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## Family Trouble

### *Views from the Stage and a Merchant Archive*

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The texts I explore here, ranging from a popular stage play to a variety of manuscripts from a megatrader's archive, concern merchant houses in the prosperous if volatile decades around 1700. Their subject is the multigenerational stem family, the *ie*, which they treat as so elemental a source of identity and value that it requires, without justification, the axiomatic devotion of all members. And their focus is the existential threat to the *ie* posed by bad leadership, expressed either by the weakness of an incumbent head or the failure to assure sound succession from one generation to the next. Although there are great differences between the texts in genre and audience, each takes the survival of the *ie* as the paramount good, the responsibilities of heads as unequivocal, and the abdication of responsibility as unbearable. The play ends in tragedy; the archive lays out ingenious safeguards to prevent it.

Despite the assumptions of the authors of these texts, the election of stem family succession by merchants is puzzling, since the economic incentives that abetted the choice among other constituencies in Tokugawa Japan are hardly transparent for them. The *ie* spread throughout the samurai community, clearly enough, because martial title and stipend could pass to a single male successor. In a similar fashion, stem transmission in the outcaste community protected a range of begging and other privileges that were not divisible among heirs. While farmers faced some official controls on inheritance, their turn to the *ie* model was arrestingly coincident with the slowing of land development around 1700, when opportunities for reclamation were narrowing and the concentration of resources through unigeniture improved the prospects of family survival. Historically, we might note, farming households have been the principal adopters of stem succession as a recourse against unsustainable partitions of property.<sup>1</sup>

But among professional urban households the stakes were different. Like a martial stipend or a begging turf or an agrarian landholding, their assets certainly took material form. The primary property of the urban commoners we have seen thus far, however, was the intangible resource of a brand. Both the Sen and the Raku families secured lucrative commercial niches through the reputations conveyed by their names. Whether by offering instruction in the increasingly canonical art of the tea ceremony or fabricating ceramics to practice it with orthodox savvy, these houses capitalized on an authenticity (and authority) embodied in heads who promised integrity in the transmission of their arts and guaranteed value through lineal continuity. For any number of other professionals, luminous and lesser alike, branding could also help capture market share. Teachers, manufacturers, specialists in *métiers* ranging from carpentry to medicine—all traded in goods and services linked to the unbroken household names attesting to the unbroken excellence of the enterprises.

Still, the protection of brands does not require the formation of stem families. In commercial societies from London and Venice to Delhi and Beijing, the intangible capital of reputation has always been vital and frequently linked to family names. Yet maintaining it has not mandated, past or present, any single family configuration. Why, then, did Tokugawa business houses elect a form of succession that, on the one hand, was not necessary to shield an impartible asset and, on the other hand, carried heavy costs: the disinheritance of the head's siblings and nonsucceeding offspring; the concentration in that head of encompassing responsibility for both domestic and commercial affairs; and the constraint on entrepreneurship that follows from the submission of person to lineage and hereditary calling. What gains surpassed these costs?

Economic interest alone, of course, cannot account for the election of the *ie* model in early modern Japan. As the essays in this volume demonstrate, multiple factors buttressed stem choices that, if generally grounded in economic motives, resonated in disparate domains. They include the growth of ancestral veneration, which depended on multigenerational fidelity to ritual prescriptions; the focus of local governance on persisting lineages, which had reliable roots in their communities; the lure of elite example, which melded reputation with unbroken headship; and the sheer momentum of conformity with an apparent social norm. Did these factors move urban traders toward the *ie*?

In this chapter I examine retail merchants, perhaps the Tokugawa constituency least obviously drawn to a stem model of unigeniture and preservation of the family venture. I am concerned with both their representation in selected texts and the logic of *ie* formation those texts intimate—but *only* intimate, since, again, the *ie* is taken for granted by the authors as a norm, not examined as a choice. To anticipate some of the disclosures of the texts, let me mention, first, that the merchant *ie* appears there as an enterprise fully fusing household and

business. No private unit of kin seems imaginable to the authors as a definition of family. Let me mention, second, that this *ie* appears entirely self-reliant. No structures of state or law seem relevant to the authors as external protections of family interests. In each respect, the texts invite reflection on the role of the *ie* as a defense against commercial trouble.

And my sources do focus on trouble. Indeed, from the outset of the Tokugawa period, the ever-enlarging literature on the family made peril a core subject. If they routinely portrayed the family as a bastion of social order and personal felicity, neither fictional nor nonfictional texts treated it as safe. Much of the trouble was generic. Thus, for example, a best-selling perennial, *The Family's Book of Bewares*, typifies the advice literature with its tireless lists of the hazards—both external (from bad weather to bad neighbors) and internal (from bad health to bad budgeting)—menacing most households. (The remedy? Forfend! Through ever harder and smarter work, combined with iron thrift.)<sup>2</sup> But much of the trouble, specific to the *ie*, turned on the seminal challenges of leadership and succession. They dominate the texts I take up now.

One was written by Chikamatsu Monzaemon, the most celebrated playwright of the era; the others by Mitsui Takahira, a fabled retailer and financier. Both authors were born in 1653. Both had samurai ancestors. Both flourished in the commercial economy that boomed around 1700. And each put the *ie* squarely in front of his audience. Chikamatsu spoke to theatergoers enmeshed in family trials; Takahira spoke to household members dependent on his own family's fortunes. Thus linked in numerous ways, the authors diverged deeply in experience. Chikamatsu, the younger son of a declining house of scholar doctors, served for a time at courtly residences and then found success writing scripts for the fiercely competitive producers, actors, and chanters of Kyoto and Osaka. His line disappeared with his death.<sup>3</sup> Takahira inherited a far-flung empire of retail and banking enterprises that he left strong enough to thrive throughout the Tokugawa period (and, with mutations, to this day).<sup>4</sup> The two men also addressed the fragile family in different ways. A maverick who put the contemporary family on stage, Chikamatsu made pain his subject in tear-drenched tragedies about human weakness. An organization man who perfected the art of admonition and reform, Takahira took pain for granted as the price of folly and focused on prevention. The two nonetheless describe the same universe, the same sources of trouble, and the same system of value.

I begin with Chikamatsu's play, which orients us in the milieu of the contemporary urban marketplace and the values guiding its imagined players. Although the tragedy centers, for many modern interpreters, on the emotional turmoil of a protagonist torn between obligation to his family and attachment to his lover, my reading draws out a different story. The tragedy centers, I think, on the senseless destruction of a merchant house by a narcissistically flawed head. Audiences are

meant to weep, but less for a barely sympathetic protagonist than for the havoc he brings down on his *ie*, which the play portrays as the heart of merchant life.

