Urban Planning Seen Through the Process of Establishing Substitute Land in the Edo Period

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Abstract

What was the process of decision-making when hiyokechi were established and substitute land provided in Edo? This study aims to clarify the shogun's logic in considering the urban planning of Edo, which occurred through the confiscation of land and transfer of substitute land. This paper has two foci: the actual conditions and distribution of the substitute lands, and the process of how these lands were allocated. The results of the study arrive at two conclusions: 1) Substitute land was based on the bashogara, which was the grade of land in the town; 2) Edo expanded through this process of redistributing land through substitute land.

Keywords: substitute lands; hiyokechi; chonin-chi (merchant quarter); bashogara (the grade of land); Edo town

1. Introduction

In response to recurring blazes, a plan to set up hiyokechi was established in Edo (modern Tokyo). The hiyokechi refers to an open space for fire prevention assigned by the shogunate during the Edo period, and was triggered by a major fire in 1657. Once designated as a hiyokechi, the cho, or town, would be given a plot of substitute land in another region to which the townspeople could move. According to Gohunaiengakuzusyo, a historical record of Edo, there was a great quantity of such substitute lands. The term "hiyokechi" refers to a plot that was given in exchange for the land taken, and any such piece of land was named accordingly—the suffix " ○ ○ substitute land" added to the name of the original town. For instance, if the original town was named "Sakuma-cho," then the substitute land would be called "Sakuma-cho substitute land."

The patterns of allocation of substitute land demonstrate careful consideration and a specific logic at work. Therefore, this study explores where, when, and for what purposes substitute lands were designated, including the shogunate's motive for seizing land from the townspeople. Furthermore, it investigates the trends regarding the expansion and reorganization of Edo (modern Tokyo) in the middle Edo period with respect to the establishment of hiyokechi and the building of townships on substitute lands.

The provision of substitute land given after land expropriation was seen throughout the early modern period, but little research has been undertaken on the process in any detail. Research on the urban history of Edo has been conducted on the aspects of spatial and social history. However, Yoshida Nobuyuki proposed the concept of "society = spatial structure" and contended that social and spatial structures are inseparable. Yoshida (1991) reviewed the inverse relationship between original and substitute land based on the "Takano family diary". Although little research has been conducted on substitute land in Edo due to limited historical data, there is a considerable amount of research on the fires in Edo, hiyokechi, and bukechi (samurai districts). Moreover, numerous studies on the expansion of urban areas in Edo have been conducted in areas such as history and geography. In this study, the urban trend in the middle Edo period—i.e., the expansion and reorganization of Edo—is discussed by reviewing the movement of substitute land and details based on these research results.

With information obtained from Edo Machikagami, Gohunaiengakuzusyo, Tokyosisiko, Tokyo city history draft, the movement of substitute lands has been plotted on a map using GIS. Substitute land trends up to the An'ei era (1772–1781) were investigated using Edo Machikagami as the fundamental reference, while information about the post-An'ei era was extracted from Gohunaiengakuzusyo. Further relevant information was obtained from Tokyosisiko. A map of substitute land movement in Edo was drawn based on the aforementioned sources, the movement patterns of substitute lands were analyzed and the reasons for the allocations of hiyokechi and substitute lands were sought in the historical literature record of Tokyosisiko.

2. Patterns of Allocation of Substitute Land

This study first plots the general trends of movement of substitute lands across the whole Edo period, with particular attention to the following findings.
2.1 The Value of Chonin-chi (Merchant Quarters)

Under normal circumstances, the size of substitute land was equivalent to that of the original town. However, additional plots were provided if the substitute land was located in Tsukiji, Azabu, or Honjo. In 1688, for instance, Asakusa Tenno-cho was seized for the establishment of a hiyokechi, and this was compensated with a piece of substitute land that was double the size of the original town near Honjo. Similarly, Kita-Konya-cho and Kaneroku-cho in Kyobashi were given substitute lands triple their original size in Tsukiji, when they were seized in 1718. This raises questions about the reasons for such deviations from the standard practice of bestowing substitute land of equivalent size. Considering that there were classifications of chonin-chi, it is speculated that the substitute lands were bestowed in accordance with these during the Genroku era (1688–1704). Located near Asakusa or Kyobashi, Chonin-chi received larger plots of land as remuneration when they were relocated to the outskirts of Edo, such as Tsukiji, Azabu, or Honjo.

