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DAVID L. HOWELL
(Hokkaidô University, Sapporo)

EARLY *SHIZOKU* COLONIZATION OF HOKKAIDÔ*

The study of early *shizoku* (former samurai)¹ migration to Hokkaidô is valuable for a number of reasons. First, it is of obvious importance to students of Hokkaidô's development; second, the rôle played by the *shizoku* in the defense of Hokkaidô and Japan's other northern territories from the perceived Russian threat is of interest to students of Russo-Japanese relations; finally, the events leading up to the migration of the *shizoku* to Hokkaidô and their treatment after arriving raise intriguing questions concerning the fate of the *shizoku*, especially those from domains opposing the Meiji Restoration, after the end of the Tokugawa régime.

Whereas most Japanese works on Hokkaidô history, centering upon the various officially-sponsored local histories, are primarily concerned with the colonists' rôle in developing given small areas of Hokkaidô,² and

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¹ Strictly speaking, not all former samurai were *shizoku* nor were all *shizoku* former samurai, but as a practical working definition it is possible to think of the two groups as being essentially the same. Here the term *shizoku* is used to include both the *shizoku* (gentry) and the *sotsu* (soldiers), a group below the *shizoku* made up of former low-ranking warriors (*ashigaru*, etc.), unless otherwise specified in the text, because of the ambiguity of the position of most of the early Hokkaidô colonists. This usage is in line with that of most Japanese-language material. For a precise definition of *shizoku*, see Kikkawa Hidezô, *Shizoku jusan no kenkyû*, rev. ed., (Tokyo, Yûhaikaku, 1942), pp. 4-10, and Fukaya Hiroharu, *Kashizoku chitsuroku shobun no kenkyû*, 2nd rev. ed., (Tokyo, Yoshikawa kôbunkan, 1973), pp. 119-146.

² Although some of the local histories, being of a commemorative nature, are of little academic value, others, beginning with the fairly recent *Shin Hokkaidô shi*, 9 vols., (Sapporo, Hokkaidô, 1969-1981), are of great importance.

the few works in English on Hokkaidō stress Russo-Japanese relations,³ there is very little in the literature on the migrants' position as *shizoku* within the greater context of early Meiji society. In this essay I will concern myself primarily with this aspect of the *shizoku* migration problem. I will therefore concentrate on the events leading up to the decision to move to Hokkaidō, and the social and economic position of the *shizoku* prior to their migration, rather than their activities after arriving in Hokkaidō.

The period I will deal with runs approximately from the establishment of the Kaitakushi (Hokkaidō Colonial Office) in 1869 to the end of the domain system (*haihan-chiken*) in 1871. Although the period is short, it marks an important era in the history of immigration into Hokkaidō because the essential nature of immigration during this period differed greatly from later years.⁴

Enomoto Morie lists eighteen immigrant groups for the 1869–1871 period.⁵ Of these, five were composed of commoners (*heimin*), eleven of *shizoku*, with two of unclear composition. Of the eleven samurai groups, one was made up of remnants of Enomoto Takeaki's followers from the Boshin civil war; one group was from the former Aizu domain;⁶ one from Awaji in Tokushima; and the remaining eight parties belonged to five groups⁷ from Sendai.

³ The English work most directly concerned with Hokkaidō's development is John A. Harrison, *Japan's Northern Frontier*, (Gainesville, Univ. of Florida Press, 1953).

⁴ Later groups included the farmer-militia and private settlement companies often made up entirely of *shizoku*, but not based on former feudal relationships, as were the groups of this period. For a discussion of the farmer-militia, see Matsushita Yoshio, *Tondenhei sei shi*, (Tokyo, Satsuki shobō, 1981), *Shin Hokkaidō shi*, vol. III, and Harrison, *Japan's Northern Frontier*, pp. 72–89. For a discussion of the farmer-militia and later groups seen in terms of a Hokkaidō "frontier spirit", see Enomoto Morie, *Hokkaidō kaitaku seishin no keisei*, (Tokyo, Yūzankaku, 1976), pp. 27–72, 119–198. For a case study of a later group from Tottori, see Takahashi Isamu, *et al.*, "Hokkaidō ijū sho shūdan no ruikeiteki kōsatsu", *Hokkaidō gakugei daigaku kiyō*, 1:9:1 (Sept. 1958), 115–185.

⁵ Enomoto, *Kaitaku seishin*, pp. 20–21.

⁶ Here I am using the term "domain" for the Japanese *han*; it therefore denotes both a corporate entity and the actual land held by that entity.

⁷ For discussions of the other Sendai-based groups, see *Shin Hokkaidō shi*, III, 317–334; Muroran shi, ed., *Shin Muroran shi shi*, (Murooran, Muroran shi, 1981), I, 555–635 (the Ishikawa group); Tōbetsu chō, ed., *Tōbetsu chō shi*,

Here I would like to concentrate especially upon the Sendai group led by Date Kunishige — the “classic” example of an early *shizoku* immigrant group.⁸ This group was the earliest, largest, and most successful of all *shizoku* colonization attempts, and its motivation and approach to the development of Hokkaidô are representative of *shizoku* colonization patterns in general.

All the early groups hold in common several important characteristics that distinguish them from later immigrants. First, unlike the later and more famous *tondenhei* (farmer-militia) settlers, the early colonists were private, voluntary settlers, paying their own way to Hokkaidô and striving to attain self-sufficiency as quickly as possible. Second, the land granted to the immigrants was put under their complete control, and was thus tantamount to the granting of a fief under the Tokugawa system (and was often perceived as such by the early groups).⁹ Third, unlike later groups, they relied heavily upon pre-Restoration hierarchical relationships, with important retainers of daimyô heading groups of their personal retainers.¹⁰ Fourth, all the groups, with the exception of the Awaji party under Inada Kunitane, were from the Tôhoku area and had opposed the Imperial forces in the civil war; the Inada group, on the other hand, had opposed its lord and fought for the Restoration, and thus ran into trouble afterwards. Finally, all the colonists stood to lose their means of support and/or their very status as *shizoku* if they remained in their home domains.

With two or three exceptions, the conditions borne by the political process of the disturbances of the Restoration and the demand for immigrants to develop Hokkaidô coincided in the immigration before the replacement of the domains with prefectures (*haihan-chiken*) and the land-tax reform (*chiso-kaisei*). The Meiji régime, with the Emperor at its pinnacle, produced from the very beginning those who fell away from the system: direct retainers of the Tokugawa family became unemployed

(Tôbetsu, Tôbetsu chô, 1972), pp. 21–138 (the group under Date Kuninao); Noboribetsu chô, ed., *Noboribetsu chô shi*, (Noboribetsu, Noboribetsu chô, 1967), pp. 138–151, 229–239 (Katakura Shôjurô's group); and Miyagi ken, ed., *Miyagi ken shi*, 34 vols., (Sendai, Miyagi ken, 1958–1981), III, 46–54.

⁸ *Shin Hokkaidô shi*, III, 323.

