, amiability’): *En* (エン)

etsu (悦, ‘delightful, joyous’): *Etsu* (エツ, エツ, ゑつ)

24 Hearn, »Japanese Female Names«, 108.

- baya* (早, 'quick, nimble'): *Haya* (ハヤ, はや)
hide (秀/英, 'excellence'): *Hide* (ひで)
biro (広, 'broad-minded'): *Hiro* (ヒロ, ひろ)
jun (順, 'obedient, faithful'): *Jun* (ジュン)
katsu (勝, 'victory'): *Katsu* (カツ, かつ), *Katsuko* (勝子), *Katsuyo* (かつよ, 勝代)
kei (敬, 'respect'): *Kei* (けい), *Keino* (こいの)
ken (賢, 'wisdom', also 謙, 'modesty'): *Ken* (ケン, けん)
kimi (君, 'royalty', also 貴美, 'nobleness + beauty'): *Kimi* (キミ), *Kimie* (きみゑ)
kiyo (清, 'pure'): *Kiyo* (キヨ, きよ, 清), *Kiyoko* (キヨコ, キヨ子, 清子), *Kiyono* (きよの, 清野)
kō (考, 'filial piety'): *Kō* (こう)
masa (正, 'righteousness'): *Masa* (マサ, まさ), *Masae* (マサエ), *Masayo* (マサヨ, まさよ)
michi (道, 'the Way' – the right, proper way of existence): *Michi* (ミチ, みち)
misao (操, 'chastity'): *Misao* (ミサヲ)
naka (仲, 'friendship'): *Naka* (仲), *Nakano* (ナカノ)
nao (直, 'honesty'): *Nao* (ナヲ, なお, なを, 直), *Naomi* (直美)
nobu (信, 'faithfulness, trust'): *Nobu* (ノブ, のぶ, 信)
nō (能, 'ability, talent, skill'): *Nō* (のう)
ryō (良, 'good, pleasing'): *Ryō* (リヨウ, 里よう)
sada (貞, 'chastity'): *Sada* (サダ), *Osada* (ヲサダ)
sai (才, 'talented'): *Sai* (サイ)
sei (誠, 'truth'): *Sei* (せい)
setsu (節, 'fidelity'): *Setsue* (セツエ)
shin (真, 'truth', also as 信 'faithfulness, trust' above): *Shin* (シン, しん, 志ん)
shinobu (忍, 'endurance, perseverance, patience'): *Shinobu* (しのぶ, 忍)
shizu (静, 'quiet, peaceful'): *Shizu* (しづ, 志ず, 志づ, 静), *Shizue* (シズエ, 志づゑ, 志づ江, 静枝), *Shizuko* (しづこ, 静子), *Shizuno* (シズノ)
sbun (俊, 'excellence'): *Sbun* (シュン, 志ゆん)
suke (助, 'helper'): *Sukeno* (すけの)
sumi (澄, 'clearness'): *Sumi* (スミ, すみ), *Sumie* (スミエ, すみゑ)
tada (忠, 'loyalty'): *Tada* (タダ)
tae (妙, 'exquisite'): *Tae* (タエ)
taka (貴, 'honor', also 高, 'height'): *Taka* (タカ, たか), *Takano* (たかの)
tame (為, 'for the sake of'): *Tame* (タメ, ため)

tei (貞, 'chastity'): *Tei* (てい), *Otei* (をてい)
toku (徳, 'virtue'): *Toku* (トク, とく, 徳), *Tokue* (徳枝), *Tokuyo* (とくよ)
tomo (友, 'friend'): *Tomo* (トモ, とも), *Tomoe* (トモエ)
toshi (敏, 'cleverness, alertness'): *Toshi* (トシ, とし)
tsune (常, 'constancy'): *Tsune* (ツネ, つね), *Tsuneyo* (常代)
yasu (安, 'quiet, peaceful'): *Yasu* (ヤス, やす), *Yasuno* (ヤスノ)
yoshi (良/善, 'good', also 淑, 'chastity, gracefulness', also 芳 'fragrant, having good reputation'): *Yoshi* (ヨシ, よし), *Yoshie* (ヨシエ, 芳枝, 芳江), *Yoshiko* (ヨシ子), *Yoshino* (ヨシノ, よしの)
waka ('young'): *Waka* (ワカ)

2. Life conditions

Similar to wishes for desired future qualities, wishes for the girl's good future life conditions, prosperity and good fortune were also expressed. Some possibly dithematic names included in this category combine meanings from this and another category, e.g., *Fuku* (富久, 'wealth + eternity').