CHIKAMATSU MONZAEMON AND THE *LOVE SUICIDE*  
AT *AMIJIMA* (1720)

Chikamatsu wrote well more than a hundred scripts, most of them on historical themes featuring the (implausible) derring-do and (wrenching) sacrifice of warriors. His fame is inseparable, however, from a small body of domestic dramas that are set in his “today” and focused, in the main, on urban commoners. All are tragedies. The masterpiece is the *Love Suicide at Amijima*, inspired by a spate of attested incidents (condemned as criminal by the Tokugawa regime) in which desperate couples chose death over intolerable lives. The lovers in *Amijima* are Jihei, a paper merchant age twenty-eight, and Koharu, a prostitute age nineteen. In the final act, Jihei kills Koharu and then himself. How the two arrive at this climax is Chikamatsu’s subject.<sup>5</sup>

Stripping his plot of the elements that made the real-life incidents so riveting to the public, Chikamatsu declines to tell a sensational story or even a romantic one. We hardly see the lovers together before the final act, and then as sharers of sorrow rather than passion. At the narrative forefront is Jihei’s household, where much of the drama unfolds. And that drama is driven by a single source: Jihei’s consuming weakness. No sublime failing or fatal obstacle converts the protagonist into a tragic hero. He is banal but able to do awful damage to all those around him. Their pain, a family story, remains Chikamatsu’s concern.

The author draws the family to the fore of his play with three narrative choices. First, he multiplies the relations between members and, hence, the weight of their obligations to one another. From the outset, and no fewer than six times thereafter, the script informs us that Jihei is married to his cousin—the only child of his father’s younger sister—in a union combining conjugal and blood ties. Because his widowed and dying father had entrusted Jihei to his sister’s care, the intimacy is compounded: the aunt acquires a sort of maternal role, which Jihei acknowledges by calling her mother. At the time of the play, Jihei and his wife have a son age six and a daughter age four. They effectively belong, then, to a three-generation *ie* made up of a senior couple (simultaneously Jihei’s surrogate parents, in-laws, and aunt and uncle); the ascendant couple of Jihei and his wife (also his cousin); and the heir-in-waiting. One more important relative is Jihei’s older brother, also a cousin to Jihei’s wife and nephew to his in-laws. He has struck out on his own to become a prosperous flour merchant but remains a kind of guardian to his younger sibling, who runs the family’s retail paper business.<sup>6</sup>

Chikamatsu’s focus on that business is a second key to his plot. Never separating his players from their callings, the playwright fixes audience attention on the *ie* by fusing family and enterprise, identity and resources, one generation and the

next. Repeatedly named as Jihei the paper seller, the protagonist heads a substantial house. In a sequence of carefully deployed details, the script describes the large frontage of the paper shop (three times the norm), its fine location (on the avenue leading to Osaka's prime tourist destination, the Tenma Tenjin Shrine), and its fortunate circumstances: the shop is "long established" and reputedly "well managed," and it sells "fine paper" to "customers who practically rain down." Accordingly, the family quarters at the rear of the shop are appointed with the comforts of prosperous, not quite affluent people. The household has quilts and screens, a sunken brazier, wardrobe cabinets, and the paraphernalia for hospitable offerings of tea and tobacco. It also has excellent clothing. Jihei dresses for a crucial errand in "an under-robe of Gunnai silk, a padded over-garment of sheer black silk, a striped coat, and a satin sash"; he carries a short sword "ornamented with gold." A partial inventory of his wife's dowry includes fifteen robes made from such luxurious fabrics as Hachijō silk and Kyoto crepe.<sup>8</sup>

This thick material allusion surely served, in part, to situate a knowing audience in Jihei's orbit. Chikamatsu's play about a contemporary merchant house in Osaka was staged, after all, for heavily merchant audiences in the nakedly commercial arena of an Osaka theater. Money and display were on their minds. At multiple price points, clients paid for both floor space (from private boxes to crowded parquet) and amenities (from saké to charcoal braziers, from any variety of culinary fare to any variety of companionship) that marked their means. Above all, perhaps, clients paid to see and be seen in what served as a showcase for finery.<sup>9</sup> So, in this site of conspicuous consumption, Chikamatsu made his characters socially legible through their assets.

Far more than background detail, however, those assets direct attention to the real scene of the drama. If it is physically set in a cityscape of brothels, shops, and landmarks, the action belongs to the overarching world of the marketplace. There, gold coins and "new silver" make the music, while business inflects a lexicon of interest rates and exchange rates, service contracts and sales contracts, seals and signatures, accounting ledgers and payment schedules for debts. There arithmetic rules, as the players calculate the days before wholesalers must be paid, the years left on indenture agreements, and the likely returns on hocking padded silk.<sup>10</sup> And there Chikamatsu locates his play, which lingers lightly over the love affair between Jihei and the courtesan Koharu—almost three years old when the stage action begins—to focus on the fate of a commercial house.

Money is at stake from the opening dialogue. We learn in quick succession that the manager of her brothel has forbidden Koharu to meet Jihei, whose avidity is discouraging other clients; that a wealthy rival is planning to buy out her costly contract and establish the girl as his mistress; and that the paper merchant, hard-pressed to meet his debts let alone redeem his lover, has so "squandered his prestige and his money that his fortune is paper filled with holes, wastepaper unfit even for blowing his nose."<sup>11</sup> These revelations come before the narrator catalogues most

signs of the household's seeming prosperity—its prime location and standing, fine merchandise and popularity, good furnishings and wardrobes. In their dark light, those signs point away from enviable privilege toward alarming jeopardy. A besotted head of house is running to ground the assets that the players and their audience understand as a legacy held in trust and the basis of the *ie*'s social life.

And, thus, the third key to Chikamatsu's plot: the playwright strips his protagonist of sympathy, hence placing his injury to the *ie* beyond forgiveness. We first encounter Jihei in Act I, set in the licensed-prostitution quarter of Sonezaki, where his older brother visits Koharu to dissuade her from continuing the affair. Disguised as a samurai client who sympathizes with her anguish, the brother elicits a confession from the girl: although she has pledged, in their hopeless circumstances, to die with Jihei, she wants to escape that fate and begs the samurai's help in breaking off the relationship. The confession is overheard by Jihei, waiting at the lattice of the brothel to steal a glimpse of his lover. Wrath consumes him. Calling Koharu a "rotten-hearted fox" and a "thieving whore," he thrusts his short sword at her through the lattice but misses.<sup>12</sup> During the following confrontation among the three, the brother reveals his identity and reproves Jihei for failing his household, angering his uncle, driving his aunt to illness, and forcing the brother himself into a humiliating disguise. Jihei admits to having been "bewitched by this old badger" and "deceived by this house-breaker." To demonstrate his "ten million regrets" over a now-shattered affair, he flings at Koharu the vows of fidelity he had exchanged with her for each of the preceding twenty-nine months. She turns over to the brother a small bag with her own corresponding vows. There he finds a misplaced letter that Koharu pleads with him to keep secret. As the brothers depart the brothel, Jihei cries out: "As something to remember, I will trample once on this woman's face." Then, "bidding you farewell with just this one foot," he "kicks Koharu on the temple."<sup>13</sup>

If provoked by the disloyalty of his lover, which we later learn is feigned, the violence of Jihei's reaction is grotesque. And it recurs in Act II, set in the paper shop several days later, where a morose Jihei learns that Koharu is about to be redeemed. Weeping "tears of molten iron," he offers his wife a ranting admission of anger, which combines bitterness toward the rival with hatred of the faithless "beast-woman" who had promised a "magnificent suicide" were any man but Jihei to claim her.

