Trends in Japanese First Names in the Twentieth Century: A Comparative Study

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1 Introduction

Names can be viewed as important sociolinguistic data. The onomastics points to the role and position in the society of the bearer. In addition to revealing something about the named person, personal names provide insight into the social structure and value within the community. In the past, some people received several names and others retained a solitary name throughout their lives, which reflects the complexities of the social hierarchy in Japan. Moreover, the distinction in the semantic meaning between men's and women's names might be reflected by the different expectations of boys and girls. Thus, personal names symbolizes social and individual aspects.

This paper aims a longitudinal study of Japanese first names. It analyzes first names at Waseda in Tokyo and at Shingu in Wakayama in terms of the name pattern, the writing system and the semantic meaning, and explores how names have changed over the past 100 years, through a comparison of names bestowed in several time periods.

2 Historical perspectives of names in Japan

Currently, a Japanese name consists of two parts: a surname and a first name. The Japanese surname is inherited from either of their parents. On the other hand, the first name is given usually by their parents. Nowadays, it is taken for granted that all the Japanese are equally bestowed a surname and a first name. However, it is just recently that this naming system has started. Prior to the discussion of the first name in the 20th century, I would like to provide a brief sketch of the history of Japanese personal names in modern times since it may be relevant to the current name system.

Until the Meiji Restoration in the 19th century, there was a distinctive social hierarchy in Japanese society, which had a great influence on the name system. Specifically the number of personal names given to one person and the name patterns were different, depending on social class which the named person belonged to. Upper class men used to be bestowed various names. The warrior and the scholar had a variety of name components; *yoomyoo, jitsumyoo, tsuushoo, azana* and *goo*.[1] They were usually given *yoomyoo* (infant name) on the seventh day after birth and received *jitsumyoo* and *tsuushoo* at the coming-of-age ceremony. The *jitsumyoo* (true name) was a formal adult name and was felt to be so closely identified with the individual that other people would rarely use it. On the other hand, the *tsuushoo* (current name) was an appellative name by which a man would commonly be known and be addressed.[2] *Azana* and *goo* were introduced in imitation of Chinese practice.[3] Thus, upper class men changed names at initiation into adulthood, after which they often bore several

names. On the other hand, the majority of peasants and merchants had only one name throughout their lives.

The practice of retaining several names during one's lifetime may be due to the animistic nature of names. According to name animism, a name was not only a designator or an identifier of an individual, but possessed its own individuality. A name was assimilated with the person and was held sacred, as if it had a soul or a personality of its own. It used to be assumed that if a name was revealed, the life essence of that name could be transferred to the interlocutor. Consequently, it was a taboo to call a person directly by his *jitsumyoo*. Instead, he was most often referred to by his *tsuushoo*. [4]

Social class also affected the number of women's names, the name pattern and the writing system. *Imina*, the formal name of Imperial princesses consisted of one Chinese character pronounced with a two-syllable reading and the suffix "-ko" such as Sumiko (淑子) and Chikako (親子) . [5] Likewise, upper class women who came from aristocratic and *shogunal* families were bestowed *imina*, which comprised one Chinese character and the suffix "-ko". [6] On the other hand, the writing system and name patterns were diverse among lower class women. Their names were rarely followed by the suffix "-ko" and were written in various ways; Chinese characters, *hiragana* and *katakana*. [7] In short, social class determined women's name patterns and the manner in which they were written.

Drastic changes, which affected Japanese names, occurred at the time of the Meiji Restoration. The Meiji government sought to abolish the feudal system and the name taboos, by issuing laws which prohibited the use of various names and which forced all the Japanese equally to register one name as a personal name as well as a surname. [8] As a result, those who bore several personal names were obliged to select one name and to register it. For instance, SAIGOO Kichinosuke Takamori (1827-1877), a famous early Meiji leader, became simply SAIGOO Takamori, leaving out his *tsushoo* Kichinosuke. [9] Moreover, the Meiji government prohibited changing names that had already been registered. Consequently, it did away with the custom of changing personal names several times during one's lifetime. The Meiji government, thus, established the 20th century name system.

3 First names in the 20th century

In order to examine the use of first names in the 20th century, it may be useful to focus on two sets of concrete data. One is a name list of the graduates from the Waseda Primary School, which is located at Shinjuku-ku in Tokyo, and the other is a list from the Shingu High School at Shingu-shi in Wakayama prefecture. There are three main reasons that these two schools have been selected as data sets for this research. First, both schools have a long history which enables us to analyze the change of students' first names over the past 100 years. The Waseda Primary School was founded in 1900 and the Shingu High School was in 1901. Second, the two different data sets allow us to compare first names in Tokyo in the *Kanto* district (the eastern district) of Japan with those in Wakayama in the *Kansai* district (the western district) at certain intervals over a 100 year period. Finally, the reason that Wakayama has been selected as one area of the *Kansai* district is that the first names in Wakayama

had two significant features. One feature is that the Chinese characters which indicated animals such as 龍 (dragon) and 鶴 (crane), were likely to be used as an element of personal names. [10] The other is that the "i-e-no-yo-o" name pattern including the suffix, "-i", "-e", "-no", "-yo" or "-o" was preferred for women's names and many women received "i-e-no-yo-o" names in Wakayama in the Edo period (1603-1868). [11] Therefore, we can examine how these features in Wakayama have been changing over the past 100 years, with due regard to the differences from Tokyo.

Names are examined at ten year intervals over the past 100 years, allowing us to have opportunities to analyze the names of graduates from the both schools who were born on the nine selected interval years. (see Table 1) The oldest data from the Waseda Primary School is a name list of the graduates in 1930 whose birth year is 1917. Those who were born in 1987 are 14 years-old and are junior high school students. Consequently, the data at the Waseda Primary School in 1907 and at the Shingu High School in 1987 are not available, and the column of 1907 at Waseda and that of 1987 at Shingu are left blank in table 1. I would like to explore changes in the writing system, the name pattern and the semantic meaning of both men's and women's first names respectively, based on these data.

