Memory, History, and Autobiography in Early Modern Towns in East and West
Memory, History, and Autobiography in Early Modern Towns in East and West

Edited by
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This book publishes in English seven papers from an international symposium titled ‘Memory of Individuals and Groups in Early Modern Towns’ held on 27th and 28th September 2014 at the National Institute of Japanese Literature in Tokyo. The symposium also included two comments focusing on Chinese history and Islamic history respectively.

The direct trigger for this symposium was the International Research Seminar ‘Approaches to “Private Documents”’ hosted by the ‘Multilateral Comparative Study on Documents from the 9th to the 19th Centuries’ project (2010-2014, principal investigator: Kōichi Watanabe) mentioned below. At this seminar, held in 2012 in Tokyo, we had the opportunity to understand one aspect of research into ego-documents through François-Joseph Ruggiu’s paper. Looking for a suitable theme for the symposium to be held in the project’s final year, I wondered whether combining research on ego-documents with the study of memory, with which we are more familiar, could be an interesting theme.

A year after the seminar, I had a meeting with Vanessa Harding, Rosemary Sweet, Filippo de Vivo and Hyun Young Kim at the University of London. We agreed in broad terms on holding a symposium on memory in early modern cities. I had observed, through the seminar already mentioned, the trend in the historiography of early modern Western Europe to investigate how strongly individuals were supported by families or social groups. This trend was predictable since I had understood that the classical idea of an individual as a disassembled atom had long been relativized. In Japan too, the individual, in the classical sense, was relativized some time ago. However, in the historiography of early modern Japan, scholars have long dismissed the concept of the individual in favour of a more collective personal identity: he/she only existed as the head of the family, his wife, his child and so on. As a rule, any official positions were considered to be taken by the head of the family. At the beginning of the present century, however, a new trend of study appeared, looking at persons, not families. In this way, the established idea that people were subsumed into families has been relativized, and the individual emerges in contemporary society. This raised the possibility that both historiographical approaches could meet and engage with each other.
Among the European contributors, Vanessa Harding, who also contributed to an earlier project of mine, has written a new introduction for readers in the English-speaking world. I am grateful to her generosity. Rosemary Sweet has studied memory in the city in the past since the 1990s, and I asked her to join the symposium with an introduction from Yoh Kawana, a Professor at Tōhoku University, whose study areas include the history of early modern Western European cities. I am grateful to both of them. Filippo de Vivo, who was not able to give a paper at the symposium, introduced Dorit Raines and she readily agreed to join the symposium. I appreciate her effort to prepare her paper in a short span of time. I would also like to express my gratitude to two contributors from East Asia, Hyun Young Kim and Reiji Iwabuchi, both of whom I have worked with in the past.

The mother tongues of contributors vary. Four papers concerning Europe were written in English. The other three papers on East Asia were translated into English from other languages: Kim’s paper was originally written in Korean and Iwabuchi’s paper and mine were in Japanese. I am grateful to Sung Hee Kim and Hisashi Kuboyama for their translation.

The success of the symposium is owed to two project researchers, Machi Sasai, who majors in the history of medieval English cities, and Jirō Araki, who majors in the history of early modern Japanese villages. All the practical business for editing this book including contact with Cambridge Scholars Publishing was done by Sasai. I really appreciate her work.

My thanks go to many other people who helped me in various fields. I am grateful to Mina Ishizu, researcher in early modern English economic history at the London School of Economics and Political Science, who worked as an interpreter at the meeting at the University of London. I am also indebted to those who proofread papers written by authors whose mother tongue is not English: Séamus Moloney for the papers of Iwabuchi, Kim and Raines, Anne McCulloch for Ruggiu’s paper, and Michael Brooman for mine. I am grateful to two postgraduate students at Ochanomizu University, Matsurika Isobe, whose major is medieval French history, and Ai Saito, whose major is medieval English history. They formatted the manuscripts.

A version of this book will be published in Japanese for readers in Japan. It will include translated versions of papers by Ruggiu, Kim, Sweet, Harding and Raines as well as the two papers on Japanese history partially revised for Japanese readers. Moreover, two other articles based on the comments at the symposium will be included. Therefore, while this present book in English can be regarded as the proceedings of the symposium, the Japanese book will be an independent publication.
developed from the symposium. This means that this book and the Japanese version will to some extent have different characters as well as content.

