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〔Article〕

The Nishimura Family in the Kyoto Kimono Textile Industry between 1900 and 1944

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Abstract

Muromachi merchants in Kyoto have managed the kimono textile wholesale business for hundreds of years. The Nishimura family, one of the most enduring Muromachi merchants, started their business in the mid-16th century as *hōe-shō* (textile suppliers for Buddhist priests' silk vestments) and stayed in business into the 21st century. Their long-standing family business was represented by a shop curtain, *noren*, where a family crest was imprinted.

The environmental changes and technological developments after the Meiji Restoration (1868) brought an increasing number of consumers and an influx of competitions in the industry. While the traditional shop style turned into a company in the early 20th century, the Nishimura family led the industry by keeping the traditional business styles that prioritized good relationships among its shop owners, employees, and society.

In this paper, two Nishimura family businesses, Chiji and Chikichi, in the first half of the 20th century are reviewed based on stories privately written by their business successors and Kyoto Chamber of Commerce archives.

Keywords: Family business, merchants, wholesale, industrial district, textile industry, silk textile, Japanese textile, kimono, fashion, Kyoto, Japan

Introduction

The Japanese textile industry became one of the leading industries after Japan reopened its ports to Western countries in the mid-19th century. Japan became the main exporter/importer of fiber, yarns, and textiles.[1] Although Kyoto has been the center of high-end silk textile dyeing and weaving, the business of Kyoto textiles (*Kyō-zome*)[2] for the kimono has not been adequately discussed. A possible reason is because Kyoto textiles were value-added "dyed silk textiles" for the kimono, not silk yarns or woven textiles that were traded internationally to earn foreign currencies. Kyoto textiles have retained a secure niche in the Japanese textile industry. These textiles have been traded by Muromachi merchants in the Muromachi district in Kyoto.[3]

After the Meiji Restoration (1868), the Kyoto textile business slowed down because of new government policies, relocation of the emperor and his family to Tokyo along with aristocrats, and abolishment of feudal domains and Buddhism. In order to revitalize the industry, Muromachi merchants and Kyoto City supported and invested in the technological development of *yūzen* dyeing, which originated in the 17th century. Thus, a mass-manufacturing

method of *yūzen* dyeing was developed.[4] Such innovations made Kyoto the production and distribution center of mass-manufactured Kyoto textiles for the kimono, and since then, the Muromachi merchants lead the kimono textile industry.[5]

An increasing number of newly emerged upper-middle class individuals who were not allowed to wear silk textiles during the feudal era gradually began enjoying these mass-manufactured textiles.[6] As the number of consumers increased, more silk textiles were introduced into the market. Consequently, fashion was born and the Kyoto textile business expanded into the 1930s.[7]

During these years, the Nishimura family successors courteously continued running their family businesses and three of the family shops survived into the 21st century. They had been exposed to business competition after the Meiji Restoration as more merchants entered the industry. They also confronted series of difficulties when the economy experienced steep ups and downs. This paper focuses on the two Nishimura family businesses – Chiji and Chikichi – during the first half of the 20th century. By reviewing their businesses, one can gain insight into how pre-industrial family businesses survived the Japanese modernization period.

Methodology

In order to contrast the Nishimura family business with their business practiced during the feudal era, a previous study by Adachi[8] is reviewed first. Thereafter, the family history of each descendant is examined based on self-published books by Daijiro Nishimura,[9] the 12th owner of Chikichi, one of the Nishimura family shops, and a retrospective manuscript written by an apprentice who worked for another Nishimura family shop, Chiji, between 1916 and 1944. Facts on each family business and company profiles are collected from the Kyoto Commerce and Industry Yearbook in 1928[10] and The Directory of Textile Wholesalers in Kyoto published in 1933.[11] The taxes paid by merchants between 1907 and 1938 are collected from the Business and Industrial Directories of Kyoto and Annual Reports of Kyoto Chamber of Commerce and Industry.[12] Reference is also made to a previous study by Nakamura, which analyzed Muromachi merchants' businesses during the pre-war period using the Business and Industrial Directories of Kyoto.[13] Finally, the significance of the Nishimura family business between 1900 and 1944 is discussed.