chika (千賀, 'thousand + joy, rejoicing'): *Chika* (ちか, 千賀)
ei (栄, 'prosperity'): *Ei* (エイ)
fuku (福, 'good fortune, good luck', and also 富久, 'wealth + eternity'): *Fuku* (フク, ふく)
fumi (富美, 'wealth + beauty'): *Fumi* (フミ)
kichi (吉, 'good luck, good fortune'): *Kichi* (キチ, きち), *Kichiyo* (吉代)
masu (増, 'increase'): *Masu* (ます), *Masue* (マスエ)
shige (繁, 'prosperity', also 茂, 'growing thickly, in abundance'): *Koshige* (コシゲ), *Shige* (シゲ, しげ, 志げ, 繁), *Shigemi* (茂美), *Shigeno* (しげの, 志げの, 繁猪, 繁野), *Shigeyo* (シゲヨ)
tami (多美, 'abundance and beauty'): *Tami* (タミ, たみ)
tomi (富, 'wealth, riches'): *Tomi* (トミ), *Tomie* (トミエ, とみゑ)
toyo (豊, 'abundance'): *Toyo* (トヨ, とよ, 豊)
yoshi (as 吉, 'good luck, good fortune' above): *Yoshiyo* (吉代), *Yoshino* (吉ノ)

3. Numerals and order

Numerals were used in names for various reasons. For example, they could refer to the date (day and/or month) or the year of the era of the child's birth. Seven has been traditionally considered a lucky number. Larger numbers such as eighty, one thousand, three thousand and ten thousand refer to longevity.

It was also common to name children based on the order of birth. The name *Kazue* (*kazu* means 'one') suggests that its bearer was the firstborn daughter, while *Mitsu* or *Mutsu* might refer to the third or sixth child, respectively. In addition to numerals, several other words expressing order were also used as names. The name *Hatsu* ('first time, beginning') was usually bestowed to the eldest daughter, and *Tsugi* ('next'), which was not, however, found in the present corpus, was used for the second-born daughter. The next daughter could be called *Naka* ('middle, the midmost'). Interestingly, if the parents did not wish to have any more children, they sometimes named their newborn girl *Sue* ('last') or *Tome* ('stop'), hoping that this one would be their last (or at least their last girl). The name *Oto*, found in the corpus, perhaps might be of the same motivation (乙 used in the meaning 'last/youngest child').

fumi (二三, 'two + three'): *Fumi* (二三)

batsu (初, 'first time, beginning'): *Hatsu* (ハツ, はつ), *Hatsue* (ハツエ, はつゑ),
Hatsumi (ハツミ), *Hatsuno* (初野), *Hatsuyo* (ハツヨ)

ichi (一, 'one'): *Ichi* (イチ, いち)

iku (幾, '(how) many'): *Iku* (幾く), *Ikue* (幾之), *Ikuyo* (幾代)

kazu (as 一, 'one' above): *Kazue* (一枝)

man (万, 'ten thousand'): *Man* (まん)

michi (三千, 'three thousand'): *Michi* (ミチ, みち)

mitsu (三, 'three'): *Mitsu* (ミツ, みつ), *Mitsue* (ミツエ, ミツエ), *Mitsuno* (ミツの²⁵),
Mitsuyo (ミツヨ)

mutsu (六, 'six'): *Mutsu* (ムツ)

naka (中, 'middle'): *Naka* (ナカ, なか), *Nakano* (ナカノ)

oto (乙, 'last, the youngest child'): *Oto* (ヲト, おと)

sen (千, 'thousand'): *Sen* (セン, せん)

shichi (七, 'seven'): *Shichi* (シチ)

25 This combination of *katakana* and *hiragana* is probably a mistake.

sue (末, 'last'): *Sue* (スエ, すへ, スエ, すゑ, す江, 末), *Sueno* (すゑの)
*tome*²⁶ (留, 'stop', in the sense of 'last'): *Tome* (トメ, とめ, 留), *Tomeno* (とめの)
yaso (八十, 'eighty'): *Yaso* (ヤソ)

4. *Time*

This group contains names related to time. They may refer to the time of birth, such as the particular season or part of the day. *Haru* ('spring') is the most frequent season used in the names in the corpus, followed by *natsu* ('summer'). Some names related to time also express longevity. *Chiyo*, which can be translated as 'thousand generations', is the third most frequent name in the corpus.