This book is one of the achievements of the ‘Multilateral Comparative Study on Documents from the 9th to the 19th Centuries’ project (2010-2014, principal investigator: Kōichi Watanabe), which constitutes a part of the National Institutes for the Humanities’ inter-institutional research project ‘Comprehensive Research on Human Cultural Resources.’ I wish to thank the National Institutes for the Humanities for adopting this research project.

Last but not least, I am deeply grateful to Cambridge Scholars Publishing, which willingly took on the publication despite the fact that the proposal came from so many miles away.

Kōichi Watanabe
Tokyo

Translated by Machi Sasai

Notes

INTRODUCTION

VANESSA HARDING

Over centuries and in most societies, towns have been the locus of literary activity, historical investigation and writing, and the conscious memorialization of the past. The town itself plays a part in this, not just as subject, but as conditioning environment and sometimes as censor of what can be written. Towns have been credited with freeing the individual to articulate himself, to construct an identity, but the voices that emerge often have a distinctive urban accent. Early modern societies in east and west, where manuscript traditions continued to flourish alongside the newer medium of print, offer rich examples of the way that personal self-fashioning could use the materials of memory and tradition, and conversely, how the individual could write himself into civic or collective history. The essays in this volume, ranging in focus from Renaissance Venice to nineteenth-century Edo (Tokyo), and from capital cities to provincial towns, aim both to illustrate particular cases of this kind of symbiotic development, and to illuminate larger questions about the construction of memory.

An important concern for the symposium and collection was the relationship between the individual and the group and the very different historiographies of this topic in east and west. While historians of western cultures have for some time been exploring the construction of the individual and the ‘rise’ of ‘individualism’, historians of eastern societies have tended to focus on the family and the group, and to see the early modern individual primarily in terms of his identity as member of a group. As these essays show, however, there is not a simple dichotomy: eastern historians are paying more attention to the individual, the conscious self, who emerges more fully realised against the background of the group, while western historians are re-emphasising the importance of family and group identity in the formation of the individual. In both east and west, the town offers a prime arena to explore these relationships and their development.

All seven essays were written with the same concerns in mind, and seek to address the same issues, even if the worlds on which they focus
may seem to be far apart. All the essays, to some degree, discuss the historiography of their own topic or focus. The potential of comparison for generating new insights was central to planning the symposium at which these papers were given; it is important that the collection is being published in both English and Japanese, and that each of the papers was written within the culture it explores, so that readers will be able to compare less-familiar approaches and historiographies with those they know better. Obviously, translation presents challenges for the discussion of both concepts and phenomena, but we believe that it is possible, in spite of social, political, economic and cultural differences between the societies being studied, to find commonalities and consistencies as well as striking contrasts.

The geographical span of the collection is wide but not comprehensive: two essays each on England and Japan, one each on France, Italy, and Korea. We certainly do not suggest that other countries and historical traditions could not be compared with equal value and interest, and indeed hope this collection may encourage such comparisons. ‘Early modern’ is taken in its broadest sense as a phase of development rather than a calendar period, in order to allow the juxtaposition of studies separated in chronological time. What early modern societies seem to share is an urban sector of comparatively small (if increasing) size but with a disproportionate cultural and social influence. Before the contemporary era, only a minority of almost any national population lived in towns, but as Ruggiu notes, urban-dwellers predominate among early modern first-person writers.

The first section of the collection, with essays by Iwabuchi, Ruggiu, and Kim, under the heading ‘Autobiography’, aims to trace the relation between the individual’s realization of himself in writing—whether in autobiography in the classic sense or one of the broader genres of ‘personal writing’—and the urban background from which he came, while the second, with essays by Watanabe, Sweet, Harding, and Raines, entitled ‘Memory’, brings in the city as an active agent in its own autobiography. ‘History’ is fundamental to all the contributions, both because of the brief for the symposium and collection, and because of the background from which we all write.