2.2 Conditions of the Original Town and Substitute Land

Was the specific environment of the original cho taken into consideration when substitute lands were allocated? A cho was comprised of inhabitants from various social strata; therefore, the reputation and status of a cho was crucial for inhabitants to maintain their traditional occupations. If the original cho was situated along a river and thus consisted of inhabitants who maintained river-related businesses, would its substitute land have an environment similar to the original? Tracing the movement of substitute lands revealed that the type of environment was irrelevant in the allocation of substitute land. For example, the inhabitants of Sakuma-cho filed a petition to exchange ten units of the original town and substitute land, since the allocated substitute land was situated far from the river where they used to make their living. This suggests that the environmental factors were not taken into account in the allotment of substitute lands. Numerous examples can be found in the historical records of instances in which relocated inhabitants of cho file requests for plots of land more suitable to their traditional occupations.

2.3 Urban Planning Based on the Time and Place of Substitute Land Allocation

Cho, a fundamental administrative unit in Edo, was managed by a nanushi, the representative of a cho and the minor employee of the machibugyo. The shogun controlled chonin-chi by the machibugyo. The units of nanushi were divided by region into 21 groups. After analyzing the movement of substitute lands by the units of nanushi, it was found that the substitute lands bestowed were located in the same region as the original town where fires occurred, which explains why they were seized for the establishment of hiyokechi at that time. Furthermore, the shogunate's method of urban planning can be extrapolated by analyzing the purpose for each unit of nanushi seizing plots of land. Chonin-chi were seized to establish hiyokechi in the Asakusa region and the area from Kanda River to Shibaguchi, bukechi near Honjo, and jishachi (religious districts) near Shitaya. Southern Kyobashi, the area from Shitaya to Kanda and the vicinity of Azabu were seized to construct roads and waterways. The bukechi that were initially spread across Asakusa, as well as the area from Kanda River to Shibaguchi, were relocated to Honjo and Fukagawa, while the original bukechi plots were substituted into chonin-chi.

2.4 Shogunate's Intentions and Urban Planning in Edo

By analyzing the purpose for seizing land and the uses of the substitute lands, the shogunate's intentions for the relocation policy across the whole of Edo can be inferred.

In 1662, jurisdiction over temples and shrines like Asakusa and Shiba, as well as areas originally under the governance of local administrators, was transferred to the machibugyo, a magistrate of the merchant quarter. In addition, areas under the control of local administrators in Fukagawa, Honjo, Asakusa, Koishigawa, Ushigome, Ichigaya, Yotsuya, Akasaka, and Azabu were urbanized; and then, in 1713, the jurisdiction of these areas was given to the machibugyo. In 1745, machiyas in the precincts of temples and shrines came under the machibugyo's control, and the chonin-chi located in the interior of the waterway were expanded.

To explore the relation between the expansion of Edo and the placement of substitute lands, the period of expansion of the Edo township was analyzed with respect to substitute land movement. It was found that substitute lands were located in Honjo and Fukagawa during the Jokyo (1684 – 1688) and Genroku (1688 – 1703) eras; these two regions were absorbed by the Edo township in 1713. This implies that the substitute lands were bestowed first, and that jurisdiction over Honjo and Fukagawa were transferred to the machibugyo later. The shogunate began a full-fledged redevelopment of the Honjo and Fukagawa regions in the wake of the Great Fire of Meireki in 1657. Although initially under local administrative control, Honjo and Fukagawa came under both the local and machibugyo control in 1713. However, it was found that a Honjo Bugyo was appointed in 1660, and, while it is widely known that the Honjo region was seized in 1713, the shogunate was already deeply involved in the governance of Honjo and Fukagawa before then. The shogunate also allocated substitute lands in Honjo and Fukagawa during the Genroku era, when the two areas were controlled by local administrators.

Considering that the shogunate was committed to the development of new land in order to prevent fire damage in Edo, it may perhaps have been logical to
designate parts of Honjo and Fukagawa as substitute lands for cho seized as hiyokechi, especially since the settlement of these two areas was nearing its end during the Genroku era. Numerous substitute allotments were designated in Fukagawa and Honjo during the Genroku era, while in the Kyoho era, the shogunate expanded Edo by moving bukechis from inside the outer waterway to the outskirts, and then conferring the vacated land spaces as substitute lands.