Before I've been out of the way ten days, she is to be redeemed by Tahei. For that rotten woman, that four-legged [beast], I have no love left at all. But that Tahei will be bragging. He will spread the word throughout Osaka that Jihei's business has reached an impasse and he is pinched for money. Those with whom I have dealings in all the wholesale houses will stare at my face, and I shall be disgraced.<sup>14</sup>

At this, the wife reveals an exchange of letters with Koharu. Fearing that the affair would lead to Jihei's death, she had written the note discovered among Koharu's

vows in Act I: "Between women there is a mutual sympathy. Do what must seem the impossible and sever [your relationship with him]. I beg you for my husband's life." And Koharu had responded: "He is precious to me, worth more than life itself, but being caught in an inescapable obligation [to a fellow woman], I shall give him up." The wife now concludes that the "virtuous" Koharu, if outwardly renouncing Jihei, will surely honor her promise by dying alone: "All we women are constant and do not change our minds."<sup>15</sup> She resolves to prevent the death.

Here the playwright homes in on his message. While confirming the venality of Jihei, Chikamatsu highlights the valor of a wife who, twice, intercedes to protect her household: first to save her husband's life by convincing his lover to forsake him; and now to save both the lover and the family by supplanting Tahei and raising funds to redeem the girl. The wife calculates that she can make a sufficient advance on Koharu's contract if she combines the money put aside to pay the wholesalers (after hocking the bulk of her wardrobe) with the money to be had by hocking the last of the clothing (hers and her children's).<sup>16</sup> So she dispatches Jihei to the pawnshops, impervious to both the material loss and the threat to her own status. (If Koharu cannot be established in a separate residence as Jihei's concubine and must enter the main household, the wife declares her readiness to assume the role of wet nurse, cook, or lay nun in retirement.<sup>17</sup>)

The climax is set in motion by the arrival of nemesis. The wife's wary father interrupts Jihei's departure, discovers the looting of his daughter's dowry, and demands from Jihei a "bill of divorce": "You would peel the skin off your wife and children to acquire the means to chase a harlot. You pickpocket! My wife is an aunt to you, but to me you are completely unrelated."<sup>18</sup> After the father removes his desperately resisting daughter from the house, Jihei returns in Act III to the Sonezaki quarter and reunites with Koharu. The two make their way in a long, late-night walk to the Osaka locale of Amijima. There Jihei stabs Koharu and hangs himself.

Chikamatsu brings deep pathos to this final act, for compassion toward frailty inflects his stagecraft.<sup>19</sup> Jihei's closing sweetness toward Koharu, his gestures of rectitude concerning how their bodies will be found, his consuming sorrow, his dying invocation of Amida Buddha<sup>20</sup>—all such grace notes discourage any naked moralizing. The feeling that has always dominated a script short on action and long on tears takes over, as the sheer pain imposed by a weak man brings down the curtain.

The murder-suicide appears less a catharsis, however, than an ultimate act of waste. Chikamatsu has structured his play too starkly to allow release. Although fortunate in his circumstances, Jihei has all but abandoned his business, wasted its resources, and left his wife to cover his debts to wholesalers with her trousseau. Although surrounded by blameless relations, Jihei has withheld physical intimacy from his wife ("for two years I have been left alone"), made the "entire family . . . intensely anxious and sick with worry," and cast his children on frightening shoals.<sup>21</sup> No external trouble—an enemy, an unjust world, a vengeful god—helps explain his descent. No alternative ethos—which elevates personal

happiness, say, over the good of the *ie*—underlies his choices. Chikamatsu projects a penitent Jihei who shares the values if not the character of his relatives. And with those two loathsome scenes, he frustrates any temptation to view Jihei as a hero of love. When he feels betrayed by his lover, Jihei spews venom at the girl and kicks her on the temple. When he hears of her imminent redemption by a rival, Jihei laments only the damage to his reputation: word will spread of the failing business and “I shall be disgraced.” Jihei is all *id*, all selfish impulse, particularly in contrast to the wife and the lover whom Chikamatsu assigns the selfless virtues of loyalty to each other and their households. If Koharu is a loving victim of Jihei’s folly, she pays the price with her life while despairing over the consequences for her impoverished mother.<sup>22</sup>

The playwright thus lodges the tragedy in the destruction of a family—an *ie* that knots household with enterprise—through the conceit of a bad head. And the play presumes, for its power, a shared audience understanding of the *ie*’s centrality, the head’s charge, and his singular weight in ensuring survival. I return to these points after turning to the complementary texts of a merchant financier.

MITSUI TAKAHIRA AND HIS *OBSERVATIONS* (1720s),  
*REGULATIONS* (1694), AND *WILL* (1722)

Around the time Chikamatsu wrote *Amijima*, Mitsui Takahira was assembling notes on recent business failures in the real world. The resulting text, *Some Observations on Merchants*, focuses on fifty-some traders in Kyoto who inherited fortunes from industrious founders but ruined their houses through indulgence and Jihei-like recklessness: “Having been brought up after the family had already become rich and knowing nothing of physical hardships or the value of money,” they “leave the family business to others and pass their time in idleness.”<sup>23</sup> Takahira’s subjects—the majority brought down when large loans to daimyo went bad—played well above Jihei’s league. They nonetheless shared with Chikamatsu’s protagonist a familiar catalog of faults. Many surrendered to sex (with both male and female lovers), luxury consumption (especially of huge homes and precious tea wares), and the lure of art (poetry, the tea ceremony, gardening, theater chanting, *noh* drama, courtly kickball). Some squandered resources on Buddhist temples. Most were ensnared in foolish loans by hopes of vast profits.<sup>24</sup> In general, they forgot both the “merchant spirit” (of vigilant bookkeeping, cautious investment, ceaseless discipline) and their “proper station.”<sup>25</sup> In essence, they sacrificed their *ie*—their families, their family enterprises, and their ancestral obligations—to their own vanity.