⁹ See Enomoto, *Kaitaku seishin*, p. 23.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 60. The Aizu group was the only exception to this rule. See Tsuchiya Takao, *Meiji zenki keizai shi kenkyû*, (Tokyo, Nihon hyôron sha, 1944), I, 166–186.

as a result of the loss of lands by the Tokugawa; and the general dissolution of the Ōu (Tōhoku) domains that had formed the alliance against the Restoration was effected.¹¹

The Sendai domain after the Restoration

Prior to 1868 the Sendai domain, with an official income (*omotedaka*) of 620,000 *koku* and an actual income (*uchidaka*) of 1,120,000 *koku*, and territory stretching from the northern part of modern Fukushima prefecture to the southern area of modern Iwate prefecture, was by far the biggest domain in northeastern Japan and one of the most important *tozama* domains in the country. However, as a result of the Boshin civil war (1868–1869), in which Sendai led the other Tōhoku domains in support of the Tokugawa family, and lost,¹² the Sendai domain, along with the other members of the alliance, lost heavily in terms of income and territory: the Sendai domain went from 620,000 to 280,000 *koku*,¹³ Aizu was moved north to Tonami (centering on the Shimokita peninsula) and its income dropped from 230,000 *koku* to 30,000;¹⁴ the Nanbu domain fell from 200,000 *koku* to 130,000, etc.¹⁵ The Sendai domain lost its most fertile lands on its northern and southern peripheries. The northern area was almost immediately divided into prefectures and put under central

¹¹ Enomoto, *Kaitaku seishin*, pp. 22–23.

¹² For a discussion of the civil war in general, see W. G. Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration*, (Stanford, Stanford Univ. Press, 1972), pp. 292–299. For a more detailed account, see for example, Hirao Michio, *Boshin sensō*, (Tokyo, Meicho shuppan, 1978), or Nihon shiseki kyōkai, ed., *Boshin nikki*, rpt. ed. of 1925 ed., (Tokyo, Tokyo daigaku shuppan kai, 1973). The classic study of the Sendai domain's rôle is Fujiwara Sōnosuke, *Sendai boshin shi*, 3 vols., rpt. of 1911 ed., (Tokyo, Tokyo daigaku shuppan kai, 1981). Kunishige's rôle is discussed in Date chō, ed., *Shinkō Date chō shi*, 2 vols., (Date, Date chō: 1972), I, 301–332 (hereafter cited as *SDCS*).

¹³ The 280,000 *koku* figure was reached by dividing the domain's true income of 1,120,000 *koku* by four. See Fujiwara, *Sendai boshin shi*, III, 895.

¹⁴ The life of the Aizu *shizoku* in Tonami was apparently extremely difficult. See Takahashi, *Meiji keizai*, I, 125–165.

¹⁵ For a complete list of domains punished after the civil war, see Inoue Yūkihiro, "Chōteki shohan shōbun to bosshūchi no shihai", *Niigata shigaku*, 9 (1977), pp. 66–67.

the Nanbu domain. Along with the loss of his territory, Kunishige's income was reduced from 24,350 to a mere 58.5 *koku*. Prior to the Restoration he had supported some 7,854 personal retainers (1,362 households) from his income, but this, of course, became quite impossible. With no territory and practically no income, Kunishige and his followers were faced with an unpleasant decision: either to fall to common farmer status on what was now Nanbu land, or leave the domain.

Kunishige was reduced to this choice partly by the central government, which had included all personal farmland (*hōkōnin-mae*) and all houses and other buildings in the order to transfer authority over the southern districts to Nanbu,²² and partly by the actions of the domain leaders in Sendai. The domain, trying to deal with its own financial crisis, was forced to cut the incomes of all its retainers drastically. In addition, it could not recognize *baishin* as *shizoku*, placing them instead in the lower *sotsu* class. Initially it appeared that all the *baishin* would be moved to remaining domain lands; however, the farmers of Watari, Uta, and Igu sent a petition to the central government dated February 27, 1869, requesting that the land not be transferred to the Nanbu domain on the grounds that given the long history of samurai-peasant cooperation in the development of the area, the departure of several thousand former samurai would bring disaster to local agriculture. Upon hearing of the petition, the Sendai domain presented one of its own, asking that it be allowed to order all *baishin* to return to agriculture (*kinō*) on their former lands. The central government acceded to the request, but on the condition that the *baishin* forfeit their right to carry two swords (*dattō*) and give up their surnames, and truly return to the land.²³

While the domain leaders in Sendai were probably satisfied with this, since a loss of *shizoku* or *sotsu* status by the Watari samurai would end the domain's residual responsibilities toward them, Kunishige and his followers were in an unpleasant situation. Aside from the humiliation of being reduced to peasant status on another domain's land, which in itself

²² *Watari chō shi*, I, 573.

²³ *SDCS*, I, 334–336, contains a copy of the farmers' petition. Presumably these peasants were either the *fudai* or tenant farmers of the *baishin*. The original order requiring the *baishin* to forfeit their surnames and the right to carry swords is in *Ōfuku (Meiji kimi [1869])—Kakuda ken* (document in the Miyagi Prefectural Library, Sendai).

would be unbearable,²⁴ the entire Tōhoku area was suffering from the effects of the worst harvest since the famous famine of the Tenpō era (1830–1844), and a number of peasant uprisings in the area south of Sendai had made the situation there quite unstable.²⁵ On the other hand, however, there was really no place for the *baishin* to go, since the remaining Sendai lands were being settled by other *baishin*. In either case, they had to decide quickly because the Nanbu domain was planning to bring settlers into the new territory.

It should be emphasized here that the main problem was not farming *per se*. As a matter of fact, throughout the Sendai domain samurai had traditionally been engaged in agriculture, especially the opening of new lands.²⁶ In Watari, too, samurai had cleared new fields, engaged in the construction of reservoirs for irrigation, salt fields, and dikes since the time of Date Masamune (1566–1636).²⁷ Rather, the loss of dignity involved in losing their land and homes and becoming peasants under another domain is what disturbed them. This is clear because in areas that remained under Sendai's control the return of samurai to a completely agricultural life went fairly smoothly.²⁸

At this point Kunishige's leading advisor, Tamura Akimasa (known at the time as Tokiwa Shinkurō) suggested a move to Hokkaidō in the following petition:

While it would be good to develop the land of our former domain, it would be unrealistic to expect warriors [*shi*] who had until recently carried two swords at their side and lived a comfortable life to succeed in agriculture now. Rather than seeing them spend their lives in dissipation and licence, would it not be better for them to enter the barren wastelands and attempt to make a living there? Ezo [Hokkaidō] is the northern barrier of the Empire, and as such cannot be given to neglect

²⁴ One writer has suggested that the humiliation of being reduced to a lower status was the *sole* motive behind the eventual migration to Hokkaidō. Watanabe Hideo, "Sendai han ni okeru Hokkaidō ijū no dōki no kōsatsu", *Miyagi ken no chiri to rekishi*, I (1956), 274–282. As will be seen, I think the problem is rather more complicated.

²⁵ Matsuo Masahito, "Meiji ni nen no Tōhoku chihō kyōsaku to shin seiken", *Nihon rekishi*, 345 (Feb., 1977), 66–84.

²⁶ Saitō Etsuo, "Sendai han no kashindan no kōsei: Seiritsuki no kōsatsu", *Nihon rekishi*, 219 (Aug., 1966), p. 46.

²⁷ *SDCS*, I, 302.