aki (秋, 'autumn'): *Aki* (アキ, あき), *Akino* (アキノ)
asa (朝, 'morning'): *Asa* (アサ, あさ), *Asae* (アサエ), *Asano* (あさの)
hide (日出, 'sunrise'): *Hide* (ひで)
chibaru (千春, 'thousand + spring'): *Chibaru* (チハル)
chitose (千歳, 'thousand + years'): *Chitose* (チトセ)²⁷
chiyo (千代, 'thousand + generations'): *Chiyo* (チヨ, ちよ, 千代), *Chiyono* (チヨノ, ちよの)
chō (as 朝, 'morning' above): *Chō* (テウ)
haru (春, 'spring'): *Haru* (ハル, はる), *Harue* (春江), *Harumi* (はるみ), *Haruno* (はるの), *Haruyo* (ハルヨ, 春代), *Kobaru* (コハル)
bisa (久, 'long time, eternity'): *Hisa* (ヒサ, ひさ), *Hisae* (ヒサエ), *Hisako* (ヒサコ)
ima (今, 'now'): *Ima* (イマ, いま)
miharu (美春, 'beauty + spring'): *Miharu* (ミハル)
natsu (夏, 'now'): *Natsu* (ナツ), *Natsuko* (ナツコ), *Natsuyo* (なつよ)
shun (as 春, 'spring' above): *Shun* (シユン, 志ゆん)
toki (時, 'time'): *Toki* (トキ, とき), *Tokiko* (トキコ)
toshi (年, 'year'): *Toshi* (トシ, とし), *Toshie* (年恵, 'years + blessing, kindness')

26 *Tome* denotes neither a number or order but it is included here because it is related to birth order and the meaning 'last'.

27 According to Suzuki (『Japanese Female Names of To-day』, 20) this name was suitable only for professional girls.

toshi (壽, 'longevity'): *Toshie* (壽恵, 'longevity + blessing, kindness')

5. *Plants*

This is another large category, consisting of names of various plants and their parts. These include several flowers and blossoming trees, a variety of evergreen plants, and also the rice plant and its grains. In addition to the generic *hana* ('flower, blossom'), the most frequent plants used in the names in the corpus are *kiku* ('chrysanthemum'), *matsu* ('pine'), *take* ('bamboo'), and *ume* ('plum'). Flowers and trees that were just in bloom were chosen to reflect the season of the girl's birth, and also to allude to the commonly held symbolism and associations with human appearance, and especially character qualities. For example, the chrysanthemum is a symbol of longevity;²⁸ lily represents purity, while hemp stands for straightforwardness.²⁹ Being the first flower to blossom still during winter, *ume* is a symbol of perseverance, strength, and of the arrival of spring. But rather than flowers that soon wither, at the time of high infant mortality, winter-resistant evergreen plants were more commonly used, such as *maki* ('podocarp'), *matsu* ('pine'), *sugi* ('cedar') and *take* ('bamboo'), representing health, longevity and constancy.

asa (麻, 'hemp'): *Asa* (アサ, あさ), *Asae* (アサエ), *Asano* (あさの)

azusa (梓, 'catalpa tree'): *Azusa* (梓)

fuyo(o) (芙蓉, 'cotton rose, hibiscus mutabilis'): *Fuyo* (フヨ, ふよ)

hana (花, 'flower, blossom'): *Hana* (ハナ, はな), *Hanae* (花枝, 葩枝), *Hanako* (はな子, 花子)

ine (稲, 'rice plant'): *Ine* (イネ)

kaya (萱, 'miscanthus'): *Kaya* (カヤ)

kiku (菊, 'chrysanthemum'): *Kiku* (キク, きく, 菊), *Kikue* (キクエ, キクエ, きくゑ), *Kikumi* (キクミ), *Kikuno* (キクノ)

kuwa (桑, 'mulberry tree'): *Kuwa* (くわ)

maki (榎, 'podocarp'): *Maki* (マキ), *Makie* (まきえ), *Makiyo* (まきよ)

²⁸ Hearn, »Japanese Female Names«, 137.

²⁹ Suzuki, »Japanese Female Names of To-day«, 12.

matsu (松, 'pine'): *Matsu* (マツ, まつ), *Matsue* (マツエ, まつえ, まつゑ, まつ江, 松枝), *Matsui* (マツイ), *Matsuno* (マツノ, まつの), *Matsuo* (まつを), *Matsuyo* (マツヨ, まつよ, 松代), *Komatsu* (コマツ, こまつ), *Omatsu* (オマツ)

nae (苗, 'seedling, sapling, shoot'): *Nae* (ナへ)

ryū (柳, 'willow'): *Ryū* (リウ, りう)

sakura (桜, 'cherry blossom'): *Sakura* (さくら)

sasa (籬, 'bamboo grass'): *Sasayo* (ササヨ)

shino (also 籬, 'bamboo grass' as above): *Shino* (シノ, 志の)

sugi (杉, 'Japanese cedar'): *Sugi* (スギ), *Sugino* (すぎの), *Sugiyo* (スギヨ), *Osugi* (オスギ)

sumire (菫, 'violet'): *Sumire* (すみれ)

tane (種, 'seed'): *Tane* (タ子, たね, たね)

take (竹 'bamboo'): *Take* (タケ, たけ), *Takeno* (タケノ), *Takeyo* (たけよ)

tsuta (蔦, 'ivy'): *Tsuta* (ツタ, つた)