Table 1 Sources of the data : number of informants at Waseda and Shingu

Year of Birth	Waseda Primary School (Tokyo)	Shingu High School (Wakayama)
1907	—	152 (56 male; 96 female)
1917	127 (46 male; 81 female)	155 (58 male; 97 female)
1927	41 (13 male; 28 female)	335 (75 male; 260 female)
1937	184 (98 male; 86 female)	288 (171 male; 117 female)
1947	266 (153 male; 113 female)	622 (317 male; 305 female)
1957	114 (57 male; 57 female)	394 (197 male; 197 female)
1967	147 (67 male; 80 female)	487 (248 male; 239 female)
1977	96 (51 male; 45 female)	320 (143 male; 177 female)
1987	76 (44 male; 32 female)	—

3-1 Men's names
i) Writing system

There are three ways in which first names can be written in Japanese; Chinese characters, *hiragana* and *katakana*. Historically speaking, Chinese characters were usually used to write a variety of men's names, such as *tsuushoo* and *azana*. However, laws in the 20th century restricted use of Chinese characters. The choice of Chinese characters permitted for use in first names was limited by the family register law to the 1850 *Tooyoo kanji* (current-use Chinese characters) from 1948. The choice of characters has been extended by the addition of some characters in 1951, 1976 and 1981. In 1990 the number of these additional Chinese characters was increased to 284. As a result, the number of Chinese characters which can be used for first names is currently 2229. [12]

The examination of the writing system at two schools reveals that the major writing

system used for men's names in the 20th century is Chinese characters, just as it was in the previous centuries. (see Tables 2-1 & 2-2) The only exceptions are "Shigeru" at Waseda and "Makoto" at Shingu which were written in *hiragana* in 1957.

Table 2-1 Writing system for men's names at Waseda for 1917-1987

	1907	1917	1927	1937	1947	1957	1967	1977	1987
Kanji	—	100%	100%	100%	100%	98.2%	100%	100%	100%
Hiragana	—	0	0	0	0	1.8%	0	0	0
Katakana	—	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 2-2 Writing system for men's names at Shingu for 1907-1977

|	1907	1917	1927	1937	1947	1957	1967	1977	1987
Kanji	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	99.5%	100%	100%	—
Hiragana	0	0	0	0	0	0.5%	0	0	—
Katakana	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	—

ii) Name patterns

First, I would like to analyze how Chinese characters compose men's names since the majority of men's names were written in Chinese characters. There are three kinds of name pattern: a one-Chinese character name, a two-Chinese character name and a three-Chinese character name. One of the characteristics which the Waseda and the Shingu schools share is that the majority of names are written with two Chinese characters throughout the 20th century, as graphs 1-1 & 1-2 illustrate. Most of *jitsumyoo*, *azana* and *goo*, which upper class men used to bear, consisted of two Chinese characters. It is likely that the structure of these names caused the later popularity of two-Chinese character names.

Names composed of one Chinese character have generally accounted for 10~20% of all men's names written with Chinese characters. The one-Chinese character name originated in the 9th century. Emperor Saga (786-842) bestowed one-Chinese character names such as Makoto (信) and Hiroshi (弘) on some of his sons. This name structure gradually came to be widespread among commoners.[13] At the beginning of the 20th century, the three-Chinese character names were as popular as the one-Chinese character names. However, there has been a decrease in the number of the three-Chinese character names at both Waseda and Shingu. Consequently, the dominant men's name pattern in the 20th century is a two-Chinese character name.

**Graph 1-1 Chinese character names for men in Waseda for 1917-1987**
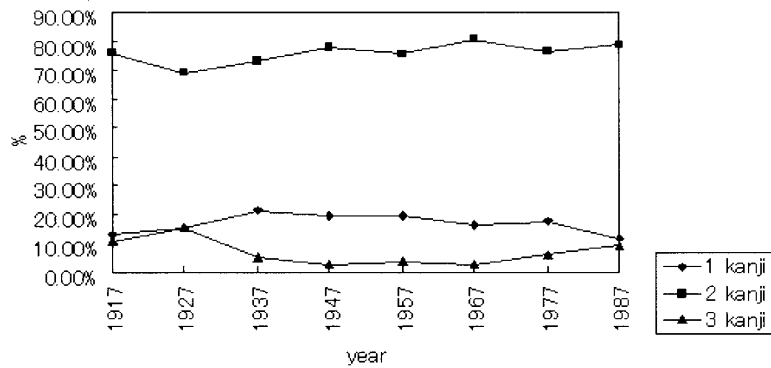
**Graph 1-2 Chinese character names for men in Shingu for 1917-1977**
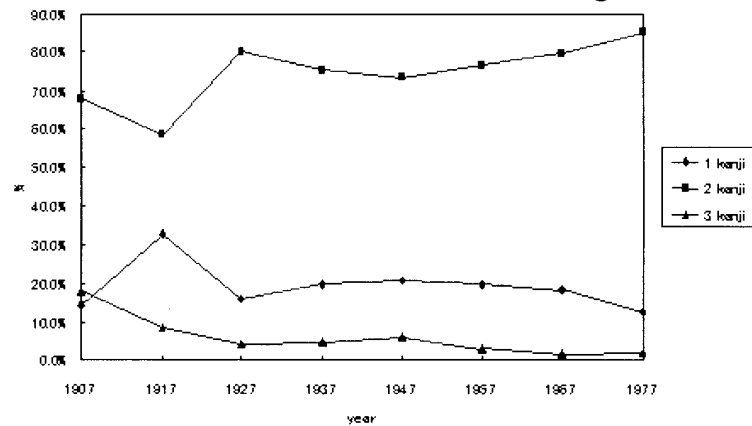
Second, it is important to focus on the elements of men's names and to investigate trends in name patterns. When light is thrown on the ending of men's names, there are approximately 34 name patterns. [14] The proportion of some name patterns have been decreasing at both Waseda and Shingu in the 20th century. This is typically true of names which end in "o", "kichi", and "zo". (see Graphs 2-1 & 2-2) "O", which was usually written 夫, 男, 生, or 雄, was a major name pattern until it peaked in 1927 at both schools. At Waseda "o" appeared in 30.4% of names and 22.7% at Shingu in 1927. Nevertheless, there has been a steady decrease in the frequency of use of "o" since 1937, and in 1977 it was no longer a major name pattern. In a similar vein, "zo" (三 蔵 造) and "kichi" (吉) have been losing popularity.