²⁸ Enomoto, *Kaitaku seishin*, p. 51n.

for even a day. And yet there are none now that would go to this barren land as colonists to open the land. If you were to emigrate with your retainers and open Ezo, on the one hand you would save your retainers from starvation, and on the other contribute to the national defense.²⁹

Although Kunishige had reservations initially, he soon gave his full support to Tamura's plan. Tamura further advised that in order to overcome the stigma of being enemies of the Throne (*chôteki*) and improve their chances of being granted land in Hokkaidô, before making a formal application to the government Kunishige should join the force that was then preparing to subdue Enomoto Takeaki and his pro-bakufu forces holding out in southern Hokkaidô.³⁰ While Kunishige failed in his quest to join the Imperial forces, a project he undertook without Sendai permission, he decided nonetheless that the time was right to make an application to the central government. So he sent Tamura to Tokyo. After arriving in the capital on July 7, 1869, Tamura received an introduction to the Councillor and Undersecretary of the Ministry of Civil Affairs (Minbushô), Hirosawa Saneomi, who was extremely sympathetic.³¹

The principal reason for Hirosawa's sympathy was a general concern for events in Tôhoku. While Sendai had opposed the Imperial forces in the civil war, and therefore had to receive punishment in the form of a cut in territory and income, its status as Tôhoku's only "great domain" (*yûhan*) meant that it exercised a great deal of influence over the stability or instability of the region. While there was a movement within the government to pardon the other domains and concentrate further punishment upon Sendai,³² Hirosawa saw Kunishige's colonization plan as an excellent means of solving one of Sendai's most pressing problems, and thus the key to a more stable mood in the area.³³

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 22. See also *Tamura Akimasa rirekisho* and *Tamura Akimasa jireki* (both manuscripts are at the Hokkaidô University Library, Sapporo).

³⁰ *SDCS*, I, 337.

³¹ Hirosawa's career is described in Sasaki Suguru, "Ishin seiken no kanryô to seiji—Hirosawa Saneomi ni tsuite", *Jinbun gakuho*, (Kyôto University), 47 (March, 1979), 113–133.

³² Nihon shiseki kyôkai, ed., *Hirosawa Saneomi nikki*, (Tokyo, Tokyo daigaku shuppan kai, 1931), p. 425. The debate over the original punishment of the various domains (which is considered to have been fairly lenient) is discussed at length in Inoue, "Chôteki shobun".

³³ *SDCS*, I, 338–339.

At Hirosawa's suggestion, Tamura sent word to Kunishige in Watari that the time was right to present a formal application to the government. However, the domain headquarters, hearing of the colonization plans, became suspicious of the vassals' motives, and sent a guard to Tôkyô to put Tamura under arrest. Kunishige sent a messenger to warn Tamura to lay low, but Tamura answered that he had nothing to fear. A few days later Kunishige sent word saying it was safe to return to Watari, but again Tamura refused to move for fear of losing what he saw to be a once-in-a-lifetime chance. He then sent a letter to Kunishige explaining his reasons for ignoring the order to return. In it, he stressed first of all that to either hide or run would be tantamount to an admission of wrongdoing. He went on to restate the importance of opening Hokkaidô as an act of loyalty which would erase the shame of having opposed the Restoration. He ended the letter by assuming complete responsibility for his actions, even at the cost of his head.³⁴

Tamura waited for an answer for approximately twenty days. When none was forthcoming, Tamura, ever conscious of the possibility of losing the opportunity to migrate, submitted an application to the Dajôkan (Executive Council) on his own responsibility on September 15, 1869. The application was mostly concerned with an explanation of Kunishige's rôle in opposing the formation of the Tôhoku alliance against the Imperial forces. It ended with a reiteration of the need to protect the North from the Russians, an expression of their "wish to fulfill a long-cherished dream of service to the Emperor (*kinnô*)", and the notion of atoning for past sins of the Sendai domain, but as an incidental result of *kinnô*, rather than a goal in itself.³⁵

The Dajôkan promptly ordered Kunishige to Tokyo, and in a series of orders given through the rest of the month gave the Watari group permission to migrate to Hokkaidô with authority over Usu-gun in Iburi province.³⁶ The order giving Kunishige authority over Usu gave him

³⁴ *Ibid.*, I, 340-341.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, I, 342-343 has the text of the application. The various government documents related to the move can be found in the second volume of *Ôu seisui kenbun shi*, 2 vols., (Sendai, Shiroishi shi shi hensan chôsa kai, 1956). (It is reprinted in Shiroishi shi, *Shiroishi shi shi*, 6 vols., (Shiroishi, Shiroishi shi, 1971-1979), vol. 4.) Also see *Sendai han ishin shiryô*, (microfilm copy in Miyagi Prefectural Library, Sendai).

³⁶ *Dajôkan nisshi*, vol. 92, Sept. 28, 1869 (Meiji 2.8.23) and Sept. 25, 1869 (Meiji 2.8.25).

total power over the area's internal affairs, with the exception of rewarding or punishing Ainu and Japanese residents not connected directly with his group.³⁷

Meanwhile, the Sendai domain leaders, hearing of the formal application and its acceptance, were furious at what they considered to be Kunishige's flagrant disregard for Sendai's authority by not making the application through the home domain. *Shinkô Date chô shi* reports that Kunishige and Tamura were surprised to have their happiness over receiving permission to move disrupted by an extremely strongly worded letter from the Sendai *karô* (elder) Ishimota Tajima accusing them of treating Sendai with contempt and demanding that Tamura present a full written explanation of their actions, which, if true, seems odd since they were of course quite aware of earlier attempts to have Tamura arrested.³⁸

Instead of having Tamura present a letter, Kunishige met with the retired lord, Date Yoshikuni. At the meeting Kunishige denied any desire to undermine Sendai's authority. He stressed the pressing importance of developing Hokkaidô (mostly to protect it from Russian advances), and the fact that he and his followers wanted to go there to combine agriculture and military duty (*heinô aikane*) because they had no way to earn their living at home. Then he noted that even among the members of the Tôhoku alliance the Sendai domain was a laughing-stock, so that to restore the dignity of not only Watari, but the Sendai domain in general, an act of service to the Empire (*kinnô*) such as the development of Hokkaidô was necessary. Yoshikuni was apparently so impressed by Kunishige's speech that not only did he rescind the order for a written explanation, but afterwards he actively supported the colonization plans.³⁹

The question arises as to whether or not Kunishige's bypassing the domain in favor of making the application directly to the Dajôkan shows a tendency toward independence on the part of Kunishige and his followers. Enomoto Morie says that while on the surface it may appear to be so, in actuality the group's feudal ties were merely transferred from the

³⁷ *SDCS*, I, 351.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, I, 345.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, I, 345-346. Kuniyoshi's own sister, who was also Kunishige's foster mother, eventually joined the immigrant group on Kuniyoshi's recommendation (*ibid.*, I, 389-390).