**Autobiography**

An important theme through this section of the book is the way in which the experience of the town stimulates and encourages self-consciousness and shapes the self that emerges. Whether the individual
sees himself as an insider, an outsider, or even an exile, the town plays a part in his formation. The essays in this section show how the town influences writing about the self, both directly, through the lived urban experience of the writer, and through the genre of writing about the town. The latter provides topics and models for more autobiographical writing and allows its authors the freedom to express and present themselves while ostensibly writing about something else. At a practical level the town supplies education or literary training, professional employment, literate company; at a more abstract one it offers an array of events, experiences, features, characters and characteristics from which the individual can fashion his narrative of himself. At the same time, however, the urban individual is not entirely freestanding: he remains a family member, member of a class or caste, with a personal history as well as the historical context within which he finds himself.

Most of the autobiographical, first-person, or ‘personal’ writings discussed here are consciously constructed, through a process of selection and arrangement. Some are didactic or homiletic in purpose, aiming to convey valuable moral truths to the reader, especially the reader of a future generation; some construct the self in dialogue with a personified interlocutor. The Korean Sim No Soong exemplifies both of these, with his autobiography *Jajeosilgi* intended for posterity, and the lengthy ‘exchange diary’, *A Collection of One Hundred Daily Self-reflections (Irilbaekseongjip)*, which he wrote explicitly for exchange with his brother. Family is an important presence in these dialogues.

The broader genre of writing about the town usually also has a particular audience in mind. In the case of Harada’s *Edo Jiman*, a description of or introduction to Edo, discussed by Iwabuchi, the reader is envisaged as the visiting samurai, anxious not to appear rustic or ignorant in the sophisticated milieu of the metropolis. While apparently effacing himself, the author in fact places himself at the apex of a triangle of mutual relationships, mediating the interaction of the samurai visitor and the town itself. Edo is defined by what the author thinks it worth noting, and his portrait of the city reflects his own preferences, choices, and practices. And as Ruggiu’s essay shows, even those writing from rather than about the town reveal themselves, in their silences as well as their explications.

*Edo Jiman*, in its present form, is the result of a sequence of compilation and copying, but the authorial voice still comes through strongly; he is by no means an impartial guide. He is conscious that his own identity as samurai has shaped his encounters in Edo: people were
polite and helpful to him because of his rank. By implication, the same
will be true for his readers, and there is no need to discuss the common
people with whose problems they will not be concerned.

The author of *Edo Jiman* takes it for granted that his readers, like
himself, are familiar with Wakayama, and that the best way to explain Edo
to them is by comparing it with Wakayama—in climate, in social custom
and ritual, in language, and most of all in food. While he expresses a
personal preference for styles of flower arranging, for example, food is the
subject that most clearly reveals his likes and dislikes. His tastes have been
formed by the food of his homeland, and while he can praise certain
aspects of Edo’s food culture, on the whole he—and he assumes the visitor
—prefers the familiar to the exotic. As Iwabuchi notes, however, change is
possible: after spending time in Edo, the author of *Edo Jiman* begins to
like the food more, and accepts that the urban environment has altered
him. But the close connection between food and identity, and the way in
which eating particular kinds of food constitutes the individual both
physically and spiritually, remains important.

The same attention to food, though in this case in the familiar trope of
urban abundance, is found in Park Je Ga’s writing about Seoul. His *Poems
for the Detailed Painting of the Capital* report on the markets and goods
for sale, including the many varieties of grains, spices, vegetables, fruits,
meat, and fish. Park Je Ga perhaps situates himself as an onlooker or
observer rather than a participant in the urban bustle, but descriptions of
food markets and the street-food stalls always conjure up the image of the
consumer and remind the reader that he or she has a body as well as a
mind. Sim No Soong also cites the kinds of foods available in Seoul, in his
case in a litany of loss and longing for the town from which he is exiled,
his *Daily Records of the Exile in the South*; he even seeks to reproduce
Seoul food in Gijang. For him, food stands for the urban resident he used
to be.