Graph2-1 Men's names including an element of o, kichi and zo in Waseda for 1917-1987
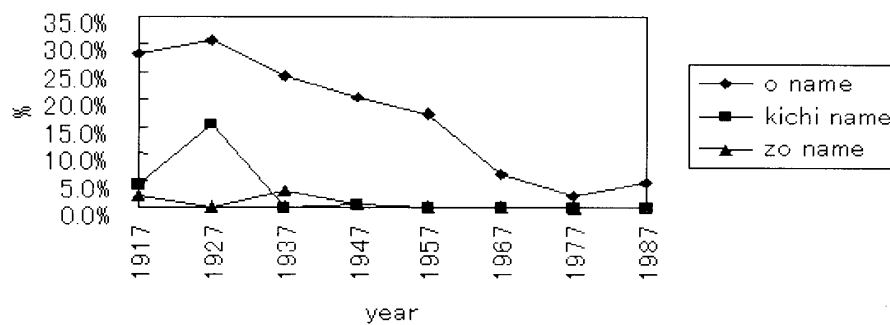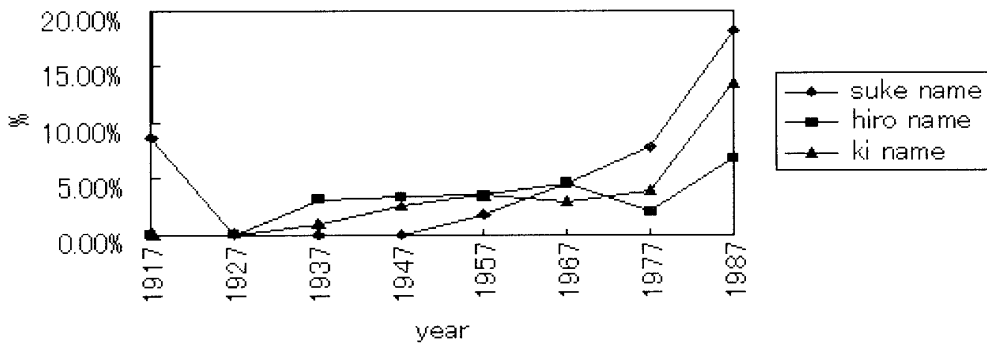
**Graph 2-2 Men's names including an element of o, kichi and zo in Shingu for 1907-1977**
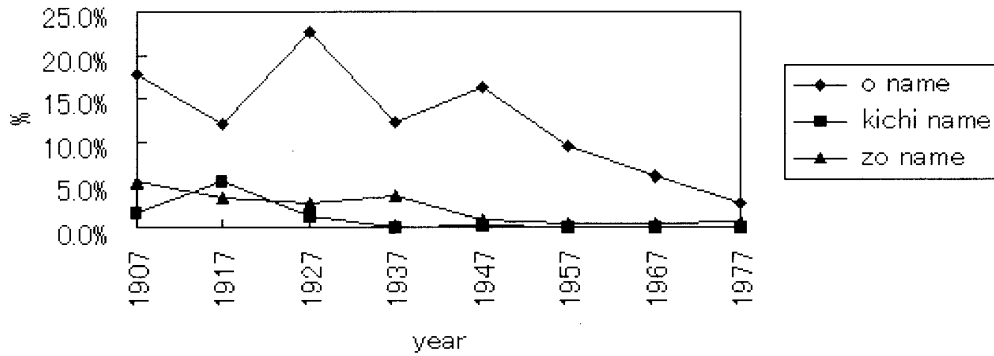
On the other hand, there has been a steady increase in the ratio of "suke" (介 輔) , "hiro" (浩 広 宏 博 洋) and "ki" (樹 基 規) . (see Graphs 3-1 & 3-2) "Suke", in particular, was the most popular at Waseda in 1987. The "hiro" pattern, which appeared in 1937, was the most widely used among all 34 name patterns at Shingu in 1977. The "ki" pattern, which also appeared in 1937, occupied 13.6 % at Waseda in 1987 and took the second place among all name patterns. In addition to these changes, "ro" (郎 朗) , which used to be one of the major name patterns at the beginning of the 20th century, was losing popularity, but has been slightly recovering. (see Graph 4)
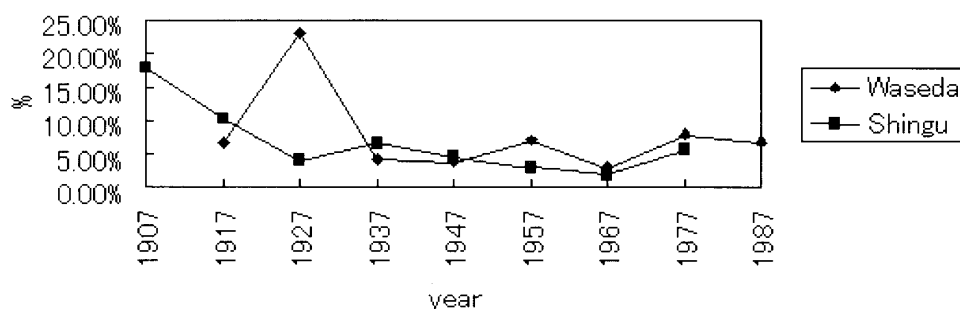
Graph 3-1 Men's names including an element of suke, hiro and ki in Waseda for 1917-1987

