



Tomioka Silk Mill

Women's History

- It is too easy to think of history as the exploits of "great men". But what about the great impact of women on Japanese history ...?
- "By 1890 women had become the backbone of the developing Japanese industrial economy. Female workers outnumbered males in light industry, especially in textiles, where a work force that was 60 to 90 percent female produced 40 percent of the gross national product and 60 percent of the foreign exchange during the late nineteenth century." (p. 153).

Sharon H. Nolle and Sally Ann Hastings, "The Meiji State's Policy Toward Women, 1890-1910" in Gail Lee Bernstein, *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600-1945*, California University Press, 1991, pp. 151-74.

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World Heritage

- What does "World Heritage Site" mean to you?
- What World Heritage Sites does Japan have?
- How does "World Heritage" status change the way we think about history in these sites?

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/>

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/jp>

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Sites as Culture

representation

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Sites as Media

- In what ways is it appropriate to think of tourist sites as forms of mediatized culture?
- In what ways is it appropriate to think of tourist sites as pop culture?
- What did you discover from the homework reading?

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They are recruited from all over Japan to learn about silk spinning.

1873: Women arrive at Tomioka after a hard journey. Wow!

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The process for spinning silk.

Thread was a very important export product in the 1870s

Competition to be most productive.

Mechanization under the supervision of French managers.

Contributes greatly to Japanese development.

Competition increases output. There's a hospital at the factory. The worker gets certified and becomes a technician at a private mill.

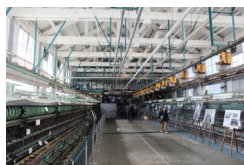
Manga representations

- What are your thoughts on this manga?
- How was it similar or different to the manga on the Tomioka Silk Mill website (link below)?
- How might the manga version differ from academic history?

http://www.tomioka-silk.jp/files/topics/1730_ext_01_0.pdf

Tomioka Diary

- Wada Ei's "diary" is a key primary document. What do you notice when reading?
- Wada's profile?
- Competitive Hatsuko?
- Notes 3-5?



Historians

- Let's now read an excerpt from Elise K. Tipton's *Modern Japan* (3rd edition).
- How does the depiction of Tomioka change? What new material is introduced?
- And how about Janet Hunter's account *Japanese Women at Work, 1880-1920* in *History Today*?



Conclusions

- Is factually correct history necessarily accurate history? When might there be a major difference?
- What are the pros and cons of having such history as “Local” or even “World Heritage”?
- Should we judge the past by today's standards?



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Finally

- Next time: The experience of women in the Meiji Period as seen through literature and poetry.
- For homework, read the photocopies about Higuchi Ichiyo and Yosano Akiko. Search online for information about these two famous female authors.

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