Regional variation in food and diet was certainly true of Ancien
Régime France, but for those who lived in particular towns—as apposed to
those who visited and commented on different towns—it seems to have
been taken for granted. Also in the background of autobiographical
writings emerging from within towns was the urban landscape. Ruggiu
draws attention to the scarcity of topographical detail in such writings,
contrasting with the profusion of chronological incident and reference.
Visitors might remark on buildings, landmarks, routes and sights, but for
those who lived there these passed without comment. Present-day
historians are very conscious of the physicality of the early modern urban
environment and the ways in which it might have shaped the lives and
perceptions of its inhabitants, but for those inhabitants themselves it was below the level of everyday awareness. As Ruggiu notes, the personal writings of eighteenth-century townspeople that he studies ‘do not provide a precise account of the spatial practices of their authors’; from the point of view of their inhabitants, towns and cities were made more of history than of geography. Even phenomena as obvious as the walls and ramparts shaping and defining many towns play no part in the life-stories narrated by their residents. It takes an outsider, or a consciously distanced observer, like Park Je Ga in his Poems for the Detailed Painting of the Capital, to see the city as a material object, its roof-ridges and roof-tiles like ‘carp... swimming in the swelling water’.

An important theme of the interaction between urbanity and autobiographical identity is the perception of the town as the place for self-realization. This is sometimes explicit, as told by Iwabuchi in the case of the sons of Hachibei, from a wealthy farming family. The three eldest sons all struggled against the grip of family, leaving for Edo—‘absconding’, in the eyes of the family—and returning. The eldest, Heiroku, on whom the burdens of expectation and obligation weighed most heavily, sought to renounce his future as head of the family, but did not succeed; indeed, he co-operated with his father and another brother in putting pressure on Ryūsuke, the second son, who nevertheless succeeded in settling in Edo and fulfilling his scholarly ambitions there. Ryūsuke supported the third brother, Hanji, in his attempts to leave and settle in Edo, but the latter eventually returned home and took on the headship of the family. The letters exchanged between the brothers articulate the conflicting desires and constraints: Heiroku said he was prepared to accept the loss of status that separation from the family would entail, Ryūsuke urged Hanji to ‘stay in Edo however hard it might be’ if he wanted to realise his talents, and himself chose to stay even though his scholarly calling brought him little financial reward. For all three, Edo offered tantalizing possibilities and opportunities which life at home foreclosed. Watanabe makes a similar point in his essay in Part II of the volume, in his discussion of the role the samurai Shōsuke played in mediating between his hometown and the capital.

Both the figures discussed in Hyun Young Kim’s essay produced major autobiographical works in middle or later life which show some marks of influence from their background in the Korean metropolis. The poet and government official Park Je Ga enjoyed the benefits of Seoul in his youth, especially the opportunity to belong to the intellectual circle of the White Pagoda group. Metropolitan culture was a stepping-stone to
cosmopolitan awareness, since through contacts in Seoul he gained direct or indirect access to Chinese and Japanese culture. It also freed him, to some extent, from the constraints imposed upon his career and social ambitions by his birth as the son of a concubine: in Seoul, he could engage with a range of others for whom birth was not the prime consideration. His later desire for a country retirement was based, not on dislike of the town, but on the fact that even in the town he could not entirely break free from his background. Despite the king’s favour and his own abilities, high office was closed to him; as an alternative, therefore, he hoped to pursue his writing and the life of the mind in a modest rural retreat. He took with him, however, his contacts with a wider world: his engagement with Chinese intellectuals, for example, detailed in Anthology of International Exchange (Hojeojip) compiled from his own memoirs by his son, can be traced back to contacts made during his life in Seoul.

Sim No Soong, half a generation younger than Park Je Ga, likewise owed much the metropolitan milieu in which he was formed, though he moved in different literary circles. He was more successful in his government career, and did not suffer the disillusion and frustration that Park Je Ga experienced. Political reverses brought a five-year exile to Gijang in mid-career, but this also stimulated the production of a major work of autobiography in the form of a journal. Although one of his works in exile was called Joyful Writings in Mountain and Sea (Sanhaepilhui), as noted above he clearly missed and longed for the sophisticated and cultured life of the city, including its familiar foods.

Both Park Je Ga and Sim No Soong belonged to highly cultivated and literate circles, where writing in a number of genres was both expected and celebrated. Both were responsible for a remarkable quantity and quality of outputs, but the desire to position themselves in their society through their writings is very noticeable. Park Je Ga, perhaps because of the facts of his birth, seems to have valued voluntary friendship particularly highly, referring to friends as ‘brothers without blood ties’. His autobiography, Sojeon, was written not for family reasons but to introduce himself to Chinese intellectual circles. While he married and had a son, who indeed collected and edited some of his writings, the group with which he most identified himself was a community of intellectual interests. Sim No Soong, more conventionally, identified himself with family and its chronology. Writing consciously for posterity, he praised autobiography as ‘a better source through which the following generations can learn about their ancestors’. He wrote a self-chronicle or chronology, Jajeoginyeon, in part at least because his younger brother’s death deprived him of both a literary correspondent and his expected future biographer. Subsequently he
wrote a fuller autobiography, *Jajeosilgi*. For both, autobiography is not fundamentally about interiority: it is about communicating and presenting the self to a chosen audience.