Graph 3-2 Men's names including an element of suke, hiro and ki in Shingu for 1907-1977
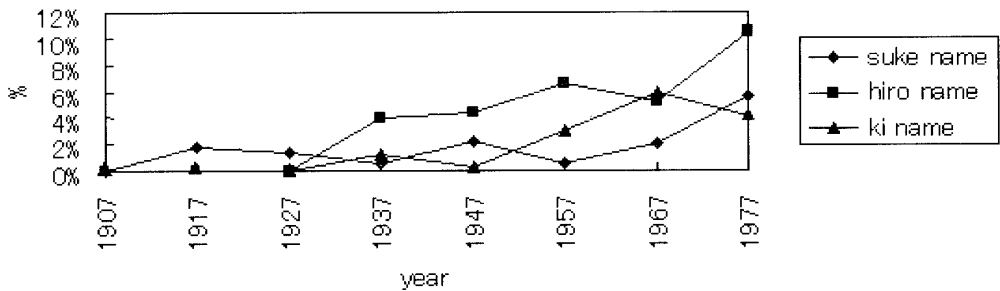
Graph 4 Ro name in Waseda and Shingu for 1907-1987

Next, there are some differences in name patterns between Waseda and Shingu. The striking distinction is that the name patterns at Shingu are more diverse than at Waseda. This might be due to the fact that the Shingu data set is much bigger than the Waseda data set. For instance, while names which end in "saku" (作 策) can be observed between 1927 and 1967 at Shingu, there is no such name pattern at Waseda throughout the 20ᵗʰ century. Furthermore, "mitsu" (充 光) , "toshi" (年 利 敏 俊) , and "hei" (平) , which are seldom used at Waseda, are occasionally found at Shingu.

iii) Chinese characters

Name patterns greatly influence the choice of Chinese characters. As table 3 demonstrates, the majority of Chinese characters frequently used during the 20ᵗʰ century are the element of the popular name patterns. For instance, the "o" pattern was widespread in the first half of the 20ᵗʰ century. Accordingly, the Chinese characters 夫 雄 男,which represented the sound 'o', were often used until 1967. On the other hand, the use of 介 and 樹 increased in the latter half of the 20ᵗʰ century, which corresponds to the increase in the "suke" and the "ki" name patterns.

Table 3 Chinese characters frequently used for men's names in the 20ᵗʰ century

Waseda	Shingu
郎 (man) 一 (one) 夫 (man) 雄 (male) 男 (man) 正 (correct) 良 (good) 介	郎 一 二 (two) 夫 雄 男 彦 (boy) 正 司 (rule, administer) 宏 (wide) 弘 (wide) 浩 (wide) 久 (lasting) 生 (life) 勝 (win)

The word in parenthesis indicates the semantic meaning of each Chinese character.

It is also important to examine the meaning of Chinese characters used in first names since the name written in Chinese characters may symbolize an idea. Chinese characters frequently used in the 20ᵗʰ century can be divided into four groups in terms of semantic meanings. The Chinese characters of the first group (久 生) are concerned with life. The second group (郎 彦 夫 男 雄) refers to masculinity. The third group (正 良 司) is related to virtue. The final group (弘 浩 宏) expresses width or breadth. The use of these characters may be based on the belief that the name will magically produce the desired character trait in the named child. In other words, the name-giver hopes that the boy will live long, become masculine or virtuous, or at broad view. In

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addition, the frequent use of these same Chinese characters throughout the 20th century implies that people's expectations towards boys are relatively consistent.
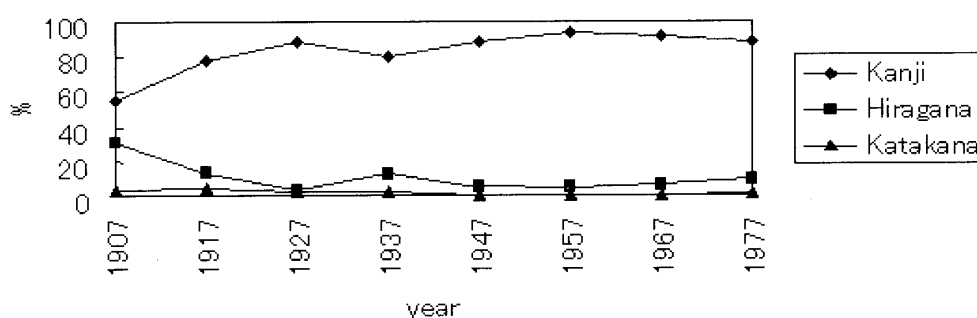
3-2 Women's names
i) Writing system

There are five writing systems for women's names; Chinese characters, *hiragana*, *katakana*, Chinese characters & *hiragana*, Chinese characters & *katakana*. The majority of women's names has also been written in Chinese characters throughout the past 100 years. (see Graphs 5-1&5-2) *Hiragana* was used frequently for female commoner's names in the Edo period. Under this influence, *hiragana* was frequently employed as a writing system for women's names at the beginning of the 20th century. However, the proportion of names written in *hiragana* gradually decreased. *Hiragana* and *katakana* continue to be used as a writing system at both Shingu and Waseda, although they are not employed so frequently as Chinese characters. Whilst Chinese characters have certain meanings, *kana* only expresses a particular sound in Japanese. It can be assumed that one of the reasons that *hiragana* and *katakana* are still used for women's names is that in the naming of girls a priority is given to the sound of names rather than the meaning.