The Nishimura family business

Origin

The Nishimura family had been manufacturing flower vases called Chikiri-dai (Figure 1) since the 8th century and offering (donating) one for the religious adherents of the Kofukuji temple every year. They moved to Kyoto as palace carpenters at the time of the Heian capital relocation.[14] In the mid-15th century when Kyoto was on the Ōnin War battlefield, the family escaped to Nishimura village in Ōhmi (Shiga Prefecture). Their family name, Nishimura, is derived from this village.

When the war ended, the family returned to Kyoto in 1555 and started a *hōe-shō* (silk textiles for Buddhist priests' vestments) business in the Muromachi district. Since then, the district has become the center of silk textile businesses, and its merchants came to be called Muromachi merchants. Yozaemon Nishimura, the founder of the textile business, decided to use the name of the flower vase, Chikiri, as a trade name and the design of the vase as the family crest. The house name was Chikiriya (Chikiri Shop).

The Nishimura family expanded as the number of branch families increased.[15] Most of the

Figure 1　Chikiri-dai (Flower Vase)

family dealt with silk textiles for Buddhist priests' vestments, some dealt with silk textiles for noble people, and others dealt with a combination of textile and money exchange business.

Three Nishimura family shops survived into the 21st century and each of them succeeds its unique first name, Sōzaemon, Jihei, and Kichiemon Nishimura. The first character of the house name and the first character of the first name made up the shop names — Chisō, Chiji, and Chikichi — respectively.

Business operation

The family crest was imprinted[16] on a shop curtain, *noren,* to represent the family business, as shown in Figure 2. It was hung at the shop front during business hours. Adachi describes the connotation of a shop curtain in terms of the three main perceptions of merchants from the feudal era: (1) trustworthiness, (2) loyalty, and (3) perseverance.[17]

The shop curtain seems to be crucial for Muromachi merchants because a long time later in 1989, the 12th Chikichi owner, Daijiro Nishimura, remarked, "The trustworthiness cannot be established in one day, but easily collapses in one day." He had always put pressure on himself to maintain and not ruin the shop curtain.[18] He also said that the long-lived Chikichi family business was upheld by the good relationships among its shop owners, employees, and society, which are represented by the shop curtain.[19]

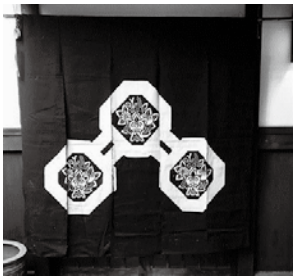
A family rule book signed by the two owners of Chiji and Chikichi (no date), mentions five articles regarding the shop's decision making.[20]

1) The shop operation should be determined in a family meeting.
2) New business expansion should be discussed and decided in the meeting.
3) The family is more important than an individual.
4) Branch families must respect the owner's family.
5) Opening a new account is not allowed. If needed, it should be discussed in the meeting.

From these articles, Adachi concludes that although their management style was conservative and passive, it was the best way to keep the business running during the feudal era. In the early 19th century, consultation among branch families, managers, and shop assistants became tighter than before for the sake of continuing the family business, which resulted in limiting the owner's activities.[21]

They also used the Koh system, which was originally a religious temple group formed to ensure the flourishment of business. Nine Nishimura family members formed the Gion-Koh system in 1757, discussing and agreeing on agendas such as sales dates, prices, interest rates, and new businesses in order to grant

Figure 2 Noren (Shop Curtain)



members with equal opportunities and to avoid competition. Adachi summarizes the Gion-Koh system as having played the role of a cartel for the family business. It helped the Nishimura family dominate the business up to the mid-19th century when establishing a new business was not easy. [22)]

Daily Business

The employment systems of the two shops were much like large shops in those days[23)]. A boy or girl starts working as an apprentice around the age of ten. In about 10 years, the apprentice is promoted to a shop assistant and works for another 10 years. Because the owner provides food, clothing, shelter, and a small allowance, there is no payment. They are treated as family members, and are expected not only to behave well, but also to be loyal to the family (business).

After 20 years of service, the shop assistant is allowed to get married and become a commuter to the shop. The shop owner provides a shop curtain, premises, and household goods. Some of the shop assistants get the chance to be appointed shop manager. In 1859, Chiji had 24 workers, while Chikichi had 17.[24)] When the owner permits a retired worker to run a branch business, the owner provides a certain amount of capital for it. Such support made workers loyal members of the family business.