(*m*)*ume* (梅, 'plum-blossom'): *Komume* (コムメ, 小梅), *Mume* (ムメ), *Mumeno* (ムメノ, む免の, む免乃), *Ume* (ウメ, うめ), *Umeno* (ウメノ, うめの, 梅の), *Umeyo* (ウメヨ)

yae (八重, 'double (-petalled), double (-flowered)³⁰): *Yae* (やゑ, 八重), *Yaeko* (八重子), *Yaeno* (ヤエノ)

yone (米, 'rice-grains'): *Yone* (ヨネ, よね, ヨ子), *Yoneno* (ヨネノ)

yuri (百合, 'lily'): *Yuri* (ユリ)

6. *Animals*

Various qualities desired in girls, and mainly wishes for their well-being were expressed through animals (both real and mythical), including quadrupeds, birds, and less frequently fish and insects. *Tsuru* ('crane') and *kame* ('tortoise'), which are said to live for a thousand or ten thousand years, respectively, and have been perceived as symbols of long life, were yet another way of wishing longevity to the newborn. Although Suzuki points out that *Kame* sounds rather vulgar,³¹ for its positive meanings it was commonly used at that time. Also names of quadrupeds,

30 Here referring to flowers with two sets of petals.

31 Suzuki, »Japanese Female Names of To-day«, 13.

such as *Koma* ('pony, filly'), *Kuma* ('bear'; not present in the corpus), *Shika* ('deer'), and *Tora* ('tiger'), Suzuki considers »very vulgar«. ³² However, even in the 1950s and 60s there were still many women all over the country with names such as *Tsuru*, *Kame*, *Tora* and *Kuma*. ³³ *Ushi* is another name that seems to denote a quadruped, the ox (牛), known for its strength, and also as one of the zodiac signs, although there might have been also other reasons for this name to be bestowed to girls in Okinawa, where it was quite common at that time.

The tiger and the mythological dragon (the symbol of good fortune, success and wealth) are another two animals of the Japanese zodiac found in the corpus. Each of the twelve animals in the zodiac is associated with a particular year, and also represents a two-hour period of the day. Thus, in addition to the qualities represented by the particular animal, the name could refer to the year or even the hour of the child's birth. Moreover, there were various regional specifics. In Nara prefecture it was apparently believed that it would bring luck to use in the name the seventh sign counted from the sign of the year in which the child was born. For example, a child born in the year of the Rat would get a name utilizing the character 馬 ('horse') instead of 子 ('rat'), and in the year of the Snake it would be the Boar. ³⁴ None of the names found in the corpus seem to follow this method, and only in some cases the year of birth matches the year of the sign used in the name. This is not surprising considering that, as mentioned above, the sign could also refer to the time of the day when the child was born, or that the *kanji* could be borrowed, for example, from the father's name, which was a very common practice.

³² *Ibid.*, 13.

³³ Kida Jun'ichirō 紀田順一郎, *Namae no nibonshi* 名前の日本史 [History of Names in Japan] (Tōkyō: Bungeishunjū, 2002), 9.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 49.

The only insect mentioned by both Hearn³⁵ and Suzuki³⁶, but not found in the corpus, is *chō*,³⁷ the butterfly, and the only fish found in the corpus is *tai*, the sea bream, which is listed by Hearn,³⁸ but doubted by Suzuki.³⁹

chidori (千鳥, 'plover'): *Chitori* (チトリ)⁴⁰

kame (亀, 'tortoise'): *Kame* (カメ, かめ), *Kameno* (カメノ, かめの), *Kami* (カミ)⁴¹

koma (駒, 'pony, filly'): *Koma* (こま, コマ)

ryō (龍, 'dragon'): *Ryō* (リョウ, 里よう)

ryū (as 龍, 'dragon' above): *Ryū* (りゅう)

shika (鹿, 'deer'): *Shika* (シカ, 子カ, 志か)

tai (鯛, 'sea bream'): *Tai* (タイ)

taka (鷹, 'hawk'): *Taka* (タカ, たか), *Takano* (たかの)

tatsu (as 龍, 'dragon' above): *Tatsu* (タツ, たつ, た津), *Tatsuno* (たつの), *Tatsuyo* (たつよ)

tazu (田鶴, 'field crane' or 'numerous cranes'): *Tazuyo* (たづよ)

tora (虎, 'tiger'): *Tora* (トラ, とら), *Torae* (トラエ), *Torano* (とらの)

tori (鳥, 'bird'): *Tori* (トリ), *Mitori* (みとり 'beauty + bird')

tsuru (鶴, 'crane'): *Kozuru* (小鶴), *Tsuru* (ツル, つる), *Tsurue* (ツルエ, ツルエ), *Tsuruno* (ツルノ, 鶴野)

usbi (牛, 'cow'): *Usbi* (ウシ)

35 Hearn, »Japanese Female Names«, 112.

36 Suzuki, »Japanese Female Names of To-day«, 14.

37 Two names that are read as *chō* were found in the corpus, テウ and チャウ, but butterfly was written in the historical orthography as テフ.