⁴⁰ Enomoto, *Kaitaku seishin*, pp. 23-24.

domain to the larger entity of the central state, and thus little real progress was made toward independence.⁴⁰ But even if Kunishige and his retainers ended up tied to an authority higher than the domain, there remains the question of their purpose in ignoring the domain in the application process. The contrast between the rhetoric of intra-domain documents (in which service to the emperor, *kinnō*, is seen as a means to another end, i.e., the re-establishment of Sendai domain dignity) and documents presented to the central government (in which *kinnō* is portrayed as an end in itself) suggests that neither theme is to be taken at face value. As Enomoto points out, Kunishige and Tamura were concerned with neither service to the emperor nor the development of Hokkaidō *per se*: they wanted to re-establish their position as *shizoku* and preserve the unity of their group.⁴¹ Unlike Enomoto, I think their successful avoidance of the home domain does show definite progress toward freedom and independence for the group because authority over a semi-autonomous domain, which is what Kunishige wanted—and got, at least until the end of the domain system—was the ultimate level of independence available for any feudal organization in early Meiji Japan.

At any rate, it is worth emphasizing here the importance of not reading too much into the pious slogans of people like Kunishige and Tamura. While it is obvious enough that service to the emperor was a mere tool used by the Watari and other groups to attain selfish goals, their expressions of loyalty and selfless devotion to the protection of Hokkaidō from foreign incursion are often taken at face value, not only in commemorative plaques, where this is to be expected, but also in some scholarly works, such as Hisamatsu Yoshinori's semi-official *Hokkaidō tsūran*.⁴²

Although the Dajōkan quickly approved the application, it is not clear what significance the choice of Usu held. While the area is now recognized as one of Hokkaidō's most fertile agricultural districts, it is possible that the officials in Tokyo thought it would be poorly suited for farming because the land lies at the foot of Mt. Usu, an active volcano. If the Dajōkan thought that the Usu land was not suited to agriculture, there arises the problem of why it was granted to Kunishige and his retainers. One possible reason is that while the government was happy to have them emigrate to Hokkaidō, their status as "enemies of the Throne" (*chōteki*) made it impossible for them to be granted what was

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁴² Hisamatsu Yoshinori, *Hokkaidō tsūran*, (Sapporo, 1893).

considered prime land. Another story has it that they requested the land specifically because Tamura had heard from a priest familiar with the area that it was very fertile.⁴³ On the other hand, it is possible that it was part of the Kaitakushi's policy of giving early settlers poor land in order to save rich lands for the anticipated rush of settlers later.⁴⁴

Once they had received permission to move, Kunishige and Tamura were anxious to get started as soon as possible. For that purpose, Kunishige appointed Tamura head of the colonization project and sent him to Hokkaidô to examine the land and assess its possibilities. Kunishige was to follow later, first returning to Watari. Kunishige arrived in Watari on October 22, 1869, and immediately called all his followers together at his family temple, the Taiyûji, and advised their ancestors of the decision to move. He read a document explaining the reasons for the move.⁴⁵ He left Watari once again on October 28, finally reaching Usu on November 23 after a difficult trip on foot. By the time Kunishige arrived, the area was fairly deeply covered with snow, so it was difficult to judge the quality of the land directly, though the vegetation on the banks of the Osaru river and the good condition of livestock on a nearby ranch gave some indication of its value. Tamura, who had arrived in Hokkaidô on October 24, presented his own report, which was extremely enthusiastic about the prospects for developing the area. Satisfied with what he saw and heard, Kunishige left for home on December 10, arriving in Watari on January 13, 1870.

After returning to Watari, Kunishige immediately called together his important retainers and announced his decision to take the first group of colonists to Hokkaidô in April. He also told the group that because of the great cost involved in moving, all unnecessary goods should be sold to raise money to finance the move.⁴⁶ Kunishige himself, during the course of the project, sold many of his family's heirlooms, raising a substantial sum to support the settlement in Hokkaidô.⁴⁷ Finally, after a conference the following six proposals were agreed upon:

1. The first group would leave in mid-April, 1870 by sea from Rikuzen Sabuzawa to Muroran;

⁴³ *SDCS*, I, 346-349.

⁴⁴ Harrison, *Japan's Northern Frontier*, p. 76.

⁴⁵ For a description of the text, see *SDCS*, I, 350-351.

⁴⁶ For Kunishige's speech, see *ibid.*, I, 363-364.

⁴⁷ For a list of things sold by Kunishige, see *ibid.*, I, 364, 412.

ing but otherwise largely uneventful trip, the party reached Usu on May 7. Work on clearing land for houses and farms began immediately, as did the construction of huts for temporary occupation, Kunishige himself supervising the work. Tamura, in his capacity as manager of the project, was to have accompanied the group but at the last moment was delayed by a major socio-political problem at home.

The problem was a new government order forbidding the Watari *baishin* from carrying two swords, the traditional symbol of samurai status. Low-ranking *baishin* living on the land in Kunishige's sub-fief played an important rôle in the local economy, producing about 7,000 of the territory's 24,350 *koku* of rice on their *hōkōnin-mae* holdings. When the southern districts were transferred to the Nanbu domain, the *baishin* were allowed to remain on their traditional lands and continue farming as *samurai* until they moved to Hokkaidō, with the only difference being that they paid taxes to the Nanbu domain.⁵¹ However, not long before the first group emigrated, the Nanbu domain paid a fine of 700,000 *ryō* to the government and was reinstated in its former domain centering on Morioka. The former Sendai territory was then incorporated into Kakuda prefecture under the direct control of the central government. The prefecture recognized neither the *hōkōnin-mae* system nor *baishin* ownership of the land their forbears had cleared. Although the first group of 220 people was ready to leave, they accounted for only about fifty or sixty of more than a thousand *baishin* households; it would take at least six or seven years to complete the move. The *baishin* therefore presented a petition asking that the *status quo* be maintained, with taxes now being paid to the prefecture. The prefecture, in a coldly worded answer dated March 28, 1870, denied the request, although it did agree to lend them about half their former land (worth about 3,670 *koku*) for a two-year period. However, the document continued, since it would be unseemly for *shizoku* to be engaged in agriculture, the condition was made that the *baishin* not carry their swords except when on official business related to their move to Hokkaidō.

The *baishin* could not accede to the government's demands. After all, aside from their already serious economic problems, which would get even worse if their land were cut in half, they had already sacrificed too

⁵¹ *Ōu seisui kenbun shi*, II, 2. See also a memorandum from Kakuda prefecture to the Ministry of Civil Affairs dated March 1870 in *Kanshō ukagai to-doke-Kakuda ken* (1869-1870) (document in Miyagi Prefectural Library).

much to maintain their dignity as warriors—their move to Hokkaidō, after all, was for that purpose—to submit without a word. Added to that, of course, they reasonably believed that since they were preparing to “serve the emperor by combining agriculture and military duty to protect Japan’s northern gate,” the least Kakuda prefecture, itself part of the central government, could do was to give them the means to maintain themselves until they went to Hokkaidō.⁵²

Tamura went to the Kakuda prefectural office to protest the decision, but was coldly rebuked, being told that the prefecture was concerned only with its internal affairs; the *baishin*’s future plans were immaterial. In fact, Tamura was ordered from the grounds because his appearance at the office wearing his swords was breaking the law. Tamura, this time accompanied by representatives of Ishikawa and Katakura, who were in largely the same position, went to higher authority, the Inspector’s Office, where they were granted an interview with the magistrate. The magistrate was initially unsympathetic, saying that if Tamura *et al.* were really interested in service to the emperor (*kinnō*), they should be prepared to make sacrifices. Not wearing swords (*dattō*) during their stay in Kakuda was nothing compared to the hardships endured by many loyalists, including the magistrate himself, in their struggle to serve the Throne before the Restoration. To this Tamura replied that while the sacrifices made by samurai before the Restoration were certainly laudable, they were actions undertaken on individual responsibility, whereas the sword and land problem involved forcing great sacrifices upon more than a thousand households. Also, the right to carry two swords was too important a symbol of warrior status to be lightly surrendered.