Daily business came to be managed by a shop manager sometime in the early 19th century. As important business decisions were made during family meetings, the shop owner fully relied on the manager to conduct the daily business, such as management of human resources, strategic planning, and supporting account holders or apprentices to participate in the business.[25)] However, the owner, as a successor of the family business, took full responsibility of the business. The authority of the owner was absolute, and he was the symbol of the family business. This means that the shop owner was the representative of the business in the society as well as the leader for workers. Therefore, when the family did not have a son, adopting a son was necessary.[26)]

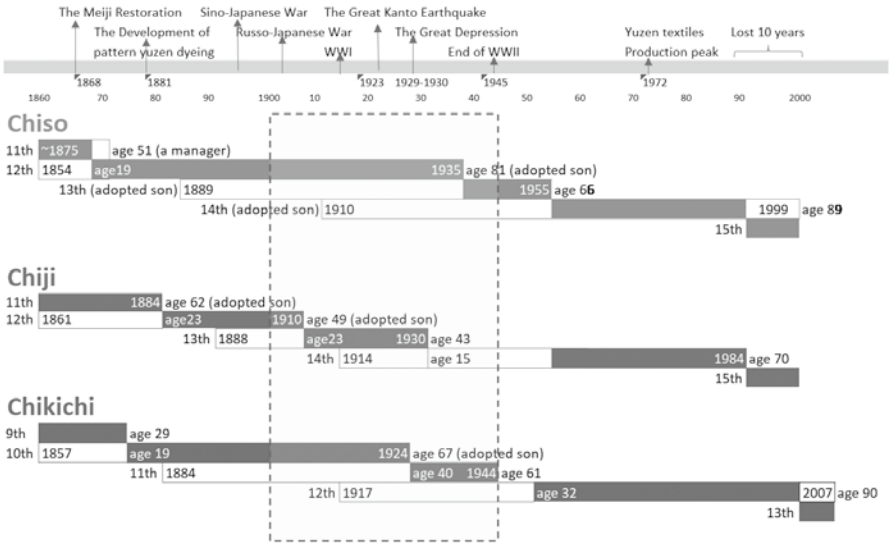
After the Meiji Restoration

Adopted sons

The Koh system and the money exchange business that had been practiced by the Nishimura family were terminated at the time of Meiji Restoration. However, family meetings, the employment system, and the daily business management style, conducted by managers (manager-conducted-business style), survived into the 20th century.[27)] Figure 3 displays a chronological flow of the three shop owners from 1868 to 2000.

The 12th Chisō owner (1854 – 1935) was an adopted son and succeeded the family business at the age of 19 when the industry was unstable. He made special efforts to revitalize Kyoto tex-

Figure 3　Chronological table of Chikiriya owners



tile industry and exhibited artisanal textiles at Expos held in western countries and in Japan. The Chisō business steadily grew for over 60 years under his leadership until 1935.[28)]

Chiji began engaging in *yūzen* dyeing around the end of the Edo period[29)] and became well known for its high-end *yūzen* textiles by 1900. The 12th Chiji owner (1861 – 1910) was also an adopted son. He was the president of two banks, vice president of another bank, and chairman of the Kyoto Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the 1900s, a member of the Kyoto Municipal Assembly in 1905, and a member of the House of Representatives in 1908. In 1909, he visited major cities in the United States for market research along with Chamber of Commerce chairmen.[30)]

The 10th Chikichi owner (1857 – 1924) was adopted by the family in 1875, during which time, Chikichi expanded its merchandise to include Nishijin textiles, silk woven textiles from other production centers, and white fabrics for *yūzen* dyeing, in addition to Buddhist priests' vestments. He was the president of a bank at the turn of the 20th century. When he was about to become the president of a second bank, the resignation of the previous president caused the bank run in 1902. With the help of Chiji, branch families, and the Bank of Japan, the 10th owner closed the bank without any debts to the depositors.[31)] He paid back the entire debt by 1917.