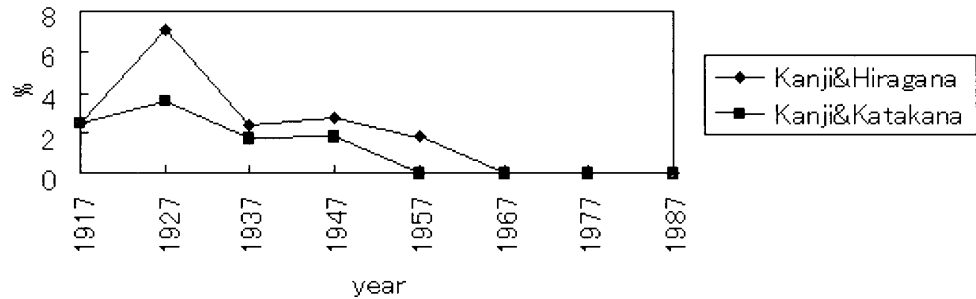**Graph 5-1 Writing system for women's names in Waseda for 1917-1987**
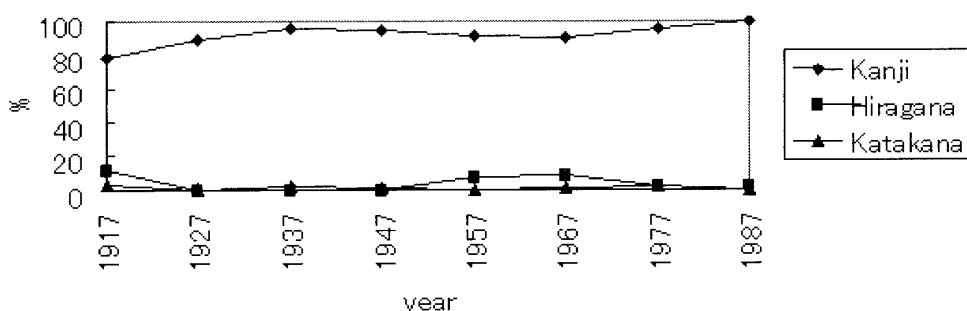
Graph 5-2 Writing system for women's names in Shingu for 1907-1977

The mixture of Chinese characters and *hiragana*, or Chinese characters and *katakana* was used for lower class women's names in the Edo period. While at Shingu in 1977 the combined writing system of Chinese characters and *hiragana* was still used, at Waseda it has not been used since 1967 (see Graphs 6-1 & 6-2). The combination system of Chinese characters and *katakana* has not been used since 1957 at Waseda

and Shingu. Thus, the two types of combined writing system have been losing popularity and will not be used next century.

Graph 6-1 Writing system for women's names in Waseda for 1917-1987

**Graph 6-2 Writing system for women's names in Shingu for 1907-1977**
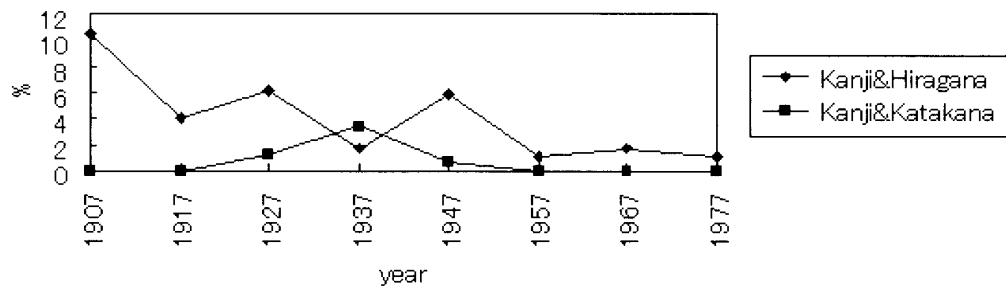
In conclusion, in the 20th century the number of writing systems used for women's names has been decreasing from five types to three; Chinese characters, *hiragana* and *katakana*. Among the three writing systems, Chinese characters have been the dominant system just as they have been for men's names.

## ii) Name patterns

Women's name patterns can be largely divided into five groups; the "ko" pattern, the "i-e-no-yo-o" pattern, the "mi" (美) pattern, the two-syllable pattern and the three-syllable pattern except the "i-e-no-yo-o" and the "mi" patterns. The following graphs indicate shifts in each pattern during the 20th century.

Graph 7-1 Five women's name patterns in Waseda for 1917-1987
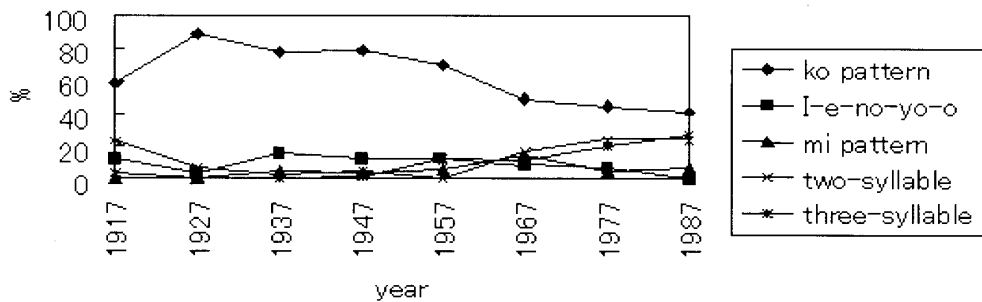
Graph 7-2 Five women's name patterns in Shingu for 1907-1977
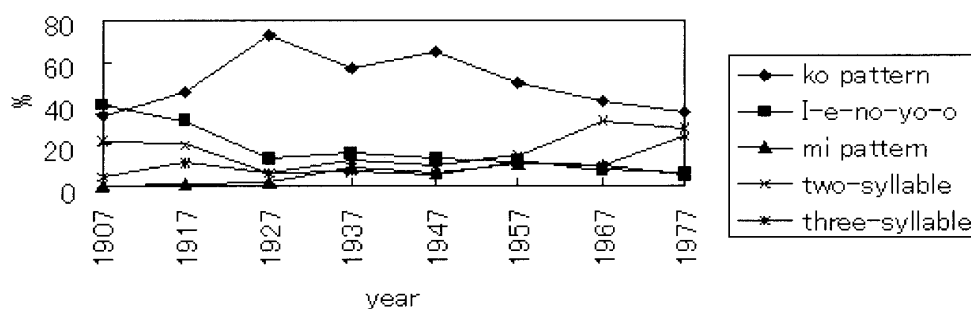
As pointed out, only the women who belonged to the Imperial family and the highest levels of the upper class used to be bestowed a name which ended in the suffix "ko" in the Edo period. But the "ko" pattern has become widespread among lower class women since the end of the 19th century. In the 20th century the "ko" pattern has always been the most widely used among the five types, except in 1907 at Shingu, and peaked in 1927 at both Waseda and Shingu. Nevertheless, there has been a gradual decrease in the use of the "ko" pattern.