Mitsui Takahira had no sympathy for men whom he judged inhuman and made the object of uncompromisingly cautionary tales for his successors. Nor did he hesitate to hit close to home. His father’s eldest brother, the text reports, presaged the decline of his once-prosperous house by cultivating an interest in *noh* drama,

building a stage, inducing his heir to perform, and neglecting the boy's education in the family business. That heir, "thoroughly extravagant in his tastes," abandoned himself to distractions (tea, chess, designing buildings and gardens) and irresponsible loans. The subsequent heir, a "person of no talent," lived on credit. A fortuitous adoption stalled but did not prevent the slide of the house.<sup>26</sup>

Such a fate was what Takahira determined to prevent in his own lineage, which was established by his father, Takatoshi (1622–94), the youngest of four sons born to a modestly successful saké brewer in the town of Matsuzaka in Ise Province. (The brewer's father, a samurai in service to the Sasaki daimyo of Ōmi, had retired there following the wartime defeat of his lord.)<sup>27</sup> Outrageously gifted in business, Takatoshi built a constellation of (at least nine) retail and banking operations that stretched, by the time of his death, from the headquarters in Kyoto to Edo and Osaka.<sup>28</sup> He also won recognition from the Tokugawa shogunate with appointments as an official draper and a licensed exchange agent; in the latter position he managed fiscal transactions between Edo and the Osaka-Kyoto area on behalf of the regime.<sup>29</sup> Although the financial enterprise came to dominate Mitsui interests, the trade in silk textiles remained the business's public face and the source of its reputation for legendary innovation. Takatoshi sold cloth in his showrooms at fixed prices for cash payments, cut it to lengths requested by clients, and supplied provincial salesmen with wholesale fabrics from Kyoto. He was a wizard at advertising as well as customer service. He probably employed hundreds of clerks in his last years.<sup>30</sup>

This legacy was large, and Takahira's approach to protecting it complex. Two manuscript documents—one written before and one after the *Observations*—addressed first the managers and then the kindred leadership of the house in order to illuminate a strategy for survival that combined rigorous oversight of operations with visionary planning for succession. The perpetuation of the *ie*—which "we must honor without fail, eternally and throughout the generations of children and grandchildren"—was the imperative. Fidelity to the founder—whose "divine protection" continued to ensure the family's prosperity—was the corollary.<sup>31</sup> A pendant to these documents, *Some Observations on Merchants* supplied real-life warnings of the doom awaiting anyone heedless of their admonitions.

The *Collection of Family Regulations*, dated 1694, itemizes the rules for preventing "ruin" in ninety articles directed to, and witnessed by, the managers of the Mitsui textile headquarters in Kyoto.<sup>32</sup> Setting the tone, the lofty preamble effectively conflates the Mitsui lineage with the imperial house (both are committed to the "family business") and the central shop with a daimyo's donjon (both are "main castles"). It also foregrounds the founder as the model for performance. Because Takatoshi pursued his calling "single-mindedly," "diligently," and "day and night until past the age of seventy," he "attained virtue in accord with the way of heaven" and, consequently, "peerless success." Similarly, managers and clerks who strive in their work (ever "alertly," "honestly," "sincerely," "unselfishly") will "certainly

succeed.” The promise of gain remains nonetheless subordinate to the “primary principles of loyalty and filial piety,” for the *Collection of Family Regulations* casts the Mitsui staff as members of the Mitsui *ie*, each of them entwined in the hierarchy of familial attachment and obliged to deliver unwavering deference.<sup>33</sup>

Mixed throughout the *Regulations* are two practical emphases. The first, on good behavior, emerges in multiple articles that enjoin managers to hold clerks and other underlings to stern standards: no indulgence (in colored hair ties or perfumed hair oils, new or fancy clothing, saké or fine foods); no discretion over any but the smallest amounts of pocket money; no freedom of movement (whether at work or play, day or night); no unsupervised guests or access to the kitchen larder. Supervision was to extend not only to routine confirmation of guarantors but unflinching maintenance of the separate ledgers for recording the personal expenditures of clerks, their daily comings and goings, and the meals supplied by the kitchen. Such monitoring of the self was to be matched by safeguarding of the shop (according to detailed guidelines for fire-fighting, locking up merchandise every evening, securing the shutters, and the like).<sup>34</sup>

Thus alert to good behavior as the foundation of the enterprise, the *Collection of Family Regulations* attends in greater part to good procedure. Many articles cover the mechanics of management: scheduling inventories (month by month, with annual reconciliations); stocking merchandise (from the initiation of orders to the inspection of deliveries and the determination of prices); keeping accounts of debits and credits (day by day, with monthly reconciliations of master ledgers and the settlement of debts); and handling the heavy traffic (in goods, correspondence, and people) between Kyoto and the branch shops in Edo and Osaka that the headquarters supplied. Many other articles engage personnel practice. Managers are to confer regularly and candidly on “all matters” in the presence of several senior advisors who, in turn, are to report concerns to the Mitsui head. The managers, the advisors, and the head are to meet on the fifth day of each month in preparation for an assembly of all shop staff on the sixth day. In addition to the seals required for all ledger entries, significant documents are to be jointly witnessed by three managers. And, lest discipline grow lax, the *Collection of House Regulations* is to be read aloud two times each month.<sup>35</sup>

Acknowledging the dependence of a large enterprise on a large staff, the *Regulations* tilt decisively toward personal discipline, methodical practice, and mutual surveillance as the instruments of stability. Even so, there are intimations of a collaborative role for managers in abetting the development (not simply the survival) of the business: they are challenged to excel in their work, to scout out promising suppliers, to keep their eyes on provincial markets and exchange rates, to identify and reward talent in their subordinates.<sup>36</sup> Suggestive here are sentiments attributed to the founder, which would become part of Mitsui lore: “One excellent clerk can do the work of a thousand; one bad clerk can make most of the others bad. Distinguish that excellent clerk from the others and reward him.”<sup>37</sup> If loyalty and

filial piety bound the Mitsui staff to the family leadership, a synergistic respect for quality appears to have bound the leadership to the staff.

The second major document that illuminates Mitsui Takahira's approach to protecting the legacy of the founder is a combined testament and house constitution signed in 1722 and titled the *Will of Sōchiku* (the Buddhist name Takahira took in retirement).<sup>38</sup> Addressed to contemporary kin as well as succeeding generations of children and grandchildren, it includes fifty-one articles, both sweeping in exhortation and relentless in detail, that are divided into a prologue, sixteen sections with individual headings, and a conclusion.<sup>39</sup> The provisions served as the fundamental law of the Mitsui house throughout the Tokugawa period.

We find in them, as in the 1694 *Collection of Family Regulations*, addressed to managers of the Kyoto headquarters, a recurrent attention to daily business operations. What is central and singular in the *Will*, however, is a multifaceted engagement with the headship and control of the *ie*. It was failure at the top, after all, that brought down the firms described in *Some Observations on Merchants* and, in a humbler register, the retail paper business of Chikamatsu's *Amijima*. A bad head was as dangerous as a break in the lineage. Managerial discipline was only as reliable as the conduct of the leadership.