The magistrate, apparently impressed by this argument, called representatives of the three groups back for further discussion. It was finally decided that in addition to official colonization business, the *baishin* would be allowed to wear their swords when making pilgrimages to their ancestors’ graves, when dealing with foreigners, and whenever they went to the prefectural office. The land question was solved by the development of the “2–4–6 system”: those with former incomes above ten *koku* were given six *tan* (about 1.5 acres) of land; those with one to ten *koku* were given four *tan* (about one acre); those with less than one *koku* were given two *tan* (about 0.5 acres). The land was leased, not

⁵² *SDCS*, I, 371–372. The actual petition is cited in *Ou seisui kenbun shi*, II, 18–19.

granted to the *baishin*. The system obviously favors those with low incomes; its purpose was apparently to encourage the lowest-ranking *baishin* to become full-time farmers.⁵³

The second party left Watari on September 3, 1870. Because they went by land, no children and only four women were included in the seventy-two members. The lateness of the season gave them little time to clear much land, and their harvest that year consisted of only potatoes and radishes. The third group of 788 men and women, including Kunishige and his family, left Watari on March 27, 1871. This group was by far the largest to migrate, and their arrival in Usu brought the number of settlers to over a thousand. Originally the third group was to have included one thousand persons, but events in Tokyo had forced a reduction in numbers. In late February and early March 1871 Tamura Akimasa was in the capital trying to get the Date group's land holdings increased by the three districts of Urakawa, Samani, and Mitsuishi on the Pacific coast to the east of Usu. The former two areas had been under the Kagoshima domain, which had made almost no effort to develop the land and had finally asked permission to return it to the government. The Date settlers wanted the land because the possibilities for fishing were much better than in Usu. Tamura received a great deal of support from Hirosawa Saneomi, who was impressed by the contrast between the Date party's efforts to get more land and the rush by the great domains of the south and west to return Hokkaidô land to the central government. It appeared that through Hirosawa's influence the additional land would be granted, but before the formal application had gone through the complex maze of the Meiji bureaucracy, Hirosawa was assassinated and an anti-Sendai group came to the forefront in the Kaitakushi and Dajôkan.

Tamura, concerned over the sudden halting of the application process, eventually learned that the officials suspected the motives of the group in asking for more land. There were two problems: first, that 600 former retainers of Katakura Shôjurô, also of Sendai, should have gone to Hokkaidô as regular farmers at Kaitakushi expense, but instead went to Sapporo; it was suspected that the request for additional land was somehow part of a similar plot to move to Sapporo at government expense. Second, although Kunishige and his retainers had immigrated into Hokkaidô, they were still official residents of the Sendai domain; their loyal-

⁵³ *Watari chô shi*, I, 629-630. See also *Ôu seisui kenbun shi*, II, 11-26.

ties were thus called into question and they were accused of being "feudal". Both problems could be solved, Tamura was told, if the settlers agreed to become commoners (*heimin*) registered with the Kaitakushi. If they did so they would also be eligible for financial aid which would alleviate the grave economic difficulties the group now found itself in.

Given all that they had gone through thus far to retain their *shizoku* status, Tamura naturally felt that it would be impossible to agree to the Kaitakushi's suggestions in full, though he did agree to a change in the group's registry, which was accomplished on May 3, 1871.⁵⁴ While the application for the three districts was dead, the Kaitakushi did agree to give them authority over Abuta-gun, next to Usu, and later Muroran, next to it. Tamura was satisfied with this, especially after an interview with Matsuura Takeshirô of the Kaitakushi, who showed him an official document written by Magistrate Shima of the Kaitakushi lamenting the granting of land as good as Usu to "enemies of the Throne" such as the Date, and cautioning more care in the future.⁵⁵

In the meantime, the conditions of the settlers in Hokkaidô were steadily worsening as a lack of money and food made their survival until the harvest questionable. After living off radishes and potatoes for some time, Kunishige was at last forced to apply to the Kaitakushi for loans of food and money. This was around the first of September, 1871. The Kaitakushi expressed reluctance to make the loan on the grounds that Kunishige should have been able to take responsibility for his own people, but since it was a question of human life being at stake, a loan of 500 *ryô* and some rice was eventually made.

The abolition of the domains

It was at about this time that a major turning point came in the story of the Date colonization project. The announcement of the abolition of the domains on August 29, 1871 was followed the next month by an order from the Kaitakushi which put the entire island (with the exception of Date prefecture, the former Matsumae domain) under its direct control. The Date clan settlers were shocked and dismayed by the news that their authority over Usu had been taken away, although they did recog-

⁵⁴ *SDCS*, I, 382.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, I, 379-384.

nize its inevitability in light of events in the rest of Japan. In March 1872 Kunishige was appointed Director of Immigration for Usu, thus becoming a bureaucrat of the Kaitakushi. On May 20 he was appointed colonial officer, 8th Grade, and Tamura was named to the same post, 13th Grade.⁵⁶ Although Kunishige tried to turn down the appointments, saying that since he was in the prime of his life (thirty-one) he wanted to go to Tokyo to study, he was eventually persuaded to stay on the grounds that his retainers depended upon him for spiritual support.

With the transferral of total authority to the Kaitakushi came the end of the rice stipend payments that the Kaitakushi had taken over from the Sendai domain. The government offered to treat the immigrants in the same manner as other agricultural colonists, giving each adult a daily allowance of seven *gô*, five *shaku* (approximately 3/5 pints) of rice and a monthly miso and salt allowance of two *bu*, on the condition that they surrender their *shizoku* status. In spite of discontent on the *baishin*'s part, mostly because not all of the *baishin* from the Inada party from Awaji were required to drop to commoner status, the economic condition of the group was so bad that they were forced to accept the government's terms without much discussion. After the loss of *shizoku* status development work continued, but the morale of the group dropped considerably, with drunkenness becoming common and general efficiency falling off.⁵⁷

Migration continued even after the group came under the control of the Kaitakushi. The fourth group of 465 persons, mostly relatives of earlier colonists, left Watari in May 1872. Not having enough money to make the move on their own, the group asked the Kaitakushi for financing and received ten months' worth of rice. The fifth group (562 persons) moved in June 1872, after an unsuccessful attempt to get Kaitakushi backing in exchange for three years' labor in road construction; lack of funds forced the group to endure great hardship after arriving in Usu. The sixth (April 1874; 58 persons) and seventh (May 1875; 56 persons) groups, much smaller than the others, were privately financed. The eighth (March 1880; 358 persons) and ninth (April 1881; 18 households) groups were both partially supported by the Kaitakushi.⁵⁸ The nine

⁵⁶ Colonial Officer 8th Grade is the highest regional post listed in the *Kaitakushi kan'in roku* (document in Hokkaidô University Library, Sapporo) for 1872.