The author notes that adopted sons in each of the three Nishimura families conducted the family business well and contributed to social positions, as they were more mindful of the owner's responsibilities.[32)]

Chiji: Family meeting and manager-conducted-business style

When the 12th Chiji owner (1861 – 1910) died in 1910, the 13th owner (1888 – 1930) succeeded the business at the age of 23. An apprentice, Tsutomu Takenaka, who started working at Chiji's Osaka branch in 1916 described the shop's daily life in a letter to his mother.[33)]

> Chiji shop is a wholesaler and deals with Kyoto textiles. I heard that the owner is a millionaire in Kyoto. The branch offices are in Tokyo and Osaka. The manager of the Osaka branch is about 60 years old and commutes

from Kyoto. The Osaka branch business begins around 10 am when the manager arrives at the shop. Neighbors start working around 8 am.

The shop owner never visits the Osaka branch. About 50 people are working in the Osaka branch, all men. New apprentices are 12, and 11 from the last year. Meals are provided, sometimes they are like feasts for special occasions in my hometown. Wake up time is five thirty in summer and six thirty in winter. Sweeping and cleaning the shop is the first thing to do in the morning. In the evening, bookkeeping for the day is the responsibility for apprentices. We have free time from 9 pm to 10 pm to do the laundry, to write letters, and to practice math with an abacus. But many of the apprentices go out for fun.

Apprentices cannot have money. If needed, the shop provides for us. The shop provides everything apprentices need so that you do not have to worry about anything but one. The only thing that I need is a futon set. I am now leasing the shop's futon.

This letter reveals that the number of employees had increased from 24 in 1859 to 50 in the Osaka branch in 1916. However, the everyday life of apprentices had not changed much since the Edo period. The business was still operated by the manager as Tsutomu says that the 13th owner seldom visited the Osaka branch.

During his era, Chiji had a huge amount of money to help customers and for investments. In 1913, one of its main customers from the Edo period, Daimaru, suffered a financial crisis. Chiji and three other Muromachi merchants[34] financially helped them and became Daimaru's reorganization team member.[35] Consequently, sales to Daimaru increased about 30 percent[36] and a brother of the 13th owner was appointed as its board of directors when Daimaru Department Store was incorporated in 1920.[37]

However, when Tsutomu was promoted to shop assistant, an assistant account holder for the Daimaru Department Store, he wrote about Chiji's business with Daimaru as follows:

> The shop manager does not visit Daimaru Department Store together with the account holder or me. Competitors such as Ichida, account holders would always accompany elder men who would greet senior managers in a purchasing division.

The manager visiting the Kyoto main shop more often than visiting customers because the shop owner stayed in Kyoto and family meetings were held there. But by looking at their daily business, it can be guessed that the manager-conducted-business style in the Chiji shop, at least in the Osaka branch, was not as effective as it had been.

In the same year, the brother of the 13th owner traveled to Europe for market research and splurged on merchandise. By the time the goods arrived in Kobe port the following year, the post-World War I bubble economy burst, and Chiji lost money.

Moreover, Chiji, Ichibun and four Nishijin textile merchants established a Woven Textile Company (*Orimono Shōgyō Kabushiki-Gaisha*) with a capital of three million yen, which was doubled the following year in 1920.[38] Details are unknown, but Chiji's family meeting approved to invest half of the new company's capital.[39] Tsutomu wondered why the shop had to spend such a huge amount of money on woven textiles when its main merchandise was Kyoto textiles.

As a result of such expenditures, Chiji almost became bankrupt in 1920. A family meeting resulted in the decision to incorporate Chiji and an investment of another 500,000 yen was made. However, the unchanging structure of the business (family meeting and manager-conducted-business style, etc.) was unable to revitalize Chiji.

Furthermore, the Great Kanto Earthquake occurred in eastern Japan in 1923 damaged Chiji. Active Muromachi merchants, such as Ichida gained considerable profit by sending inventories to Tokyo,[40] while Chiji's Osaka branch lost September's major sales because managers gathered at Kyoto for meetings without providing proper instructions. Managers were supposed to follow decisions made in the family meetings, but in this case, they were not made in a timely manner.

Even worse, Chiji's high-skilled contracted *yūzen* factories (full- and semi-contracted) gradually left Chiji and started doing business with other shops such as Ichida. Tsutomu was furiously disappointed but later realized that shop manager had set selling prices with unfavorably low margins.