A key aspect of Mitsui conduct originated with the founder, whose ghost suffuses the *Will* as the declared source not simply of the family's prosperity but of Takahira's injunctions for preserving it. While evidence for tight transmission from father to son remains elusive on many matters, there is little doubt that Takatoshi articulated the crucial tenet of "one seed, joint prosperity," or strength through solidarity.<sup>40</sup> Thus, on the one hand, the Mitsui house was to have a single and clear head—the successor in the main line (from Takatoshi to Takahira and beyond) who would inherit primary responsibility for the *ie*. On the other hand, the house was to incorporate as principals the heads of collateral lines established by Takatoshi's younger sons. The 1722 *Will* of Mitsui Takahira recognizes five fraternal lines as joint members of a consolidated *ie*; it also recognizes three lines established by in-laws as affiliates of the *ie*.<sup>41</sup>

This model of consolidation was exceptional to the prevailing pattern (in families with substantial means) of separating junior lineages from the senior house as largely autonomous enterprises.<sup>42</sup> And it probably reflected the exceptional experience—in the generations of both Takatoshi and Takahira—of fraternal cooperation in running a business with interlocking retail and financial operations, as well as expansive capital assets, in three major cities (and several provincial nodes). Disaggregation would have boggled the minds of even star accountants. It would also have posed external dangers. In one of his concluding articles, Takahira rationalizes the solidarity model by citing the legend of a foreign king who demonstrated to his ten sons that ten arrows could be broken one by one but not as a combined quiver.<sup>43</sup> If union brought collective exposure to the weakness of any particular member, it fortified each against easy fracture.

The Mitsui model involved a complex assignment of shares in house assets to each of the fraternal and affiliated lines. It also involved elaborate stipulations governing the annual disbursements to them from the central treasury; the annual returns expected from them on profits; the administration of a substantial reserve fund; and the provision of support for widows, retirees, daughters, and surplus sons.<sup>44</sup> But the scrupulosity in the *Will* to such elemental matters was only a beginning. Good structures, even those binding brothers in a quiver, do not supplant persons. Hence, the *Will* invokes early and often the need for talent in each lineage head and sound preparation for leadership. In one long section, Takahira outlines a curriculum for the sons of partners who, from age twelve to age thirty, are to rotate through all the main Mitsui shops and master there all essential skills—from the most modest services for clients to advanced proficiency in purchasing, accounting, financing, and coordinating staff—until they are ready to assist the incumbent heads with formal assignments.<sup>45</sup> And those incumbents are meant to relinquish authority in a timely fashion by retiring around the age of sixty, earlier if disability intrudes. Should a head lack an appropriate heir, he is advised to adopt one from a collateral lineage, either a boy or (yes) a girl.<sup>46</sup>

Nor did the *Will* stop here, since the threat of a bad head is hardly foreclosed by good training and prudent counsel. Removal of a thorn must be an option. So the *Will* authorizes the assembled heads of the main and fraternal lineages to compel the retirement or separation of any one of them who injures the business or violates the collectivity.<sup>47</sup> There is more still. Takahira's *Will* confirms two innovations, both dating from 1709 or 1710, that institutionalized the Mitsui *ie* as a corporate holding transcending kin.

The first, the establishment of the Managers' Council, effectively lodged responsibility for the administration of Mitsui enterprises in a group of six or seven senior staff representing shops in Edo, Kyoto, and Osaka. "Putting the security of the house first," the *Will* states, the councilors are to "focus with a single mind on the harmonious regulation of superiors and inferiors" and, thus, to reprove both "heads in error" and "underlings in the wrong." The lineage heads must respect their judgment, reward exemplary performance with bonuses and pensions, and select successors from the circle of promising juniors being prepared for leadership by current councilors. So indispensable are the best of the councilors that even as the *Will* recommends retirement by age fifty-five or fifty-six, it exempts still-robust incumbents and insists on "unending" consultation with the others on all vital matters.<sup>48</sup>

The second innovation, the creation of the Executive Board, remains the paramount development in Mitsui history during the early modern period. The board did not displace the successor in the main lineage as the head of the Mitsui house; nor did it compromise the collective claim on resources, influence, and prestige of the principal collateral heads. In both the rhetoric of the *Will* and the subsequent conduct of business, however, the board emerges as the ultimate source of decision

making concerning all Mitsui operations. The *Will* instructs board members to visit each shop annually (spending up to two months in Edo), inspect all books biannually, focus meticulously on capital flows and the quality of goods, watch market conditions (particularly in Nagasaki), and ensure the diligence of staff. The *Will* also requires them to convene monthly, attend the meetings of the Managers' Council, and deliberate thoroughly on all aspects of the business. And what of the board's composition? According to the *Will*, members should include three able and mature heads of the principal family lineages. But from its inception, and throughout the Tokugawa period, the board also included members of the Managers' Council. Kin and staff jointly controlled the Mitsui *ie*.<sup>49</sup>

No family, and no family fortune, is ever safe. The second-generation successor to Mitsui Takatoshi's conglomerate nonetheless put in place cordon upon cordon of protection in the most versatile campaign for survival launched by a Tokugawa-period house. The essential defense was sound management practice at the shop level. Additional defenses circled the headship: the consolidation of main and fraternal lineages to concentrate strength; the protocols for methodical training and orderly succession of heirs to abet stability; the provision for removal of errant incumbents to afford fail-safe correction. The definitive defense, however, embedded heads in a sort of senatorial system that all but obviated individual leadership. Entrusting immediate administrative responsibility for the Mitsui concerns to the Managers' Council, Takahira vested ultimate oversight of the house in an Executive Board—where the combined representation of kin and staff asserted both the unitary identity of family and enterprise and a consequent commitment to corporate governance.

#### REFLECTIONS ON THE TEXTS

The scale of the Mitsui holdings and the complexity of the safeguards surrounding them would have been unimaginable to the paper merchant Jihei and most of his real-life counterparts. Still, Takahira's documents and Chikamatsu's play spring from a common worldview. At a basic level, the admonitions of the documents hew to the same popular morality—conveyed throughout school primers and family manuals, neighborhood and village regulations—that informs the play. Resist temptations to laziness and neglect of business by ceaseless striving in the “family calling.” Elude the lure of luxury by recognizing that “limits” lead to prosperity. Suppress vanity in selfless service to the house. And, above all, preserve virtuous accord in that house with reverence toward ancestors, loyalty and filial piety toward superiors, benevolence toward inferiors, and harmonious domestic relations.<sup>50</sup> Jihei knew these rules as well as anybody. He just couldn't live by them.