The connection between urbanity and the articulation of identity is underlined in the second section of Ruggiu’s essay, where he considers the expression of civic ambition in autobiographical writing and the formation of civic consciousness. Unlike the Korean government officials, whose desire for office is freely admitted, Ruggiu’s Ancien Régime townsmen do not confess ambition in so many words. In that, they conform to the urban tradition in which office is an obligation to be accepted rather than pursued, and the complementary one in which appointees are expected to disclaim ambition and act out a show of reluctance before accepting office. But it is clear that early modern urban culture prized high civic office and gave respect and honour to those who held it; it is not surprising that citizens aspired to such status. They had internalised both the set of values which placed high civic office at the pinnacle of a man’s career, and the discourses of service and self-effacement which surrounded it. If ambition could not therefore be spoken it is still perceptible, in the relief and pleasure with which appointment to office was privately greeted. Once achieved, though, the satisfactions of honour and status could be enjoyed: Jean-Baptiste Le Prince d’Ardenay wrote frankly that office-holding ‘gratified my vanity and my inclination’. Attaining civic office reinforced and fulfilled his sense of himself. Sweet, in Part II of the volume, shows also that in early modern England, beginning to make or keep personal chronicles often coincided with achieving a civic ambition.

It is striking that, in Ruggiu’s account, some of these traditions of self-denial and dissimulation in approaching office were dissolved by the Revolution, which brought ‘a sudden widening of…political and social horizons’. Men were freer to admit ambition and to pursue it; civic politics became sharply competitive and partisan. It was legitimate to seek office in pursuit of a political rather than a personal agenda. Pierre-Philippe Candy’s career and wealth prospects expanded, while Eustache Hua acknowledged his manoeuvres in pursuit of his ambition—unfulfilled, as it turned out—to gain elected office in his hometown of Mantes.

The essays in this section deal in different ways with the consciousness of the townsman, and the way this can be traced in his writings. As noted, these do not have to be first-person or explicitly autobiographical to reveal the influence of the city on the individual; nor does he have to show full awareness of this influence. The tension between collective identity—
family, caste, or group—and the individual is an important concern, revealed in widely differing contexts.

Memory

The memory of the individual, in the form both of recollection and memorialization, is the principal material from which his or her personal history or autobiography is constructed. Without memory, there is no fixed identity, and towns and corporate institutions need memories and histories to anchor their identity as much as individuals do. As Sweet says, ‘In a sense these [urban] chronicles and annals can be seen as an “ego-document” of the civic self’, while Raines notes the Venetian attempt to narrate the city’s history through the figure of the Doge, ‘in a sort of collective res gestae of the rulers’. But the town does not write itself: town histories had authors, in both senses—agents and recorders—and the roles often overlap. This section moves to consider the memory of the town, and how the individual helped to shape that memory and even to inscribe himself within it. The essays focus on the interplay between the personal and the collective, and in some instances on that between the family group and the civic collective.

There is a long tradition in both east and west of writing town histories or biographies. The motive was often said to be modestly practical—so that things would be remembered which ought not to be forgotten—but there were larger issues at play too. Town historians might be inspired with a desire to celebrate their town and secure its rightful place in a larger chronology, or against a constellation of other towns—a motivation that as is well known can lead to the invention of detail or documentation to fill out an unsatisfactory historical record. Or the histories might be written or commissioned from outside, as a means of gaining knowledge and control, as in the case of the castle towns of Tokugawa Japan. Competition for control of the story was natural: the official, civic, history of Venice told through the Doges was refashioned from within, but successfully asserted its dominance as the prevailing narrative over other forms or versions of the city’s history.

