

Cross-Dressing Women and Non-Reproductive Work in the Late Edo and Early Meiji Periods

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Room 4020

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Abstract: In the 1820s and 1830s a biological woman who called herself the male name Takejirō (c. 1814–1838) led a portion of their life as a man because they disliked carrying out women's work and instead preferred carrying out men's work. In the 1830s Takejirō was repeatedly arrested and brought before the Edo High Court, whose judges sentenced them to prison not only for crimes they had



Yanagawa Tomoyo, "Osaka kudari onna chikaramochi" (Strong Woman from Osaka, c. 1841) from *Misemono kankei shiryō korekushon mokuroku* (Kokuritsu Rekishi Minzoku Hakubutsukan 2010)

committed but also for wearing adult men's clothing and sporting a male hairstyle, explaining that such a conduct ran contrary to social norms. At the current state of research, scholars have exhaustively investigated the complex socio-cultural reasons behind the judges' ban on cross-dressing; however, they have paid less attention to the reasons why Takejirō lived as a man and the connection with gendered labour. The talk aims to fill this gap by examining how in "instructional books for women" (*jokunsho*), a textual genre strongly influenced by Confucianism, "work" (*waza*) is assigned according to gender, with reproductive work such as sewing, cooking, and cleaning the house assigned to women, while non-reproductive work such as running a shop, being employed in the shogunate bureaucracy or as a warrior retainer was assigned to men. The talk will explore how between the 1800s and the 1880s a small number of women alongside Takejirō cross-dressed to adopt a masculine gender performance to carry out non-reproductive work that Confucian thought assigned to men. In this manner, this talk will move the focus away from the strategies the Tokugawa shogunate used to prohibit cross-dressing, a line of inquiry that experts have so far privileged, to study the points of view of cross-dressing women themselves and how their motivations were tied to a wider socio-cultural shift in the conceptions of gender and work.

To Attend Online (Zoom):

Access the Zoom Meeting via the following Meeting ID and Passcode. Preregistration is NOT required to attend via Zoom.

Meeting ID: 928 7530 2555 Passcode: KUMMC

To Attend in Person:

Preregistration via the adjacent QR code at least a day in advance for those coming in person from outside the KU community is greatly appreciated. If you are coming from off campus, please also register as a Guest at the Information counter near the entrance before coming up to the room.

ご来場の方：神奈川県関係者は事前登録不要です。学外の方は前日までに QR コードにて事前登録をお願いします。当日は 1F の Information カウンターで Guest 登録を済ましてから、部屋までお越しください。Zoom でのご参加は事前登録不要です。

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