3. Bashogara (Grade of Lands) and Substituted Land

What were the criteria for seizing chonin-chi for hiyokechi and finding substitute lands for the chonin (merchants)? In this study, it was hypothesized that substitute lands were selected based on Bashogara, or the grade of the plots. All the towns in Edo are included in 23 units.

According to Nihonbashikusi, Nihonbashi ward history, chonin were distributed based on type of labor, which corresponded with Bashogara, in 1722. In a broad sense, chonin-chi in Edo could be divided into three categories based on Bashogara: top, middle, and bottom. From the Kyoho (1716–1735) to the late Shogunate era, this classification applied to issues pertaining to the cho’s finances. In addition to compulsory silver payment, the distribution of special allowances and the seating arrangement at Kanjin-Noh were determined using this hierarchy. Historical records from 1826 divide the units of nanushi, according to the Bashogara, into three categories of regions as follows:

- Top: Unit 1, Unit 2, Unit 4, Unit 5, Unit 6, Unit 7, Unit 8, Unit 11.
- Middle: Unit 3, Unit 9, Unit 12, Unit 15, Unit 17, Yoshihara (extra).
- Bottom: Unit 10, Unit 13, Unit 14, Unit 16, Unit 18, Unit 19, Unit 20, Unit 21, Shinagawa (extra).

Fig. 1 illustrates the placement of substitute lands corresponding with the Bashogara grades. Fig. 1 shows the original town expropriated during the Edo period and the substitute land that was moved into afterward. Then, the cho’s upper, middle, and lower place (Bashogara grades) were overlapped on the movement map.

Note that the grades of substituted lands corresponded with those of the original town. While the substitute lands were not assigned any Bashogara grades, as they were initially bukechis; for bukechis were deemed to have the same grade as the surrounding region. Among 259 plots of substitute land, 209 were allotted regions with an equivalent Bashogara grade, while 28 were assigned areas with lower grades, and 22 given areas with higher classifications. Although the policy of seizing original town and providing substitute lands was actively pursued in the Genroku and Kyoho eras, the idea of assigning Bashogara grades began slightly later, in 1722. However, this is not to suggest that the concept of Bashogara among chonin-chi in Edo was implemented abruptly during the Kyoho era. The Bashogara of Edo-town indicates the values of the chonin-chi up to 1722, so it can be hypothesized that the movement of substitute lands was established based on this criteria of the Bashogara.

4. Selection Process for Substitute Land

In records like Akichinobu and Tokyosisiko there is no mention of the process for selecting substitute lands, only the results. However, by using the Tokyosisiko, it is possible to explore the process of reallocation of urban space sequentially by observing the establishment of hiyokechi, the exchange of bukechi, and the movement of urban areas. Land offered as substitutes included bukechi, chonin-chi, hiyokechi, and
The most common type were bukechi, and the least common were jishachi, with only four of these chosen as substitute lands. Based on this, the process of allocating substitute land in bukechis and chonin-chi is the focus of this section. By analyzing how chonin-chi were seized and established as hiyokechi in exchange for substitute lands, it is possible to identify patterns of selection of substitute lands.

4.1 Substitute Land in Bukechi: The Area Around Sakuma-cho 4-chome

What follows is an analysis of the process in which substitute lands were offered in exchange for the establishment of hiyokechi, based on historical records pertaining to the area surrounding Sakuma-cho 4-chome and Kuemon-cho.

The Sakuma-cho 4-chome area was destroyed on January 22, 1717, in a fire that began in the Ide Saburoemon plot of land near Koishigawa grazing land. Later, in May 1718, the affected land was seized by the shogunate as goyochi land for the shogunate, and was subsequently designated as a hiyokechi. On June 2, 1718, five plots of bukechis belonging to Honda Hanuemon, Soga Kenjiro, Obata Kosuke, Matsuura Sakenoske, and Yokotora Nosuke were seized; and new plots of land beside Minamihonjo and Shinoobashi were given to them in return. While parts of the land destroyed by fire were set aside as hiyokechi, the substitute lands originally belonged to samurais.

In the cases of Kuemon-cho and Tomimatsu-cho, existing bukechis were first relocated in order to secure the plot to be used as substitute land. Subsequently, substitute lands were offered to seven distinct cho on June 8 and 11, 1718.