38 Hearn, »Japanese Female Names«, 137.

39 Suzuki, »Japanese Female Names of To-day«, 14.

40 The name *Chitori* is most likely composed of *chi* 千 'thousand' and *tori* 鳥 'bird'. The compound 千鳥 is commonly pronounced as *chidori* and means 'plover'.

41 *Kame* in the Okinawan dialect.

7. *Materials and related activities*

As apparent from this group, females used to be named also after various materials. While *kinu* ('cloth of silk') can be easily associated with women, the motivation behind naming a girl, for example, *Isbi* ('stone') can only be speculated, probably connoting, together with various metals (gold, silver, iron, etc.), physical strength, or a strong, firm character. Several names denote various activities related to cloth – weaving, dying and embroidering.

gin (銀, 'silver'): *Gin* (ギン, ぎん)

isbi (石, 'stone'): *Isbi* (イシ, いし), *Isbie* (石江)

ito (糸, 'thread'): *Ito* (イト, いと), *Itoe* (糸糸), *Koito* (こいと, 小イト)

kane (金, 'metal'): *Kane* (カネ, かね)

kin (金, 'gold', also 錦 'brocade'): *Kin* (きん), *Kinno* (きんの)

kinu (絹, 'cloth of silk'): *Kinu* (キヌ, きぬ), *Kinue* (絹江)

ori (織, 'weaving'): *Ori* (ヲリ)

some (染, 'dying'): *Some* (ソメ)

nui (縫, 'embroidery, sewing'): *Nui* (ヌイ, ぬい)

tetsu (鉄, 'iron'): *Tetsu* (テツ, てつ)

8. *Geographical names and features of the landscape*

Another large group contains names of topographic and toponymic origin. In some cases the origin could be either. For example, the names *Hama* and *Saki* might originate in *bama*, commonly denoting a beach, and *saki*, denoting a cape or point, but Suzuki suggests that, in some cases, they might as well come from names of towns, Yokohama and Nagasaki.⁴²

Topographic names were drawn from common vocabulary items referring to local features of the landscape (a rock, a waterfall, a mountain, etc.) or townscape (a market, a shrine), at or near which the family lived, or some place of importance to the family. Names of toponymic origin include names of towns, provinces, mountains, lakes, etc. Suzuki explains that this type of name was quite frequent, but the origin was hard to trace for anyone not immediately concerned.⁴³ For example, some parents chose a name associated with the name of the shrine to

⁴² Suzuki, »Japanese Female Names of To-day«, 6.

⁴³ Ibid., 18.

which they went to pray for their child's birth.⁴⁴ The most frequent name of toponymic origin in the corpus is *Fuji*, denoting the well-known symbol of Japan.

bama (浜, 'shore, coast'): *Hama* (はま)

ichi (市, 'market'): *Ichi* (イチ, いち)

iso (磯, 'rocky beach, seashore'): *Iso* (イソ, いそ), *Isono* (いその)

iwa (岩, 'rock'): *Iwa* (イハ, いわ), *Iwae* (イワエ)

kuni (國/邦, 'province, country'): *Kuni* (クニ, くに), *Kuniyo* (國与)

kyō (京, 'metropolis, capital'): *Kyō* (きやう)

machi (町, 'town'): *Machie* (まちゑ), *Machiyo* (マチヨ)

mine (峰, 'peak'): *Mine* (みね), *Mineno* (みねの)

miya (宮, 'shrine'): *Miyae* (宮枝)

mura (村, 'village'): *Mura* (むら)

nami (波, 'wave'): *Nami* (ナミ, なみ)

saki (埼, 'cape'): *Saki* (サキ, さき)

sato (里, 'home, native place'): *Sato* (サト, さと), *Satoe* (さとへ)

sono (園, '(flower) garden'): *Sono* (ソノ, その, 園)

taki (滝, 'waterfall'): *Taki* (タキ, たき), *Takino* (タキノ), *Takio* (タキヲ)

ura (浦, 'shore'): *Ura* (ウラ, うら), *Urano* (うらの)