⁵⁷ *SDCS*, I, 413-415.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, I, 441-443.

moves produced a total of about 2,600 persons who emigrated from Watari and Uta to Hokkaidō. This figure is indeed impressive compared to other early colonization efforts, which usually numbered in the hundreds at best, although it was still only a fairly small percentage of the seven thousand or more *baishin* who were originally supposed to move. While the great expense involved in moving kept many behind, no doubt a number of Kunishige's retainers were not anxious to leave Sendai for one reason or another, in spite of their reported fervor.

In spite of initial hardship, the Date *baishin* remained in Usu, working at the development of the land under the authority of the Kaitakushi. Kunishige was a great proponent of Western agricultural tools and methods, and from an early stage encouraged sericulture, the development of a textile industry, and the raising of grains introduced from the West. These progressive methods help to account for the great success seen by the group after the initial period. The success of the project got Kunishige a government award in 1881, the only one given for the development of Hokkaidō, and a peerage later.⁵⁹ After about 1881 the first agricultural immigrants started arriving from areas other than the former Sendai domain, and the population of the area grew accordingly. By 1886 the population was 4,278; in 1891 it was 7,162, and by 1896 it had grown to 12,989. The area settled by the group had originally been divided into five unorganized villages, which were brought together in 1900 and named Date *mura* (village). In 1925 its status was raised to Date *chō* (town), and in 1972 it was incorporated as a city with a population of approximately 40,000.

From the time of the first group's arrival, the *baishin* organized themselves into a tightly-knit hierarchy, with Date Kunishige and Tamura Akimasa at its head. The traditional system of mutually-responsible five-family units (*gonin-gumi*), in which members were expected to help each other and jointly take responsibility for digressions by any individual member was instituted almost immediately. The same system was imposed upon normal agricultural immigrants by the Kaitakushi, much to the horror of the foreigners in government employ, who could see that

⁵⁹ Hisamatsu, *Hokkaidō tsūran*, pp. 31–32, 38–39. The award, given by the Second Internal Development Exhibition Association, is reproduced in *Date Kunishige Iburi no kuni Usu gun imin ryakki* (pamphlet no. 105, Hoppō shiryō shitsu, Hokkaidō University Library, Sapporo). *Watari chō shi*, I, 600, has a complete list of all awards won by Kunishige.

its restrictions would retard development.⁶⁰ It worked well enough in Usu among the Date *baishin*, however, since the group had brought with it the traditional social structure that the members were accustomed to in Sendai. Although by this time it was a purely social, rather than economic matter, the colonists were pleased to have their *shizoku* status reestablished by the government in March 1885. In response to this the *shizoku* drew up a *Shizoku Compact*, with the following seven provisions: 1) to revere and serve the emperor (by obeying laws and the directions of officials without complaint, and by paying one's taxes promptly); 2) to preserve the Watari Date family (because it had been through the good offices of Date Kunishige, *et al.* that they were able to establish themselves in Hokkaidô in the first place); 3) to promote harmony among the members of the group; 4) to learn fidelity and a sense of honor (so that as *shizoku* they might better defend the northern frontier of the Empire); 5) to promote thrift in personal finances; 6) to see to the education of their children (so that they might become fine citizens); and, 7) to do nothing to bring shame to the members of the group (at the risk of having one's name removed from its rolls). The compact put Kunishige at the head of the group, and after he died it was renewed with his son at its head. Eventually the compact became a symbol of the unity of the entire community, rather than simply the *shizoku*, and is said to have lent much to the character of the community even to this day.⁶¹

Conclusion

What can be said about the character of the early *shizoku* colonizers of Hokkaidô? Were they mere adventurers and exiles, as they have been characterized by one Western writer?⁶² Or were they fiercely loyal sub-

⁶⁰ Harrison, *Japan's Northern Frontier*, pp. 79–80.

⁶¹ *SDCS*, I, 489–490. As of 1972, 450 households, divided into seventeen groups, were members of the surviving association. Most apparently meet only once or twice a year, and then in a purely social capacity, but the community is said to be still very aware of traditional social relationships. Except for a period during World War II, no descendants of Kunishige have gone into local politics in order to avoid "soiling the family image". See "Hokkaidô Date shi ni okeru Watari Date han kyûshin jinmyaku", *Kyôdo Watari*, 32 (August 1972), 26–28. Date city now maintains sister-city relations with both Watari chô in Miyagi and Shinchi chô (the former Uta district) in Fukushima. See "Shisei shikô jissû nen o iwau", *Muroran minpô*, August 24, 1982, p. 1.

⁶² Harrison, *Japan's Northern Frontier*, p. 73.

jects of the emperor, interested only in building a strong Hokkaidô safe from foreign incursion, as they have been so often described in Japan?⁶³ Surely as losers in the struggle during the Restoration, they were left behind by the mainstream of Meiji society, and were in that sense exiles. They were without political and economic power in their home domains, under the authority of arrogant officials from western Japan,⁶⁴ who made little attempt to hide their contempt for the "enemies of the Throne". With the exception of a few individuals, such as Hirosawa Saneomi, they had few friends in the central government. The national bureaucracy, a common road to fame for ambitious low-ranking samurai, was all but closed, at least at its higher levels, to men from the north-east, as Takane Masa'aki has shown in his study of Japanese élites.⁶⁵ They were cut off from economic opportunity, as rice prices, at first high because of the famine and civil war, later plummeted, making agriculture unprofitable.⁶⁶ On the other hand, while it seems clear enough that service to the emperor *per se* was not the primary motivating factor behind the migration of either Kunishige's or any other group, the prospect of combining agriculture and military duty (*heinô aikane*) made service to the Throne attractive to the various groups of colonists. It is interesting to note, however, that the central government in its orders to the migrants never mentioned military duty, and in fact the groups were never organized into military units. After the organization of the farmer-militia (*tondenhei*) system individuals were permitted to join, but again this had nothing to do with their original immigration.

It is well known that the economic state of the *shizoku* in general in the years after the Meiji Restoration was quite bad. The government, seeing the plight of the former samurai as its biggest single social prob-

⁶³ Hisamitsu, *Hokkaidô tsûran*, p. 32, or almost any article related to the Hokkaidô colonists in *Kyôdo Watari*, a local history journal published by a group in Watari chô, Miyagi, are typical.

⁶⁴ Matsuo Masahito, "Meiji shonen no azechi", *Daigakuin kenkyû nenpô*, (Chûô University), 3 (1973), p. 228.

⁶⁵ Takane Masa'aki, *Nihon no seiji eriito: Kindaika no sûryô bunseki*, (Tokyo, Chûkô shinsho, 1976), pp. 98-129.