The two-syllable pattern such as the names Mari and Miwa decreased in popularity over time but has recently become more widespread at both Waseda and Shingu. At Waseda the percentage of two-syllable names was 0 in 1957 and at Shingu it was 5.8 in 1927, which was the lowest percentage in the eight points of time exampled. However, at both schools the two-syllable pattern has steadily been increasing in use.

As discussed, the "i-e-no-yo-o" pattern, such as Kazue and Fumiyo, was widespread in the Edo period in Wakayama. This can be deduced from the fact that in 1907 that type showed the highest ratio among the five types at Shingu. However, the use of the "i-e-no-yo-o" type has been steadily declining at Shingu and since 1937 there has not been a great difference in the use of the pattern between Waseda and Shingu.

The "mi" pattern consists of three syllables and ends in "mi" 美, such as Mayumi and Hiromi. It appeared in 1937 at Waseda and in 1917 at Shingu. This type has not shown significant changes and has maintained the stable percentage over time.

The emphasis should be placed on the shift in the three-syllable pattern. The three-syllable pattern can be largely divided into three; the "i-e-no-yo-o" pattern, the "mi" pattern, and others. The ratio of the three-syllable pattern, with the exception of the "i-e-no-yo-o" and "mi" patterns, has been increasing since 1957 at both schools. This means that instead of "i-e-n-yo-o" and "mi" patterns, the other three-syllable names which end in "na" and "ka" have appeared in the second half of the 20th century.

On the whole, the name patterns have shown few differences between the two data sets since 1967. Wakayama used to be a place where the "i-e-no-yo-o" name pattern was widespread. However, there is not a great distinction in the "i-e-no-yo-o" pattern between Waseda and Shingu because this pattern has fallen in popularity at Shingu. Furthermore, the data sets show similarity in terms of the ratio of the five name patterns between two schools. In 1967 the sequence from the most popular name pattern to the least was the "ko" pattern, the two-syllable pattern, the "mi" pattern, the three-syllable pattern and the "i-e-no-yo-o" pattern at both schools. In 1977 it was the

"ko" pattern, the two-syllable pattern, the three-syllable pattern, the "i-e-no-yo-o" pattern and the "mi" pattern. Thus, the popular name patterns and their recent ratios have been similar at Waseda and Shingu, which indicates that the geographical differences have been smaller.

iii) Chinese characters

The choice of Chinese characters used for women's names is strongly connected with the name pattern. As pointed out, the "ko" pattern has been a dominant name type in the 20th century. Accordingly, the Chinese character 子 (ko) has been the most frequently used for women's first names in the past 100 years. As the "ko" pattern has been losing popularity, the use of Chinese character 子 has also been declining. Apart from 子, 恵 (e), 枝 (e) and 代 (yo) were often used under the influence of the "i-e-no-yo-o" type. Some different Chinese characters such as 奈 (na), 希 (ki), and 香 (ka), have appeared in use at the end of the 20th century, which implies that the use of new name types including these Chinese characters has been increasing.

Table 4 Chinese characters frequently used for women's names in Waseda and Shingu

	Waseda	Shingu
Group 1	子 (child) 和 (peace, soft) 美 (beautiful) 千 (thousand) 恵 (blessing) 久 (lasting)	子 美 千 恵 久 代 智 (wisdom) 幸
Group 2	喜 (delight) 幸 (happiness) 照 (illuminate) 枝 (branch) 代 (generation) 江 (river)	和 喜 枝 江 栄 (glory) 文 (text) 三 (three)
Group 3	由 (reason, course) 真 (true) 奈 (sacred tree) 香 (fragrance) 絵 (picture)	由 真 奈 香 紀 (chronological) 佳 (good)

Group1: Chinese characters which were frequently used at almost all selected years in the 20th century

Group2: Chinese characters which were frequently used in the first half of the 20th century

Group3: Chinese characters which were frequently used in the second half of the 20th century

The word in parenthesis indicates the meaning of each Chinese character.

There is not a significant difference in varieties of Chinese characters used for women's names between Waseda and Shingu during the 20th century, as table 4 indicates. In other words, almost the same Chinese characters were selected for girls' names at both Waseda and Shingu. Chinese characters frequently used in the 20th century such as 美 恵 久 (group 1) imply aesthetic values and happiness. This indicates that throughout the 20th century name-givers consistently hoped that girls would become beautiful and happy. In the first half of the 20th century, Chinese characters which directly and vividly described happiness (group 2) were preferred, as exemplified by the three Chinese characters 幸 喜 栄.. On the other hand, Chinese characters in the second half of the 20th century (group 3) do not have the same clear

positive connotations as found in group 2, apart from 佳.. According to Sakuma (1969), the majority of Chinese characters which belong to group 3 are employed as elements of women's names in order to represent the sound of Japanese rather than to express the meaning of the individual character. [15] 奈 (na) is a typical example. The Chinese character 奈, which means sacred tree, does not necessarily imply a positive quality. But this Chinese character is an origin of the *hiragana* な. Thus, tendency in the latter half of the 20th century is to give priority to the sound of Chinese characters rather than the meaning, as regards women's names.

4 Discussion
4-1 Names and social class

Laws issued by the Meiji government brought about radical changes in Japanese personal names. However, this did not apply to the Imperial family. The Imperial family has taken over the tradition of naming. The prince and princes are bestowed two different types of name; *gyomei* and *shoogoo* at their name-giving ceremony which is held on the seventh day after their birth. [16] *Gyomei* is a personal name and is equivalent to *imina*. *Shoogoo* is a childhood name which is temporarily used. For instance, the present Emperor's *gyomei* is Akihito (明仁) and his *shoogoo* is Tsugu-no-miya (継宮).

Gyomei shows a regular pattern throughout the 20th century. The prince's *gyomei* consists of one Chinese character pronounced with a two-syllable reading and the suffix "-hito", and the *gyomei* of princesses are composed of one Chinese character followed by the suffix "ko". These name patterns are based on historical practice. The prince's *gyomei* "-hito" comes from the 56th Emperor Seiwa's name Korehito (惟仁). The following fifty-five emperors' names comprised "hito" as part of their *gyomei*. [17] During the 20th century, the eleven princes, including Emperor Showa and the present Emperor, have been bestowed "hito" as an element of their *gyomei*.