Fuji (富士, name of a mountain): *Fuji* (フジ, ふじ), *Fujii* (ふじい), *Fujino* (フジノ)

Ise (伊勢, name of a province and also of a shrine⁴⁵): *Ise* (イセ), *Ise no* (イセノ)

Iyo (伊豫, name of a province): *Iyo* (イヨ)

Suwa (諏訪, name of a lake): *Suwa* (すわ)

Yoshino (吉野, name of a mountain):⁴⁶ *Yoshino* (ヨシノ, よしの, 吉ノ)

44 Tanaka Sen'ichi 田中宣一, *Nazuke no minzokugaku. Chimei, jinmei wa dō meimei sarete kita ka* 名づけの民俗学—地名・人名はどう命名されてきたか [Naming Folklore: How Were Places and People Named?] (Tōkyō: Yōshikawa Kōbunkan, 2014), 166.

45 Many Japanese conducted a pilgrimage to this famous shrine.

46 Well-known for its cherry blossoms.

9. *Household and other objects*

This group includes names denoting various objects, some of which are associated with the household and some of them typically with women. *Kama*, *Kamado*, and *Nabi* are specific of women born in Okinawa. One of the possible meanings of *kama* is ‘kettle’ (釜), *Kamado* denotes a cooking stove (竈) and *Nabi*⁴⁷ (*nabe*) a pan or pot (鍋). However plain these names may sound, they might have had some deeper spiritual meaning. Since the ancient times, Okinawan women had worshipped the hearth deity, *himukan* (火の神, ‘god of fire’), enshrined in the kitchen, for the well-being and happiness of the family.⁴⁸ It is possible that objects related with the stove, such as kettles and pots, were also associated with this deity and treated as such.⁴⁹ There is also an isolated opinion that these names, including the name *Usbi* mentioned above (in group 6: *Animals*), actually come from Sanskrit and their meanings are of religious character.⁵⁰

fusa (房, ‘tassel’): *Fusa* (フサ, ふさ)

hina (雛, ‘doll’): *Hina* (ヒナ, ひな)

kama (釜, ‘kettle’, also 鎌 ‘sickle’): *Kama* (カマ)

kamado (竈, ‘cooking stove’): *Kama* (カマド)

kura (倉, ‘treasure-house’): *Kura* (クラ, くら)

nabe (鍋, ‘pan, pot’): *Nabi* (ナビ)

shina (品, ‘articles, goods’)⁵¹: *Shina* (シナ), *Shinae* (シナエ)

suzu (鈴, ‘small bell’): *Suzu* (すず)

47 *Nabi* is the Okinawan dialect.

48 See, for example, Kawahashi Noriko, »Folk Religion and its Contemporary Issues«, in *A Companion to the Anthropology of Japan*, ed. Jennifer Robertson (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2005), 461.

49 Asaoka Kōji 朝岡康二, »Nabe, kama: mono to ningen no bunkashi 鍋・釜—ものと人間の文化史« [Pot and Kettle: Cultural History of Things and People] (Tōkyō: Hōsei University Press, 1993), cited in Katō, »Josei no namae no hensen kara miru hondo to Okinawa no ishikisa«, 133.

50 Uehara Shonen 上原正稔, *Uchināguchi no kigen, jobō: sansukuritto bongo ga akasu ōmaru himitsu* ウチナー口の起源・序章～サンスクリット梵語が明かす大いなる秘密 [The Origin of and the Introduction to the Okinawan Dialect: A Great Secret Revealed from Sanskrit] (Yaese: Katan nyū kurabu, 2011).

51 The same *kanji* has the meaning ‘refinement, dignity’.

yumi (弓, 'bow'): *Koyumi* (こゆみ)

10. *Art and literature*

There is a small group of names that are associated with art, writing and literature. It can be expected that such names were bestowed to girls of well-educated families. The name *Fumi* and especially *Fumiko* became quite popular in the following (Taishō) period.

bun (文, 'literature'): *Bun* (ぶん)

koto (琴, 'koto'): *Koto* (コト, こと, 琴), *Kotono* (コトノ), *Kotoyo* (コトヨ)

fude (筆, 'writing-brush'): *Fude* (フデ)

fumi (as 文, 'literature' above): *Fumi* (フミ), *Fumie* (ふみゑ)

kana (仮名, 'kana' - in the sense of written character): *Kana* (カナ)

uta (歌, 'song, poem'): *Uta* (ウタ), *Utano* (ウタノ)

11. *Miscellaneous*

There are some other names whose meanings were identified but are not listed in any of the above categories. A few are, for example, associated with weather phenomena (frost, snow, dew), or light and brightness, all probably referring to bright, shining character. Some are related to length and prolongation – those probably refer to the length of life.