⁶⁶ For example, a survey of average rice prices in the period 1872-1874 shows that prices in Tôhoku were among the lowest in the nation. The price in Watari was about ¥ 3.24 per *koku*, compared to ¥ 6.04 in Tokyo or ¥ 5.40 in Kôchi. The price in Yonezawa, Akita, ¥ 1.39, was the lowest in Japan. See Ôkurashô, ed., *Meiji zenki zaisei keizai shiryô shûsei*, rpt. ed., (Tokyo, Meiji bunken shiryô kankô kai, 1963), VIII, 480-489.

lem,⁶⁷ gave the impoverished gentry a wide range of opportunities to establish themselves in the new society. Those not fortunate or able enough to become officials in the Meiji government made use of their stipends or government loans to start new businesses or take up farming. The attempts at business by most of the *shizoku*, who lacked the experience and social background necessary for success, failed miserably (as the phrase, *shizoku no shôhō*, meaning inept commercial methods, attests). The government, sensing the ineptitude of the samurai businessmen, encouraged the *shizoku* from the beginning to take up agriculture, partly because the farmer, as the backbone of the nation, had a much better image than the lowly merchant, and partly because to a certain extent anyone capable of the physical labor involved could succeed as a farmer, whereas in business special talents were required. But there was little done in terms of concrete policy before the ending of the domain system. Early in 1871 a Bureau of Land Development was established in the Ministry of Civil Affairs, but this department, which died with its ministry two years later, was not concerned specifically with *shizoku* agriculture. In January 1872 *shizoku* were formally allowed to engage in agriculture without loss of status, and after 1873 policies were designed and developed by the Home Ministry (Naimushō) specifically to help former samurai get started in farming. These usually involved the sale or lease of land at low prices, occasionally at no cost. Later, in 1878, Ōkubo Toshimichi developed a program to open large tracts of land, notably Asaka in Fukushima, using *shizoku* labor. This project attracted impoverished gentry from all over the country.⁶⁸ There were also numerous private companies formed by *shizoku* to develop land (some of which eventually came to Hokkaidō) which were not based on the former hierarchical relationships of the early groups in Hokkaidō.⁶⁹ Among the various options open to the former warriors was the colonization of Hok-

⁶⁷ Kikkawa, *Shizoku jusan no kenkyū*, p. 1.

⁶⁸ For a discussion of such projects in general, see *ibid.*, pp. 113–131. Several in the Tōhoku area are described in Toyoda Takeshi, ed., *Tōhoku no rekishi*, 2 vols., (Tokyo, Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1979), II, 63–79. For a discussion of the Asaka project specifically, see Fukushima ken, *Fukushima ken shi*, 26 vols., (Fukushima, Fukushima ken, 1964–1972), IV, 400–407. A similar project is discussed in Iwamoto Yuki, “Matsugaoka kaikonjō ni okeru shizoku jusan jigyo no tenkai”, *Rekishi no kenkyū*, 14 (1972).

⁶⁹ Enomoto, *Kaitaku seishin*, pp. 73–198. See also Tokunaga Yoshio, “Tōtori han botsuraku shizoku no dōkō”, in Takahashi, *et al.*, “Hokkaidō ijū shoshūdan no ruikeiteki kōsatsu”, 117–124.

kaidō. Yet, in the early period at least, few took that option, and those that did shared several characteristics. Why?

The Watari sub-fief of Date Kunishige, as well as the domains of the other Sendai-based groups, was a semi-autonomous entity within the Sendai domain. The Sendai sub-domains were centered around castles (strictly speaking, *yōgai* or "forts", but they were treated as castles by the bakufu), with small castle towns. A miniature version of the alternate attendance system was enforced, with leading retainers spending part of the time in their home regions, and part in either Sendai or Edo, with the daimyō.⁷⁰ All the groups that went to Hokkaidō came from the southern area that was lost by the domain after the civil war. In contrast, no groups came from the northern area, also lost after the war, because most of that region had been *okurairi* land held directly by the domain, and thus did not contain any large, semi-independent sub-domains. The colonists, therefore, stood to lose not only their incomes and status as warriors by staying, but also their group identity because of the government's refusal to recognize them as anything but ordinary, individual farmers.

While similarities are to be expected in groups from the same domain, the Inada party from Tokushima shared many of the characteristics of the others. The Inada *baishin* were from Awaji island in the Inland Sea. The Inada family, while retainers of the Hachisuga family, were of fairly high status, with close family ties with members of the Imperial Court. Although the Hachisuga, because of family connections with the Tokugawa, were forced to give passive support to the bakufu in the civil war, the Inada family took an active part in the fighting under the Imperial banner. After the war, the Tokushima government, in accordance with a general government directive, placed the Inada *baishin* in the *sotsu* class in preparation for demotion to commoner status. The *baishin* protested on the grounds that the traditionally high status of the sub-fief (its income was 14,500 *koku*, and the head of the family, Inada Kunitane, was based in a castle at Sumoto), and the high incomes of many of the *baishin* (up to 500 *koku*) entitled them to special treatment. This demand for *shizoku* status eventually grew into an independence movement, which in turn led to violence between the *baishin* and the home domain. During the whole process the Inada *baishin* made frequent appeals to the central government for support, saying that their service to the emperor during the war justified their claims. The government, in spite of some sympathy, did not accede to their request for fear of the effect it

would have on other similarly placed groups. Instead it sent them to Hokkaidô as colonists.

There is some debate regarding the causes and significance of the Inada rising. One view, represented by Matsumoto Hiroshi,⁷¹ sees the conflict as a result of the paradoxical position of the Inada as Hachisuga retainers, in spite of the fact that they were placed in Sumoto by Toyotomi Hideyoshi⁷² and were nearly equal in status to the Hachisuga. According to Matsumoto, the relatively strong financial position of the Inada and their rôle in defending the sea lanes to Kyoto stirred up resentment regarding their subordinate position in the domain. On the other hand, Miyoshi Shôichirô⁷³ has pointed out that most positive anti-Tokugawa activity before the Restoration was carried out not by Inada retainers in Awaji, but rather by lower-ranking samurai, supported by influential indigo farmers,⁷⁴ in the Inada family's important holdings in the mountains of mainland Shikoku. The samurai on the mainland, whose numbers grew from about 500 to 3,000 in the thirty-six years between 1832 and 1868,⁷⁵ far outnumbered their counterparts in Awaji, but were

⁷⁰ Kinsei sonraku kenkyûkai, *Sendai han nôsei shi no kenkyû*, pp. 19–23. See also Kimura Motoi, *Kakyû bushi ron*, (Tokyo, Hanawa shobô, 1967), pp. 121–129.

⁷¹ Matsumoto Hiroshi, "Hachisuga han ni okeru kôgo jihen Inada sôdô to sono sho kankyô", *Nihon rekishi*, 175 (Dec. 1962), 11–20. The paper is included as a chapter in his *Meiji ishin to Awa no kiseki*, (Tokushima, Kyôiku shuppan sentâ, 1977), 265–292.

⁷² See Matsumoto, *Meiji ishin to Awa no kiseki*, pp. 293–318, for an account of the establishment of the Inada at Sumoto.

⁷³ Miyoshi Shôichirô, "Tokushima han ni okeru Inada ke baishin dan no sonzai keitai", in Miyoshi, ed., *Tokushima han no shiteki kôzô*, (*Chihô shi kenkyû sôsho*, vol. 5), (Tokyo, Meicho shuppan, 1975), 209–225.

⁷⁴ For a detailed account of the rôle of indigo growers in Tokushima politics, see Matsumoto, *Meiji ishin to Awa no kiseki*, pp. 77–106.