Writing town history was never a completed project. The passage of time added new events to be chronicled; new approaches to history might prompt revisions of style and content; new political circumstances might require correction of the older narrative. As Venice evolved from an island-republic to a territorial empire, its sense of its own history changed, and the story had to be retrospectively reshaped to connect with the new reality. Manuscript town chronicles in England evolved over the fifteenth
and sixteenth centuries, as Harding and Sweet show, in both form and coverage, and with many hands contributing and updating. They were influenced by the larger project of writing a national history, the Tudor reconstruction of the past, and by the explosion into print of chronicles, annals, chorographies, and county histories. In the case of collections of town laws and customs, a new generation of townsmen might be inspired to continue the work of their predecessors, ensuring that the civic memory embodied in these collections remained alive and relevant.

Despite their best efforts, however, nobody could guarantee that future generations would value or preserve their work, or even have a proper understanding of it. Notwithstanding the purposeful collection of historical materials in seventeenth-century Banshū Miki to create a civic memory, only a century later much had been forgotten and a renewed effort was needed to assert the achievement of the past.

Town histories had authors, and most were not reluctant to assert their authorship. Thomas Damet and Henry Manship put their names to their books on Great Yarmouth, Nathaniel Bacon to his on Ipswich. The contents of the books themselves served as an example to future generations, but so too did the activity of their authors: in claiming credit for their effort they sought to show that was worthy of imitation. Print gave a particular point to the assertion of authorship, since its wider circulation brought recognition beyond the limited circles of the urban élite. It also, however, opened up the author to challenge and criticism. John Stow, compiler and epitomist of English chronicles in the late sixteenth century, engaged in a running battle with Richard Grafton, another chronicle-publisher, in which each attacked the other’s reputation, reliability, and critical insight.

The role of author gave the opportunity to correct or rebalance history in the author’s own interest. Sogawa Yojiemon, author of two successive versions of Banshū Miki’s civic history, actually perpetrated a falsehood in his family’s favour when he wrote that they had kept the keys to the town storehouse hereditarily and by implication continuously, when in fact they had had to cede them to another family on account of financial problems. John Stow put much of himself into his Survey of London (1598), speaking often in the first person and alluding to events in his own life; he also explicitly refused to commemorate those who themselves had defaced the memorials of others. He did not present himself as an actor in the historical drama, however, as John Watts of Reading did, writing to ensure that ‘my own transactions during the time I was twice Mayor of the Corporation of Reading’ were recorded for posterity.
Venetian writers seem to have stepped back from this kind of self-promotion: according to Raines, ‘astonishing as it may sound, the writers rarely included in their narration any personal testimony. They may have commented sometimes harshly on different situations, but rarely told their own story’. Instead, the individual was subsumed into the civic, so that in telling the city’s story the chronicler told his own. As Raines shows, the myth of Venice was not merely a myth of origins, but one of cohesion, harmony, and unanimity. The alternative to the civic was not the individual but the family, so that the official narrative was complemented and counterpointed by family-centred histories.

Histories written for personal use and interest, including memoirs and autobiographies, might be adopted into a more official narrative at a later date. The English historian John Strype, who revised and updated Stow’s Survey of London, certainly read Henry Machyn’s personal manuscript ‘cronacle’ as well as the versions of Stow in print. The memorandum of Enomoto Yazaemon was intended for himself and his descendants, and dealt with topics of personal interest such as his own ill-health; he cannot have expected it to gain wide currency, and it remained in obscurity for over a century, but it was ‘rediscovered’ in the nineteenth century and given official status as a key element in the story of Kawagoe.

As this suggests, those who wrote town histories relied on a variety of sources. The most important were obviously the archives of the city, to which civic officials had access but which might be closed to others. The city’s memory was embodied in its written records, which might include foundation charters and records of privileges, civic legislation, records of court proceedings, accounts, minutes of meetings, and correspondence and interactions with the outside world. Obviously, the ability to read these historical documents, and to retrieve records as needed, was essential. The town clerk mediated between the archive and the civic government; familiarly acquainted with the form and content of the archive, he was often the one to digest its contents into historical narrative, as the town clerks of Great Yarmouth, Ipswich, and later Norwich did. Although the title of ‘Remembrancer’ in the city of London denoted a senior legal official rather than the town clerk, it marked the importance of recollection and precedent in defence of the city’s privileges.