Here is the reality that both playwright and financier reckon with: virtue fails, rules get broken. One explores the consequences with pain-drenched pathos, the

other forbends with gimlet-eyed practicality. Each, however, is guided by a shared understanding of what matters. Their common worldview locates the *ie* at the center of value. The rules exist to protect it. Breaking them, and thereby ruining his house, was Jihei's tragedy. Buttressing them, and thereby shielding his house, was Takahira's mission.

Indeed, so raptly do Chikamatsu and Takahira make the *ie* the highest good that competing values fade from their texts. We may find in *Amijima* a saving regard for the humanity of feeling (of the wife for her husband, the father for his daughter, the prostitute for her lover). Even so, the script withholds any redeeming purpose from the protagonist himself. He sows loss in the service of nothing. In Takahira's documents, the emphasis on the survival of the house is unconditional. The founding genius, Mitsui Takatoshi, might have served as a muse for continuing invention. He emerges, instead, as the creator of a legacy that must be conserved with unwavering fidelity. Any diversification of the business is forbidden as a reckless departure from proven competence and a source of damaging turmoil.<sup>51</sup> No less clearly, any distraction from the business is reproached as vain. While Takahira took pride in official recognition from the Tokugawa regime and enjoined all members of the house to faultless compliance with its law, his *Will* warns against deepening political service, which diverts energy from the *ie* while providing no demonstrable advantage. So, too, religious fervor. Appropriate observance of Buddhist and Shinto rituals (with appropriate donations) must not escalate to avid piety, another injury to the "family business."<sup>52</sup> The possible pull of other distractions—scholarship, say, or social service—falls beyond Takahira's ken. In fact, his Mitsui successors would venture into pursuits variously aligned and not with family interests: they became major players in poor relief, arts patronage, real estate development, and leveraged lending. The foundational documents of the house, however, make insular caution the creed of the *ie*.

Here, then, we return to my opening question: why was the *ie*, and its perpetuation, so important to merchants? Mitsui Takahira does not tell us. Nor does Chikamatsu Monzaemon. Arresting in their texts is the apparently self-evident imperative of *ie* persistence, which, despite the sacrifices entailed, remains so essential a frame for interpreting the human condition that it requires no justification. Takahira treats the many business failures described in *Some Observations on Merchants* not as a welcome thinning of witless competitors but an occasion to preach the lesson of lineage-first-ism: close ranks behind the founder and never court risk! Chikamatsu makes Jihei's crises not a study in passion but a morality tale about family damage: tame the ego to save the house! Bad behavior for both authors is the path to *ie* destruction, something transparently terrible. Nothing could be worse. The point gives pause since, as I note earlier, stem family formation, episodic historically and concentrated in agrarian societies, was new to Tokugawa Japan as a common practice outside the martial elite and hardly obvious as a desirable norm.

One lead appears in the *Mitsui Family Regulations*, where several striking analogies speak to a conception of prestige derived from elite practice. When the preamble equates the Mitsui and imperial houses (each is committed to the “family business”) and then the Mitsui and daimyo headquarters (each is a “main castle”), the leap is not toward a presumptuous social parity but the comparable social gravity that established names, professional identities, and landmark locations bestow. For traders as for their princely models, the preamble implies, presence over time builds weight in reputation. And clearly linked to reputation is the concern with genealogical honor. Both Takahira’s *Will* and the family records that were completed during the same year serve as panegyrics to a founder of distinguished descent and public trust who invested unrivaled energy in an abiding achievement. More than beneficiaries of this legacy, however, successors are bearers of consequent obligations. If the *ie* transmits genealogical honor, it also sustains it through the ancestral devotions—the passage of names, the maintenance of graves and mortuary rituals, the daily performance of filial piety—that acknowledge the “divine protection” of ascendants. The *ie* plays an ethical role as an instrument of gratitude.

Its primary role is nonetheless the protection of resources. Mitsui Takahira’s inescapable preoccupation, in scores of regulations ranging from the shareholding of heirs to the conduct of decision, remains conservation of a material endowment. Social gravity and genealogical honor surely provided practical insurance. And those values may have figured ever more profoundly over time as psychical inspirations for perseverance. But the initial (and continuing) shifts toward the *ie* turned on fortification. Mitsui Takahira, the second-generation heir to a fortune made of innovation, dug in with defense.

Defense presumes danger. It is recognition of this reality, I think, that leads us to the heart of merchant choices of the stem family: efforts to explain the decisions of Takahira and his kind must grapple, in the end, with the fears that animated them. The weak-heir syndrome—so colorfully on display in *Some Observations on Merchants* and so tragically on display in *Amijima*—was a critical part of the mix, since bad incumbents and failed successions posed the immediate threat to the *ie*. Alone, however, it fails to explain why *ie* survival mattered so deeply in the first place and, in the Mitsui case, inspired such serious institutionalization. Binding brothers in the equivalent of a corporation, assigning control to senatorial councils, exposing all operations to the light of ledgers, seals, and mutual surveillance—these were acts that established the lineage as a trust. On the one hand, they formalized and routinized the internal relations of parties who decided to work together. On the other hand, they projected the house externally as a formidable unit of stability and dependability: it adhered to protocols of verification and signature; it valued name; it was organized to survive for a long time. Implicit here is the fear of exposure to outside as well as inside dangers that *ie* formation might deflect.

Mitsui Takahira does not describe the nature of those dangers, or the specific utility of the stem household in defending against them, in either his *Regulations* or his *Will*. Perhaps he took them for granted. Perhaps he knew that *Some Observations on Merchants* provided description enough. The cautionary biographies there certainly warn against imprudence and vanity in house heads. Just as certainly, they warn against a fiscally fragile shogunate and the many daimyo houses whose predatory borrowing practices figured profoundly in the ruin of most of the subjects. Their failures did expose, flamboyantly, the movement of wealth from a martial elite increasingly dependent on large loans to the great commercial concerns able to provide them. But they revealed no less surely the vulnerability of merchant lenders who were defenseless against default, lacked protections for private property, enjoyed no certain access to legal appeal, and thus remained quarry for a troubled regime. The *Observations* served as a textbook on the exposure of merchant resources to a quixotic polity. A series of fiscal reforms from the late 1690s into the 1730s—including lurching manipulations of currency and stringent controls on consumption—only added to the insecurity of high-end urban traders.<sup>53</sup>

For all traders, however, the swift growth of the commercial economy in Tokugawa Japan brought a host of new business challenges—from recruiting suppliers and workers to managing financial transactions—that posed grim risks in the absence of legal protocols and protections for making contracts, securing credit, and indemnifying property. What emerged in this vacuum was a web of insurance, spun by commoners themselves, which entangled the players in Jihei's world no less than Mitsui Takahira's. Large and small alike, merchants came to live by the bonds of guarantors, witnesses, seals, and oaths that made fast their ever more richly documented agreements concerning sales, service, loans, and partnerships. (Recall the drone of marketplace music—its contracts, promissory notes, due dates for debts, oaths, and chops—accompanying Chikamatsu's play.) Such devices may have warned the regime against predation in an increasingly organized, and vigilant, mercantile society. Preeminently, though, they acknowledged that the arithmetic of capital required conditions of trust.