⁷⁵ Miyoshi attributes the growth to a need for money on the fief's part, which led to a rise in the sale of warrior status, a need for troops to put down the increasingly frequent peasant uprisings, and a need for manpower to defend the sea lanes to Kyoto and Ōsaka. The large number of new *baishin*, and the cost of maintaining them, is cited by Miyoshi as evidence denying Matsumoto's insistence that the Inada were well-off financially. See "Inada ke baishin dan", pp. 215–221. It is curious that Shizunai chô, *Shizunai chô shi*, rev. ed., (Shizunai, Shizunai chô 1975), pp. 265–318, which describes the Inada uprising in detail and discusses the history of the Inada colonization of the Shizunai district, does not mention the large numbers of *baishin* in the mountains of mainland Shikoku.

discriminated against in sub-domain politics. Disillusioned by the activities of the elders in Sumoto, they refused to fight in the rebellion, and were excluded from the order to colonize Hokkaidô. Miyoshi argues further that while the high-ranking *baishin* in Sumoto were sympathetic to the loyalist movement before the Restoration, their support of it was part of an active plot to gain independence for their sub-fief after the Restoration.

The crisis within the Tokushima domain represents graphically a basic problem common in many domains. That is the ambiguous position of the *baishin* class as a whole in the early years of the Meiji period. Unfortunately, there is very little in the literature in general on *baishin*. The classic work on low-ranking samurai, including *baishin*, is Shinmi Kichiji's *Kakyû shizoku no kenkyû*, a thorough study centering on the Owari domain. More recently Kimura Motoi has done work on both the *baishin* specifically (especially those of the Chôshû domain), and in terms of their relationship to other low-ranking samurai in general.⁷⁶

One of the reasons for the lack of study on *baishin* is that domain and bakufu records were often vague about their numbers and exact nature. In general, in *fudai* and *hatamoto* fiefs there were few *baishin*, and many did not enjoy full samurai status. This was because the small scale of the domains themselves meant that few direct retainers of the daimyô had the income necessary to support vassals of their own. Kimura, taking the Sakura domain (in modern Chiba prefecture) as an example, finds little or no reference to *baishin* in domain records, although of course they must have existed to some extent. It is thought that at the time of the Restoration most of the *baishin* were included in the ranks of the *shizoku*. Also, in most *fudai* domains the samurai had long been removed from the land, and thus the problem of removal from traditionally held land never arose. But in large *tozama* domains such as Sendai there were great numbers of *baishin*. Although many of the *baishin* lived in castle towns, and were thus removed from the land, others lived in

⁷⁶ See Shinmi Kichiji, *Kakyû shizoku no kenkyû*, (Tokyo, Nihon gakujutsu shinkô kai, 1952). See also his "Ishin zengo no mibun kankei", *Ôkurayama ronshû*, 1 (1952), 1-57 and "Edo jidai baishin dan no keisei to kôzô", *Ôkurayama ronshû*, 7 (1958), 61-124. Aside from his *Kakyû bushi ron*, Kimura has also dealt with *baishin* in "Hagi han no baishin ni tsuite", *Rekishi gaku kenkyû*, 220 (June 1958), 11-20. The most thorough study of the Sendai domain *baishin* is Sappinai Yoshinori, "Sendai han no baishin sô ni tsuite", *Tôhoku rekishi shiryô kan kenkyû kiyô*, 8 (March 1982), 1-12.

villages, either farming themselves or acting as landlords. Unlike Sendai and Tokushima, where most of the *baishin* were reduced to *sotsu* status after the Restoration, it is thought that in the large domains of the south and west the *baishin* were incorporated into the *shizoku* class from the very beginning.⁷⁷ When this was not done, or when traditionally held lands were taken away from *baishin*, violence was often the result.⁷⁸

The difficulty of the position of many *baishin* was a result of the frequent discrepancy between their formal and real status. In small domains their small numbers and almost necessarily low incomes made their status very similar to other groups of low-ranking samurai. But in large domains, where they often numbered well over ten thousand, there was a paradox between their formal status and their real position in society. As *baishin* they lacked the right of audience with the daimyō, and were thus subordinate to even fairly low-ranking direct retainers of the lord, in spite of the fact that many of them had incomes over 100 *koku* and responsibility for the administration of occasionally quite large sub-domains. In most large domains which supported the Restoration the problem was solved by treating the *baishin* as direct retainers and making most of them *shizoku*. But this was not possible in domains such as Sendai. Here we have one of the fundamental causes of the migration of the early groups to Hokkaidō.

It is not enough to say that Date Kunishige's followers migrated to Hokkaidō in order to preserve their *shizoku* status because in a sense they never had it. Before the Restoration they lived in a self-contained community where their low formal status was rarely a problem. But in the aftermath of the civil war their former life of course became impossible. Their response to the changes of the Restoration was naturally conservative (after all, they stood to gain little by losing their sub-domain), but in fact they went beyond merely attempting to maintain the *status quo*: they tried to bring their real and formal status into line, not by lowering the former, as the government tried to do, but rather by raising the latter by establishing themselves as an independent fief in Hokkaidō. The Inada *baishin* in Tokushima were after essentially the same thing, but they did not understand that they were in fact *losers* in the Restoration process, so they rashly tried to establish their independ-

⁷⁷ Kimura, *Kakyū bushi ron*, pp. 148–186.

⁷⁸ See Senda Minoru, *Ishin seiken no chitsuroku shobun: Tennō sei to haihan chiken*, (Tokyo, Kaimei shoin, 1979), pp. 411–418.

ence at home. Sendai was obviously very much on the losing side, so it was clear from the very start that the *baishin*'s social position would benefit little if they remained at home. In domains that were clearly winners in the Restoration, the *baishin* were usually rewarded by being granted a formal status in line with their actual economic position, and it is easy to understand the violence that erupted when the government acted to damage the position of the *baishin*. It is clear that whether winners or losers, or something in between, the contradictions between the formal and real status of the *baishin* needed to be resolved. That is why it was not especially extravagant of the Date *baishin* to seek independence in Hokkaidō; it is all the more true because the central government made it extremely difficult for them to take the path of least resistance and become relatively prosperous farmers, as the *baishin* in lands remaining under the administration of the Sendai domain were able to do.

The early colonists were able to maintain a high degree group unity because of their position as losers in the Restoration. Because they fell into destitution suddenly and as a group, with relatively high- and relatively low-ranking members ending up with nothing over-night, they felt a solidarity that could not have existed had they gone under gradually and as individuals, as in the case of the *shizoku* class in general in the later years of the Meiji period. Finally, because of their immediate and sudden drop into poverty, the *shizoku* who migrated to Hokkaidō before the abolition of the domains were caught at a time when even if the government had not been hostile toward them, few if any formal programs existed as yet to aid destitute former samurai. They were thus on their own, and their best chance at success was to maintain their group identity.

In closing, I think I have demonstrated that the circumstances surrounding the migration of early *shizoku* groups to Hokkaidō were not nearly as simple as they might appear at first glance. The migration was the logical outcome of the radical changes of the Meiji Restoration in an area that was subjected to them immediately after losing a civil war, and among a group of people whose position in society had always been ambiguous.