All institutions are to some extent protective of their ‘secrets’. In Venice, while the medieval civic archive was voluminous and well-organised, the increasingly secretive and bureaucratic structures of government meant that access to the city’s records was strictly limited. As a city-state, of course, Venice’s records contained much about its relations
with other states and entities, often sensitive diplomatic material including confidential ambassadorial reports, but the desire for ideological control of the narrative was an important motive for closing the archive to outsiders. As Raines notes, ‘this decision certainly limited chroniclers wishing to accurately narrate the history of Venice’. The town of Ōmi Hachiman had an added incentive to keep its letter or shuinjō from Tokugawa Ieyasu private, since the letter did not specifically mention exemption from land tax, a key privilege claimed by the town. As Watanabe notes, it was important to obscure the fact that this document did not substantiate the claim.

Other sources for town histories derived from private individuals, such as the historical materials collected by the bibliophile Richard Smyth, subsequently utilised by Strype in his Survey of London. As already noted, the memorandum of the seventeenth-century Kawagoe merchant Enomoto Yazaemon was a private document, and only became incorporated into official histories of the town in the nineteenth century.

The actual form in which memory was embodied—an object or artefact, a practice, a text, and if a text in what genre or format—could vary; although here we are principally concerned with texts, they themselves had a material existence and could acquire iconic object status. Archives and muniments, of course, had long been kept in treasuries, as is illustrated in Watanabe’s account of the preservation of the core documents of Ōmi Hachiman in ‘a specially made box which contained four-stacked sub-boxes’. The records of Banshū Miki were likewise kept in a ‘treasure storehouse’ (hōzō). In English towns, archives were kept in locked coffers with the keys often distributed among officials, and the key-keeper bore both honour and responsibility. But histories, even though secondary to the sources from which they had been compiled, could also merit such treatment: Banshū Miki added its eighteenth-century history to the archive, and in nineteenth-century Kawagoe the seventeenth-century manuscript Memorandum of Enomoto Yazaemon was placed in a paulownia box, guarded by inscriptions praising its value and urging its safe-keeping, thus elevating it to the status of primary source or even relic: ‘This special box was made to keep the book from insects and to prevent it from getting scattered away. May this collection not be lost in time’.

The materials of memory included visual images and artefacts as well as written texts. As Sweet notes, civic portraiture in early modern England and its role in civic memory have been studied by Robert Tittler. Enomoto Yazaemon commissioned a portrait of himself, and portraits played a part in Japanese merchant families’ practice of ancestor-worship. Kim’s
protagonists, however, preferred the written portrait to the visual, as a truer representation, but nevertheless admitted the importance of the physical image or visualization in the commemoration of the individual. Venetian family histories made much play with heraldic representation, a clear allusion to lineage and noble descent over many generations, central to the identity of the Venetian ruling class, and perhaps symptomatic of their elevation of the family over the individual. Respect for images of authority, whether rulers or their symbolization in coats of arms, figured in both east and west.

In England, town seals and coats of arms embodied corporate identity, but the memory of the town might be also be manifested in a monument or building. The architecture of town halls and civic buildings expressed wealth, power, solidity, and endurance, commemorating the past and planning for the future. Historical information might be literally inscribed on such a monument, and even if later generations were unable to read the words, as Watanabe thinks possible in the case of Banshū Miki’s memorial, the sense of authority expressed may have lingered. The meaning of physical monuments was reinforced when they served as the focus of ritual activity, or as a stage in an urban perambulation or pilgrimage. The town of Ōmi Hachiman promoted the remembrance of the Tokugawa Ieyasu, grantor of its privileges, by establishing a close relationship with Asakusa Tōzenji temple in Edo, visiting it to pray to Ieyasu’s sacred portrait and fundraising for the temple. Civic ritual, investing an official with authority and formally presenting him to the people, was of enormous importance in European towns and cities, from the great Venetian celebration of the ‘marriage of the sea’ from which the city’s wealth derived, to the more modest mayoral processions of English provincial towns. Historical scenes, pageants, and reference were common in these ceremonies, sometimes literally re-enacting history on the city’s streets, reviving and reinforcing memories of the past. When subsequently these memorializing performances were themselves memorialised—accounts of royal entries feature prominently in town chronicles, while John Stow is our major source for London’s medieval ceremony of the Midsummer Watch—the circle of history and remembrance was complete.