But trust without assured legal recourse for injury is tough. Lacking that recourse, the authority of a guarantor or a seal had to depend essentially on the integrity of the signatory. Similarly, the viability of the commercial sector had to depend broadly on the leadership of stable concerns able to enforce an ethos of integrity. In this context, the formation of merchant *ie* appears to me a means of backing the sincerity of words with the weight of time—not just the social gravity or genealogical honor that signified fame for the most ambitious houses but the promise in even humble houses that ascendants and descendants were implicated as witnesses to any transaction bearing the collective name. The *ie* put the standing of the lineage behind the seal of the incumbent head.<sup>54</sup>

Did this standing necessarily entail unigeniture (the indivisible transmission of what, after all, was the intangible asset of name and brand that might have been

shared among heirs) as well as fidelity to a defining calling (rather than entrepreneurial diversification)? The evidence outside and even inside Japan (where the *ie* was hardly the sole choice of merchant families) says no. Yet both the bunker mentality apparent in the Mitsui archive and the obligation to honor a legacy assumed in Chikamatsu's play point to a logic of cautious defense among *ie* adopters. Fusing the family with its business, the *ie* identified successive generations of kin with one core enterprise that they could corporately authenticate. Conveying authority from a single hereditary head to the next, the *ie* concentrated the capital of name in a socially legible form that uncertain legal circumstances invited. Over time, association and interdependence surely accelerated *ie* formation as well. If the security of families like the Mitsui derived from lineage continuity, it could only be enhanced by dealing with suppliers and other partners (from transporters to paper sellers) who themselves practiced stem succession. As lead firms sought the insurance of stem family witness, replication down the chain appears predictable.

There was a price, of course. Mitsui Takahira's adamant conservatism—designed to fortify a fortune against both internal trouble and the external dangers a unified *ie* might resist—put the house as enterprise over the house as persons of individual vision. The consequence for the Mitsui, and for many great counterparts across the social spectrum, was the atrophy of an increasingly symbolic headship submissive to managers. The willingness to pay this price illumines, I think, an early modern consensus that the corporately structured *ie* provided the best available recourse for protecting economic capital. The affective and morally inflected language of the Mitsui documents, and of Chikamatsu's *Amijima*, insists, too, that the *ie* provided the best available locus for defining social identity and responsibility. Feeling, and the requirement for filiality among kin and nonkin alike, came to buttress, suffuse, and blur the economic imperative.<sup>55</sup>

#### NOTES

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1. This and the following paragraph draw on material explored in the introduction to this volume and in the essays by David Spafford, Maren Ehlers, Morgan Pitelka, and Anne Walthall.

2. For the *Kanai yōjin shū* (the title I translate as *The Family's Book of Bewares*), see Tomiya (1729) 2010. For additional texts concerning family perils, see Koizumi 2010 and Nagamoto 2005 (which introduces the texts published in Nagamoto 2004–9). For treatments in popular fiction, see almost anything written by Ihara Saikaku, for example, Befu 1976.

3. For summaries of the scant surviving information concerning Chikamatsu's background and personal life, see Suwa, Shinoda, and Tsuji 1979, 128–36; and Shively 1953, 12–18. Gerstle 1999 describes the context in which Chikamatsu worked.

4. For biographical information, see Mitsui Bunko 1980 and Miyamoto 2003.

5. For an English translation, see Chikamatsu 1953, and for the Japanese text, Chikamatsu 1958. Shively (1953) provides a copious introduction to the play as well as extensive annotation of the translation. See pp. 48–51 for the play’s textual history and the sources used for the translation.

6. We do not learn why the younger brother inherited the business. But by expanding the group of elders Jihei is obliged to honor, this plot choice amplifies his betrayals.

7. Kamiya, or “paper shop/seller,” functions as a sort of surname for Jihei. Details about the enterprise—including a frontage of 6 *ken* (roughly 36 feet)—appear in Chikamatsu 1953, 74, 76; and Chikamatsu 1958, 366, 368–69. Here and below, I have made minor modifications to Shively’s translations.

8. References to the furnishings pepper Act II. For Jihei’s costume, see Chikamatsu 1953, 83; and Chikamatsu 1958, 376. For the wife’s dowry, see Chikamatsu 1953, 82; and Chikamatsu 1958, 375.

9. For illustrations of the theater environment, see Suwa, Shinoda, and Tsuji 1979; for an extended analysis that, while focused on kabuki, addresses issues common to *jōruri*, or puppet performances, as well, see Shively 1978. *Amijima* was first staged by a *jōruri* troupe at the Takemoto-za in Osaka in 1720.

10. The suffusion of the script with contemporary commercial argot accounts in good measure for the striking volume of editorial annotation in both Chikamatsu 1953 and 1958.

11. Chikamatsu 1953, 64, 66–67; Chikamatsu 1958, 358–60. Puns on paper are rich in Act I.

12. Chikamatsu 1953, 71–72; Chikamatsu 1958, 364–65.

13. Chikamatsu 1953, 74–75; Chikamatsu 1958, 367–68. “House-breaker” is a translation of *yajiri kiri*, someone who cuts through walls or fences to rob a house.

14. Chikamatsu 1953, 80–81; Chikamatsu 1958, 373.

15. Chikamatsu 1953, 81; Chikamatsu 1958, 374.

16. Note that the wife’s leverage derives from her control of clothing, as is the case of the protagonist of Amy Stanley’s essay in this volume.

17. Chikamatsu 1953, 83; Chikamatsu 1958, 375.

18. Chikamatsu 1953, 85; Chikamatsu 1958, 377.

19. For Chikamatsu’s system of value, see Gerstle 1996; and Shively 1953, 28–29, 41–42.

20. To honor Koharu’s pledge to Jihei’s wife that she would separate from him, the lovers symbolically renounce secular attachments by cutting their hair and then die by different means at a short distance from each another. Chikamatsu 1953, 94–96; Chikamatsu 1958, 384–87.

21. Chikamatsu 1953, 80, 89; Chikamatsu 1958, 372, 380.

22. We understand that Koharu was indentured to the brothel to support her widowed mother, who might become a beggar without her. Chikamatsu 1953, 71; Chikamatsu 1958, 364.

23. For the text (Japanese title, *Chōnin kōkenroku*), see Crawcour 1962, 31–123. The quotation appears on p. 31. The text includes, in addition to the Kyoto cases, several group portraits of privileged merchants and, in an epilogue, notes on a number of Edo and Osaka houses. It was completed in the late 1720s by Takahira’s son, Mitsui Takafusa, who attributes almost all of the content to his father (see pp. 122–23). In footnote 9 (pp. 11–12) Crawcour discusses the manuscripts he used for the translation as well as modern published versions,

all based on later and corrupt copies. No authoritative version has been published by the Mitsui Archives (Mitsui Bunko).