The "ko" pattern has a long history in the naming of princesses. Although nowadays "ko" is regarded as a typical suffix in women's names, it used to be an element in men's names. ONO no Imoko (小野妹子), a court official and diplomat in the early 7th century and SOGA no Umako (蘇我馬子), a political figure in the late 6th century and the early 7th century are typical examples. [18] There was a turning point at the beginning of the 9th century, when the 52nd Emperor Soga employed the "ko" name pattern in the naming of his daughters. Since this era, the "ko" pattern has been used for women's names in the Imperial family. [19] Following this practice, in the 20th century the personal names of princesses are composed of one Chinese character and the suffix "ko".

In addition to *gyomei* and *shoogoo*, there is the third type of name, *miyagoo*. *Miyagoo* are given by the Emperor only to the prince when he reaches the age of maturity or gets married. During the 20th century, seven princes have been given *miyagoo*; Chichibunomiya, Takamatsunomiya, Mikasanomiya, Hitachinomiya, Takamadonomiya and Akishinonomiya. *Miyagoo* usually comes from place names and castle names. [20] Once princes are bestowed *miyagoo*, they are usually addressed by their *miyagoo*. In sum, the revolution brought about by the Meiji government did not affect the naming practice of the Imperial family. Even in the 20th century they retain several names whose patterns are traditionally fixed.

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On the other hand, all other Japanese are currently forced to register a surname and a first name regardless of their social status. Furthermore the name-giver is allowed to bestow any name that they wish to. Consequently, name patterns that used to be restricted to the upper class became widespread among commoners, which is exemplified by the "ko" pattern of women's names. The ko pattern was usually used among upper class women. Nevertheless, a girl who was born in Sendai in 1872 was given the name Fusako (ふさこ) and three girls who were born in 1873 were named Takako (たか子), Toshiko (トシ子), and Toshiko (俊子). These cases initiated the use of the "ko" pattern among commoners and in the 20th century this has become the most popular name pattern among women's names. [21]

The personal name used to be an indicator of a person's social status. Upper class men bore several names such as *tsuushoo, jitsumyoo* and *azana*. On the other hand, commoners were usually given a single name throughout their lives. A woman whose name ended in the suffix "-ko" and was written in Chinese characters would certainly have belonged to the highest levels of the upper class, such as the Imperial family and a woman whose name was written with the two-syllable pattern in *hiragana* would have been a commoner. Thus, there used to be a clear distinction between the upper class and the lower class in terms of the number of names given to one person, the writing system and the name pattern.

However, the first name no longer serves as an indicator of the bearer's social class in the 20th century. While there is significant differentiation between the personal names of the Imperial Family and those of other Japanese, the divide is no longer as clear as it used to be. This may be what the Meiji government intended. The government's legislation changed the nature of names, by which it sought to abolish the feudal system and class consciousness of the Edo period and to introduce the concept that all human beings are equal. It seems that the naming system was exploited by the Meiji government in order to reorganize the social structure in the Meiji Restoration.

4-2 Names and geographical differences

In the Edo period there were two features of personal names in Wakayama, which contrasted with those in Tokyo. The first feature is that the "i-e-no-yo-o" pattern was popular for use in women's names. Second, Chinese characters, which referred to animals, were used as an element in names. In order to investigate whether or not the geographical differences have an influence on first names in the 20th century, it is necessary to explore the trends of these features in Wakayama and to compare them between Wakayama and Tokyo.

As regards the "i-e-no-yo-o" pattern, a striking distinction between Shingu and Waseda existed at the beginning of the 20th century. (see Graphs 7-1 & 7-2) Whilst the percentage of the "i-e-no-yo-o" pattern in the whole women's name patterns was 32 and was quite popular at Shingu in 1917, it was 12.3 at Waseda. However, the gap has closed since 1937. For instance, the percentage of the pattern at Shingu and Waseda in 1977 was 6.3 and 6.7 respectively.

Next, I would like to examine the second feature at Wakayama, namely the use of Chinese characters representing animals. Table 5 lists names that consist of Chinese characters expressing animals such as dragon (竜, 龍) and crane (鶴), at Waseda and

Shingu. Chinese characters expressing animals are employed for both men's and women's names at Shingu, which contrasts with less frequent use of those Chinese characters at Waseda. It can be concluded therefore that one geographical difference concerning the specific use of Chinese characters was observed in the 20th century, even though the other difference has been disappearing.

Table 5 Names including animal Chinese characters in Waseda & Shingu in the 20th century

	Boy at Waseda	Boys at Shingu	Girls at Waseda	Girls at Shingu
1907	—	兎茂寿 (rabbit)	—	辰代 (dragon) 辰子
1917		竜雄		千鶴子
1927		鷹繁(hawk)	千鶴子 (crane)	古羊子
1937		龍佐久 (dragon)	田鶴子	千鶴子
1947		犬男 (dog) 羊二 (sheep)	千鶴子	千鶴子
1957		龍		鶴美 千鳥 (bird) 千鶴 美鶴
1967		竜二 竜介 龍吾		
1977		龍 竜也		
1987	竜太(dragon)	—	羊子	—

The bold-faced Chinese characters indicate animals whose meaning is shown in the parenthesis.

4-3 Names and sex

In the Edo period, names were predominantly sex-typed. While men's names were written in Chinese characters, women's names were written in a variety of writing systems, such as *hiragana* and *katakana*. In addition to the writing system, the name pattern distinguished the sex of the bearers.