Three of the listed names deserve more explanation. The name *Aguri* (this word is not used in modern Japanese, but probably meant 'enough' or 'too much'), was used in some families with only daughters who wanted their next child to be a boy.⁵² Some parents whose several children had died shortly after birth named their newborn *Sute* (捨, 'throw away, abandon').⁵³ A generally known explanation for the bestowal of such a name is the belief that by pretending that the girl was not theirs (that she was a foundling) the parents could protect her from whatever evil had caused the death of their other children. Some parents would even leave

52 Kida Jun'ichirō, *Namae no nibonshi*, 49. Also Tanaka, *Nazuke no minzokugaku*, 163.

53 In some regions, names with the character 捨 were also used when the parents did not wish any more children. See Kida Jun'ichirō, *Namae no nibonshi*, 49.

their child at some place and hire someone unrelated to the family to appear there to pick up the child and bring her back to them as a »foundling«.⁵⁴

Another unexpected name found in the corpus is *Ena*. The dictionary offers the meaning ‘placenta, afterbirth’ and, indeed, there seems to have been a practice to include this word in the names of children who were born with a piece of the tissue attached to them (e.g., *Enakichi* 胞衣吉, ‘placenta + good luck/fortune’ for boys and *Enayo* エナヨ for girls).⁵⁵

aguri (あぐり, ‘enough, too much’): *Aguri* (アグリ)

cbō (長, ‘long, seniority’): *Cbō* (チャウ)

en (延, ‘prolongation’): *En* (エン)

ena (胞衣, ‘placenta, afterbirth’): *Ena* (エナ)

mitsu (光, ‘light, to shine, to be bright’): *Mitsu* (ミツ, みつ), *Mitsue* (ミツエ, ミツエ), *Mitsuno* (ミつの⁵⁶), *Mitsuyo* (ミツヨ)

moto (元, ‘origin’): *Moto* (モト), *Motoyo* (モトヨ)

nobu (as 延, ‘prolongation’ above): *Nobu* (ノブ, のぶ)

rin (輪, ‘ring, circle’): *Rin* (輪)

shimo (霜, ‘frost’): *Shimo* (シモ)

soyo (そよ, ‘slight, soft (breeze)’): *Soyo* (ソヨ)

sute (捨, ‘throw away, abandon’): *Sute* (ステ, すて)

tama (玉/珠, ‘jewel’): *Tama* (タマ, たま), *Tamae* (たまゑ), *Tamao* (たまお), *Tamayo* (タマヨ)

teru (照/暉, ‘light, to shine’): *Teru* (テル, てる), *Terue* (テルエ), *Teruko* (暉子), *Teruyo* (てるよ)

tsuki (月, ‘moon’): *Tsuki* (ツキ, つき)

tsuma (妻, ‘wife’): *Tsuma* (ツマ, つま)

tsuya (艶, ‘gloss, charm’): *Tsuya* (ツヤ, つや), *Tsuyano* (ツヤノ)

tsuyu (露, ‘dew’): *Tsuyu* (つゆ)

yome (嫁, ‘bride’): *Yome* (ヨメ)

54 Hearn, »Japanese Female Names«, 127–128.

55 Tanaka, *Nazuke no minzokugaku*, 163. According to Tanaka it was believed in some regions that children born with the umbilical cord around the neck or with a piece of *ena* would become great people in the future.

56 See footnote 13.

yuki (雪, 'snow'): *Koyuki* (こゆき), *Miyuki* (みゆき, 美雪), *Yuki* (ユキ, ゆき), *Yukie* (ユキエ), *Yukino* (ユキノ)

As can be seen from the above, female names bestowed in the Meiji period were often selected in respect to the girl's desired future qualities or her well-being, the time, place or order of her birth. Another common practice that should be mentioned was the use of part of the father's name or the name of some relative, ancestor, etc.

The desired meanings were expressed either directly, through words denoting the particular meaning, or indirectly, using words which through various associations or symbolism expressed the desired qualities, reflected or commemorated the time or circumstances of birth, etc. For example, the frequent desire for longevity was expressed through words denoting longevity, long time, length, or big numbers, and also metaphorically, through evergreen plants or animals. Similarly, various character traits were expressed, in addition to words denoting the particular trait, through associations with various plants or animals, and also, for example, light and brightness. Some of the most ordinary-seeming names might have been motivated by some old practice or belief in favor of the newborn child.