Conclusion

To conclude, perhaps the most self-conscious urban identity discussed in this collection is that of Edokko, a quality shared by permanent residents of the city. Birth and upbringing in Edo were essential but not sufficient: moral and cultural values were needed too. Writing and reading about Edo
helped to construct and communicate *Edokko* among the urban élite. It could be claimed autobiographically, and might be attributed to others, especially by outsiders who did not possess it. Strictly unique and untranslatable, *Edokko* nevertheless stands for that compound of self, family, group, and civic identity that characterised the early modern townsman and that constituted him the author—in both senses—of the town’s history.
PART I:

AUTOBIOGRAPHY
CHAPTER ONE

DWELLERS AND THEIR SELF-AWARENESS
IN THE METROPOLIS OF EDO

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TRANSLATED BY HISASHI KUBOYAMA

Introduction

Based on ego-document studies in Europe, I examined the family precepts of Kitamura Hisatomi, a provincial merchant who had a shop in Edo, and demonstrated that the family in Japan created and then preserved private papers with a view to continuing their family. I also used diaries of *Edo kimban bushi* to consider the realities of their daily lives and pointed out that the entries in their diaries were meant to be types of reports of which would show examples for their families and colleagues to follow. There exist a number of private papers from the Edo period, and they were all written with their families in mind. Diaries were not used for self-expression: literary works such as poetry served that purpose. However, as Kōichi Watanabe discusses in his essay, writing about the individual self does not necessarily contradict belonging to a family and a group.

My essay aims to consider the self-perception of those who lived in the metropolis of Edo by examining ego-documents of newcomers to Edo and also works of those who lived or stayed there for a long time. There exist many journals of short-term sojourners, but that is not the focus of this essay. Instead, the focus is on the life experience of people in the metropolis.
Dwellers—the emergence and dissemination of the sense of dwelling in a metropolis

It was not until the late seventeenth century that Edo became a city and came to be regarded as one of the three major cities in Japan, along with Kyoto and Osaka.5 In the late eighteenth century, the word Edokko began to appear in literary works.6 Matsunosuke Nishiyama has studied the word and identified about fifty examples of its usage from its first appearance in senryū in 1771 (Meiwa 8).7 All the usages of the word share several characteristics of Edokko: 1. born in the same city as the Tokugawa shōguns; 2. generous; 3. a noble upbringing; 4. brought up in Edo; 5. possessing iki (sophistication) and hari (a rebellious mindset). The word only appeared in literary works, making it difficult to comprehend how it was actually used, but it is likely that the dwellers of the metropolis of Edo emulated and developed those characteristics by reading those literary works.8 Thus, among the metropolitan dwellers there emerged a distinctive sense of dwelling in a metropolis which could be described as Edokko. Metropolitan dwellers also started to be regarded as such by outsiders.9

At the same time, as interest in ‘history’ (rekishi) and ‘roots’ (yuisho) grew in the late eighteenth century, bibliographical and historical studies (kōshōgaku) started to flourish and produced works relating to Edo. I would like to examine works published by the Saitō family, who were a kochō namushi10 in central Edo. The core of the Saitō family’s publications is Edo Meisho Zue, the first ten volumes of which were published in 1834 (Tempō 5) and the latter ten in 1836 (Tempō 7). Following the example of Kyoto’s Miyako Meisho Zue, published in 1780 (An’ei 9), it is a richly illustrated guide to popular attractions in Edo and was published in the Kansei era by three generations of the Saitō family, Gesshin, his father, and his grandfather. They all carried out research and wrote the text. According to its explanatory notes, its purpose was to ‘let people from other domains know about Edo’s prosperity’. Takizawa Bakin, a well-known writer, in a letter to a friend in Kyoto, commented that it might be useful for those far away from Edo to know about the metropolis, but offered nothing new for those who lived in the metropolis of Edo. Why exactly the family published it is not known,11 but the Saitōs were not scholars or professional writers, and the publication was not in order to make a profit because they did not gain financially from this publication.12 It is also unclear whether they regarded themselves as Edokko, but it is certain that the family, who had been involved in the metropolitan government and felt that they were metropolitan dwellers, spread ‘Edo’s