In the 20th century, Chinese characters are the major writing system of both men's and women's names. This means that the writing system of names does not distinguish the sex so clearly as it used to be. However, semantically meaningful names may make reference to a person's sex. To be precise, there are differences in the choice of Chinese characters used for men's names and women's. As discussed, people tend to bestow "pretty" and "happy" names on girls and to select Chinese characters that imply aesthetic values and happiness. On the other hand, boys' names often stress masculinity and morality. This difference is also applied to Chinese characters for animals. The typical such character for women's names is crane (鶴) , which provides the impression of being delicate and graceful. By contrast, dragon (龍, 竜) , which implies powerful and aggressive qualities, is frequently used for men's names. (see Table 5)

As regards names themselves, there is a slight increase in the number of names which are ambiguous in their sex associations, as tables 6-1 & 6-2 point out. The

following tables describe the percentage of names which are both sex typed and *sex ambiguous*, and show concrete examples of names which are sex ambiguous at the Waseda Primary School. It is interesting to note that in 1987 the exact same name, Yuuki (有紀) , was given to both a boy and a girl. Boys and girls are more likely to receive ambiguous names than they used to be.

Table 6-1 Sex-typing of boys' names in Waseda for 1917-1987

	1917	1947	1987
Name is sex-typed	97.2 %	94.1 %	86.1 %
Name is sex ambiguous	2.2 %	5.9 %	13.6 %
	正己	年美 実 夏紀 淳 政美 英世	有紀 薫 想 淳

Table 6-2 Sex-typing of girls' names in Waseda for 1917-1987

	1917	1947	1987
Name is sex-typed	97.5 %	99.1 %	75.0 %
Name is sex ambiguous	2.5 %	0.9 %	25.0 %
	林 治	照美	有紀 優希 千青 晶 歩 希 奈生

In sum, the majority of names in the 20th century are obviously masculine or feminine names in terms of the name pattern and the nature of Chinese characters. But the names which are coded for sexual ambiguity have increased.

4-4 The functions of names

Alford (1987) maintains that the naming system serves two central functions; categorization and differentiation and that both functions are equally important and complementary. In his view, the categorizing function of names plays a significant role in the clarification of the named person's position in the social group, by highlighting similarities with others. At the same time, it is necessary to distinguish individuals in a society. He argues that the naming system is designed to fulfill these two functions. [22]

This can be applied to Japanese naming system. In previous centuries, personal names served to classify people in terms of the social belonging, sex, profession and geographical differences. In the 20th century, the first name fulfills the categorizing functions, particularly by distinguishing the sexes and signaling the time of birth, even though the Meiji laws may make the function of classifying the social status weaker. Furthermore the Japanese first name serves to distinguish individuals by emphasizing difference. This is illustrated by the chronological change of names. Names are fashionable and change from time to time, mainly because people would like to give their child a unique name which highlights the individuality and identity of the bearer.

However, attention should be paid to the fact that uniqueness in excess is socially destructive and dangerous. This is exemplified by the controversial 1993 case in which a boy's name Akuma (悪魔) , which meant devil, was not socially accepted. [23] In addition to the social aspect, naming is restricted by law. The choice of Chinese characters which are permitted for use in first names is limited to 2229 by the register law. On the one hand, people tend to emphasize a person's uniqueness by giving

unique names to infants, while, on the other hand, they are socially and politically constrained in naming. Therefore, names change chronologically, but the social and political restrictions do not allow the name-giver to invent completely new names. This may cause the frequent reoccurrence of some names, just as "-ro" and "-suke", which used to be widespread as suffixes of men' names, are becoming popular again.

5 Conclusion

This study focuses on the investigation of personal names in Waseda and Shingu. The scope is limited so we cannot generalize regarding some features of names in exploring trends in Japanese first names. But observation of Japanese first names in Waseda and Shingu enables us to discover how names have been changing and how they have served to classify and individuate the people in the 20th century. Since names are not static labels and evolve over time along with changes in society, the longitudinal study of names can provide us with interesting clues about changes in Japanese society over the past 100 years.

Notes

1) Watanabe, M. 1967 *Nihonjin no namae* Mainichi-shinbunsha, 33-35.
2) Ibid., 81-90.
3) Ibid., 93-97. *Azana* was given to a boy when he started to study and was widespread usually among the scholars. *Goo* was used as literary and artistic names by the writer and the artist.
4) Ibid., 36-41.
5) Sumiko and Chikako were the names of the 120th Emperor Ninkoo's (1817-1846) daughters. Tsunoda, B. 1988 *Nihon no joseimei (ge)*. Kodansha, 10-19.
6) Ibid., 29-35.
7) Ibid., 201-203. In the Edo period, there used to be several name patterns among lower class women, such as the two-syllable and two-letter pattern written in *kana*, the two-syllable and one-letter pattern written with a Chinese character, and the two-syllable and three-letter pattern written in *kana*.
8) Plutschow, H. 1995 *Japan's Name Culture* Japan Library, 189-197.
9) Tamamura, F. 1988 Meimei koi towa. In Kindaichi, H. & Hayashi, O. & Shibata, T. (Ed.), *Nihongo hyakka daijiten*, Taishukan Shoten, 497.
10) Iwabuchi, E. & Shibata, T. 1964 *Nazuke*. Chikuma Shobo, 26.
11) Tsunoda., B. Ibid., 136.
12) Sato, K. (Ed.), 1996 *Kanji hyakka daijiten*, Meiji Shoin, 154-155.
13) Watanabe, M. Ibid., 55.
14) There are 34 types of suffix used for men's names in Waseda and Shingu; -o, -hiko, -ji, -yuki, -ichi, -hiro, -taka, -nori, -shi, -aki, -ki, -yoshi, -ya, -hito(-to), -suke, -haru, -ro, -humi, -zo, -nobu, -kichi, -mi, -hisa, -masa, -hei(-pei), -ta, -go, -tomo, -yasu, -mitsu, -saku, -toshi, -kazu, -hide.
15) Sakuma, E. 1969 *Akachan nazuke hyakka*, Oizumi shoten, 153-156.
16) Murakami, S. (Ed.) 1980 *Koshitsu jiten* Tokyo-do, 224.
17) Watanabe, M. Ibid., 99.
18) Ibid., 147.
19) Ibid., 65-66.
20) Togashi, J. 1965 *Koshitsu jiten*, Mainichi Shinbunsha, 11.
21) Tamamura. F, Ibid., 502.
22) Alford, R.D. 1987 *Naming and Identity*. Harf Press, 68-69.
23) Itagaki H, *Seimei to nihonjin*. Deieichishi, 6-7.