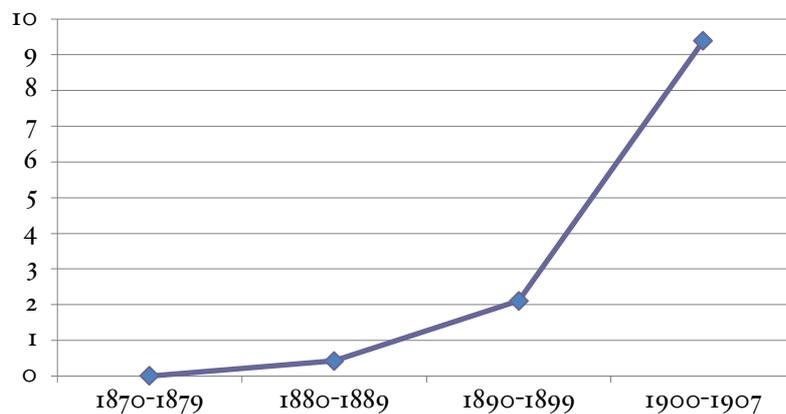
5 *From Hana to Hanako and back again*

Let us briefly return to the phenomenon of *-ko* names. It was explained above that the suffix *-ko* was used with two-mora names when addressing or referring to females of higher social status, and also that it was part of some names. When the Family Registry was established in 1872, the names of females in the Imperial family and the *kuge* (aristocratic class) that were not of the *-ko* pattern were registered with the final *-ko*, and also females of *daimyo* (feudal lord) families and wives of high officials included *-ko* in their names.⁵⁷ In later years, especially more

⁵⁷ Tsunoda, »Nihon no josei-meï (3)«, 306.

educated and emancipated women started to (unofficially) write their names in *kanji* and with the attached 子.

Towards the end of the Meiji era, names with the final *-ko* were also increasingly bestowed to newborn girls, and in the following period they gradually started to prevail. The corpus contains only 28 *-ko* names (2.84 % of all the names), but as the graph below shows, there is a significant increase in the last decade of the examined period, demonstrating this commencing trend.



Graph 2
Names with the Final -ko.

By the end of the Taishō period the two-mora names written in *kana* were perceived as old-fashioned, while the *-ko* type of a name started to be understood to symbolize the difference between the old times and the new age, and soon the final 子 became the most common feature of female names.⁵⁸ Of the other suffixes used in the Meiji period *-e* and *-yo* were more frequent than the others, but compared to *-ko*, their use was quite low.

Today, more than a century after the end of the Meiji period, the most popular female name in the annual Meiji Yasuda name ranking is *Hana* ('flower, blossom') (the 2015 and 2016 surveys).⁵⁹ It features tradition and simplicity in the

⁵⁸ Barešová, *Japanese Given Names*, 55.

⁵⁹ Meiji Yasuda Seimei 明治安田生命 [Meiji Yasuda Life Insurance Company],

phonological form and, being written in more than forty different variants (e.g., 花, 華, 羽那, 羽菜, はな, 花奈, 華奈), also fulfills the current need for personalized and unique names.

6 Conclusion

This paper examined names that were bestowed to women in the Meiji period, before the rise of the dominant *-ko* pattern. They are noticeably simple (especially compared to male names), most consisting of two morae, some with a suffix or less frequently prefix attached to a two-mora semantic core.

Except for names of females of higher social status, female names were written in *kana*. This can be attributed to the generally lower education of women and perhaps also to the unequal position of women at that time. *Kanji* were used in names for boys of any class, but not in names for girls. In the present corpus names in *katakana* are more frequent than those in *hiragana*. While *hiragana* is still used in some female names as a feminine feature, *katakana* became extremely rare, and two-mora names written in *katakana* became a distinctive feature of pre-Shōwa names.

Being written in *kana*, the meanings of such names cannot be unequivocally determined. The meanings of the most common names such as the *Kiku*, *Matsu*, and *Tsuru* in the title of this paper are generally known, but there are a great number of phonological forms (two-mora combinations) forming names, and given the generally high number of homonyms in Japanese, the identification of their meaning is in many cases just speculation. The names analyzed in this study were classified into several semantic groups to show the main sources of vocabulary from which names were drawn, and the most obvious symbolism and associations, motivations and practices were described.

Although short and simple, the various names provide an interesting insight into the female world of the Meiji period, in which Confucian virtues and moral values were the most appreciated character qualities. The various aspirations and

themes which parents included in the names of their daughters testify to the life conditions and needs of the period. The poor socio-economic conditions and high mortality are reflected in the frequent desire for sound health, longevity, and a prosperous and happy life. Names expressing birth order testify to the large families that were at that time very common. While some of the names simply refer to the birth order, place or time of birth, it was demonstrated in several examples that the bestowal of some of the plainest-looking names or names that almost seem insulting to their bearers was actually motivated by some folk practice or deeper belief protecting the newborn child.

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