The following can be concluded about the selection of substitute lands surrounding Sakuma-cho 4-chome. The closest possible plot of land within the same Bashogara grade was prioritized. Bukechi likely predominated as substitute land due to the relative ease of relocating them, which was done by the shogunate, as compared to the chonin-chi, which had a strong sense of private ownership. In this way, the shogunate began to gradually relocate bukechi to the outskirts of Edo.

4.2 Substitute Land in Chonin-chi: The Area Around Sakuma-cho 1-chome and Sakuma-cho 2-chome

The following is an analysis of the process in which substitute lands were offered in exchange for the establishment of hiyokechi, based on historical records pertaining to the area around Sakuma-cho 1-chome, Sakuma-cho 2-chome, Matsunaga-cho, and Ueno-cho.

These areas were damaged in a fire that began near Shitaya Sukiya-cho in February 1719. Disparities exist regarding the date that the hiyokechi was established, which was sometime between March and December of the same year. For the purposes of this study, it will be assumed that the area was designated as a hiyokechi in December 1719. The plot of land selected as a substitute for Sakuma-cho and its surroundings was occupied by chonin-chi and bukechis. To establish a hiyokechi in this area, three bukechis (Matsudaira Iwamatsu, Honda Gorouemon, and Honda Tonotsuke) located in the northern part of the region were relocated on April 16, 1719. Afterwards, substitute lands for Sakuma-cho 1-chome, Sakuma-cho 2-chome, Ueno-cho, and Matsunaga-cho were given the plots of land originally occupied by seven bukechis (Honda Tonotsuke, Sugiura Nananosuke, Hatori Shozaburo, Tsutsumi Heuenom, Matsudaira Iwamatsu, Kitamura Kohei, and Tsuda Matashiro) and two chonin-chi (Aioi-cho and Matsunaga-cho) on May 28, 1719. Following this allocation, in September of the same year, the seven affected bukechis were bestowed land in Azabu, Kitahonjo, and Hamamachi. The original land was then established as a hiyokechi that December, after the pre-existing bukechis and chonin-chi were relocated. Although the process is reversed in comparison with the previous case of Sakuma-cho 4-chome, similarities exist, namely that the region for relocation was first prepared before the inhabitants were moved, and that the shogunate deliberately vacated inhabited lands as substitutes instead of selecting empty plots of land.

5. Conclusion: Urban Planning by Land Substitution

In response to fires, hiyokechi were established, and the chonin inhabiting these plots of land were given a corresponding space. Substitute lands were primarily given in order to vacate lands designated as hiyokechi. Subsequently, substitute lands were developed according to another urban plan. In this study, the process of enforcing an urban planning policy of seizing land was investigated by analyzing the placement of substitute lands and the reasons for their movement.

Firstly, it was hypothesized that substitute lands were allotted according to Bashogara, or the grade of cho, which existed across Edo. In cases where substitute land was assigned to an area with a lower Bashogara grade, compensation was made by increasing the amount of land bestowed. Furthermore, plots of land seized in a similar period were redistributed within the same region, demonstrating deliberate urban reallocation for each region. In relocating inhabitants from to substitute lands, the surroundings of the original town do not seem to have been taken into consideration, although modifications were subsequently made by chonins’ request. In the establishment of hiyokechi, substitute land—regardless of whether it was a chonin-chi or bukechi—was prepared prior to the relocation of inhabitants. While there were instances of providing previously uninhabited substitute land, in most cases, the lands were vacated for relocation. It can be inferred that although jurisdiction over bukechis and chonin-chi lay with different entities, the selection of substitute land by the central authorities took supremacy over local governments. This process was facilitated in two ways.
First, the establishment of *hiyokechi* was an important policy strategy during the Kyoho era, during which the distribution of substitute land occurred frequently. Secondly, substitute lands tended to be located in *bukechis*, which were the domain of low-ranking samurais, thus easing the relocation effort compared to the *chonin-chi*, where the sense of private ownership was markedly stronger.

Finally, this study explored the shogunate's intentions underlying the policy of establishing substitute lands and *hiyokechi*. In the Genroku era, lands of substitute allotments were located in Fukagawa and Honjo. However, in the Kyoho era, the shogunate expanded Edo by moving *bukechis* from inside the outer waterway to the outskirts, and then conferring the vacated land spaces as substitute lands.

Altogether, the process of preparing substitute lands to accommodate the original inhabitants of lands confiscated as *hiyokechi* proved to be one of the driving factors that led to the emergence of Edo as a mega city.

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