24. For discussion and a numerical accounting of the chief causes of failure, see Kyōto-shi 1972, 137–39.

25. For a still-peerless inquiry into the merchant ethos exemplified by the Mitsui texts, see Miyamoto 1977.

26. Crawcour 1962, 69–72.

27. The major source of early Mitsui history is the *Record of Our Business* (*Shōbaiki*), completed by Takatoshi's third son in 1722, which is far fuller than the *Record of Our House* (*Kadenki*), completed anonymously the same year. See Mitsui Bunko 1971, 16–22 (*Kadenki*) and 23–46 (*Shōbaiki*).

28. Takahira's *Will*, discussed below, names fifteen of the shops established by his house (an incomplete figure), nine of them predating Takatoshi's death. For the names and founding dates, see Mitsui Bunko 1971, 765–68 (in the *kaidai*, or commentary, section of the volume).

29. The titles are *gofuku goyōtashi* (awarded in 1687) and *kingin on-kawase goyōtashi* (awarded in 1691.) For discussion, see Kyōto-shi 1972, 151–44.

30. For biographical overviews, see Mura 1992, 57–77; and Kyōto-shi 1973, 258–60. Although the number of Takatoshi's clerks is unclear, records indicate that just three of the Mitsui shops were employing nearly one thousand clerks around 1770. See Nishioka 1992, 179.

31. Articles 1 and 2 of Takahira's *Will*, in Mitsui Bunko 1971, 1. "Divine protection" is the translation of *myōga*.

32. The document is the *Kanai shikihō-chō*, in Mitsui Bunko 1971, 66–78. The unnumbered articles are sufficiently unsystematic in organization to suggest accrual and revision over time.

33. Mitsui Bunko 1971, 66–67. This long preamble appears to be the original and core statement of a text that, issued shortly after Takatoshi's death, may otherwise repeat accumulated shop rules. See Mitsui Bunko 1971, 774–75 (in the *kaidai* section).

34. Scarcely any page of the *Regulations* lacks counsel on good behavior. For a representative sample, as well as recurrent insistence on keeping up the ledgers for comings and goings (*deiri-chō*, *tashitsu-chō*), personal expenses (*kozukai-chō*), loans (*kari-chō*), shop accounts (*kingin deiri-chō*), meals (*daidokoro-chō*), purchases (*kaimono-chō*), and other activities, see Mitsui Bunko 1971, 68–70.

35. See, for example, Mitsui Bunko 1971, 69–70, 72–74. The article concerning monthly readings is on p. 83.

36. Mitsui Bunko 1971, 67, 70–72.

37. Mitsui Bunko 1971, 37 (in the *Shōbaiki*).

38. See Mitsui Bunko 1971, *Sōchiku yuisho*, 1–16. For a selective and problematic paraphrase prepared for Eleanor Hadley, see Roberts 1974, 499–503.

39. What I call the prologue consists of the first six articles; what I call the conclusion consists of the final four articles. The headings of many of the sections, which include the remaining forty-one articles, appear below. Because neither the articles nor the sections are numbered, occasional ambiguities in distinguishing one article or section from another may result in somewhat different counts by different readers.

40. In opening and closing, Takahira represents his *Will* as a reaffirmation of his father's will (which is not extant). Mitsui Bunko 1971, 1, 15. "One seed, joint prosperity" is a translation of *dōmyō kyōeki* (Mitsui Bunko 1971, 1), sometimes rendered as *dōmyō itchi*. For analysis of Takatoshi's origination of the principle, see Mitsui Bunko 1971, 762–63.

41. The *Will* identifies Takahira's successors in his own lineage as heads of the consolidated house (*sōryōke, sō-oyabun*). It names six houses collectively (his own and five fraternal houses) as main houses (*honke*) and three others as affiliates (*renke*). See Mitsui Bunko 1971, 2–4.

42. The senior or main house was typically called the *honke*, the junior or branch houses *bunke* or *bekke*.

43. Mitsui Bunko 1971, 15.

44. The first five sections cover the essential financial arrangements. See Mitsui Bunko 1971, "In the Matter of the Headship and Its Execution" (Oyabun no koto narabi ni shioki no jidai), nine foundational articles, pp. 2–6; "In the Matter of Retirees" (Inkyō-ryō no koto), eight articles, pp. 6–7; "In the Matter of Younger Sons" (Jinan narabi ni basshi), three articles, pp. 7–8; "In the Matter of Daughters" (Joshi no koto), four articles pp. 8–9; and "On the Need for Relief Funds" (Ryōken arubeku no koto), four articles, pp. 9–10. For discussion, see Kyōto-shi 1973, 270–74.

45. "In the Matter of Training Sons and Grandsons for Entry into the Household Business" (Shison kagyō-iri minarai no koto), one article, in Mitsui Bunko 1971, 11–12.

46. Mitsui Bunko 1971, 6 (opening of the Inkyō no ryō section), and 3 (fourth article of the Oyabun section). Should we assume that the girl's husband would then be adopted as the family head? Takahira does not say.

47. Mitsui Bunko 1971, 3 (second article of the Oyabun section).

48. "In the Matter of the Duties of the Councilors" (Motojime yaku no koto), one article, in Mitsui Bunko 1971, 14–15.

49. "In the Matter of the Managerial Duties of the Executive Board" (Ōmotokata tōryō yaku no koto), one article, Mitsui Bunko 1971, 10. For two documents (dating from 1709 and 1710) that put the formation of both the Councilors and the Executive Board well before the completion of the *Will* and that confirm the membership of several councilors on the Executive Board, see *ibid.*, 199–213 and 259–62.

50. For revealing samples in English of popular moralizing, see Ramseyer 1979; and Ooms 1996, 363–73 ("Regulations for the Villages of All Provinces").

51. "On the Prohibition of New Ventures" (Shinpōshō no kinsei no koto), one article, in Mitsui Bunko 1971, 11.

52. "On How to Understand Service to the Regime" (Kōgi aitsutome sōrō no wa kokoroeru-beki koto), one article, in Mitsui Bunko 1971, 12; and "In the Matter of Devotion to the Buddhas and the Gods" (Busshin shinjin no koto), one article, in *ibid.*, 13–14.

53. For an introduction to these complex matters, see Matsumoto 1967; Kyōto-shi 1973, 258–82; and Hiramatsu 1981.

54. For a powerful analysis of the role of merchant intellectuals during the eighteenth century in establishing ideological and practical grounds for the rightful role of merchant expertise in the polity, see Najita 1987. This development followed the formation of houses like the Mitsui, however, and never eventuated in robust legal protection of them.

55. There are many resonances here with the essay by David Spafford in this volume.

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