Three years after its incorporation, the company was in the red again and the Osaka branch moved to a downsized premises to save working capital.[41] Again, in 1927, it was transformed into a limited liability company with a capital of 70,000 yen. The Tokyo and Osaka branches were closed and only 27 employees gathered in the newly rented Kyoto head office. Tsutomu recalled that, on the first day of work, workers expected an inauguration speech by the shop owner or a new manager about the vision of the business, how to survive this critical situation, or job responsibilities of the workers, but it turned out to be an ordinary business day. In addition to its ineffective manager-conducted-business style, Chiji's family meetings were no longer efficient because they were unable to prevent the loss of money.

Chiji: Trustworthiness – loyalty – perseverance

In 1930, the 13th owner died leaving behind his 15-year-old son. Workers were suddenly notified that the shop was short of capital again. At the family meeting, members learned that no one could afford the shop (by providing additional capital) anymore. After a series of family meetings, the shop was re-established by shared capital among the wife of the 13th owner, a shop manager, an account holder Tsutomu Tsugita,[42] and another worker, leaving the owner's position vacant until young son could take over. The amount of money invested was as follows:[43]

Katsuzo Imamura, the shop manager: 23,000yen (unlimited liability)

Tsuru Nishimura, the wife of the 13th owner: 27,000 yen (limited liability)

Tsutomu Tsugita, an account holder: 17,000 yen (limited liability)

Genzo Hori: 3,000 yen (limited liability)

By 1932, further adjustments were made, and 43 percent of the capital came from the Nishimura family.

According to the Directory of Textile Wholesalers in Kyoto published in 1933, the number of Chiji employees were about 20 and the estimated annual sales totaled was approximately 800,000 yen. They had one Tokyo office (it seemed they reopened one) and their customers included Matsuzakaya and Daimaru Department Stores and big retailers across four main distribution centers in Japan. Target consumers of their merchandise (Kyoto textiles) shifted from high-end to upper-middle class. According to Tsutomu, high-end luxury merchandise sales had been declining after the Great Depression, but the Manchurian Incident triggered an increase in middle-class consumption. The shop focused on upper-middle class consumers.

The merchandiser or buyer of Chiji had not been officially appointed since 1930. Tsutomu Tsugita, who began working there in 1916, and was promoted to a shop assistant, became an account holder and one of the investors of Chiji. Additionally, he volunteered to carry out a merchandising job. He worked hard for the owner's

family and for the shop to turn the company around.

During this period, Chiji's business was fully functional on a person-to-person basis. For example, one of the suppliers, who doubted Chiji's ability to pay, refused to deliver 1400 bolts of Kyoto textiles that Tsutomu ordered for a sales event. However, one day before the event, the delivery was made possible based on a verbal agreement, using his personal premises as collateral. Tsutomu recalled that he was not asked to sign the filing. This story endorses the fact that trustworthiness was an important element of business during this period.

The business became stable for the next several years. Unfortunately, when the government issued the Second Business Integration Act in 1943, the 14th Chiji owner (1914 – 1984) who was never involved in the business, decided to terminate it. Tsutomu was the last person who agreed to the shop closure as his mother had told him that one could never serve two masters. The shop took down the shop curtain and permanently closed in 1944.

Chikichi – manager-conducted-business style

Compared to Chiji's, Chikichi's manager-conducted-business style worked efficiently until the late 1930s. When Chikichi had been struggling the debt from the 1902 bank run, two managers dedicated themselves to save the business. They sometimes warned owners not to indulge in hobbies.

Chikichi – the authority of the owner

The 10th Chikichi owner learned two things from the bank ran in 1902: one was to stick to the family business and the other was to prioritize public welfare over one's own assets so that one could obtain more credits from the society than the fortune lost.[44] In 1968, the 12th owner, Daijiro Nishimura discovered that his grandfather and the family rule book from the feudal era indicated the same concepts.

The 10th owner finally paid off the debt in 1917, but another financial crisis struck in 1920. Once again, Chikichi survived without bouncing checks.[45] However, cash flow after this crisis was so tight that the owner decided to make additional rules on surplus appropriation in the family meeting.[46] The following are several of them:

1. The financial loss of the previous year should be deducted from the future profit.
2. Forty five percent of the annual profit will be used for the depreciation of the loss, and five percent will be deposited for the depreciation of dead stock. The rest will be carried over to the next year.
3. Excess profit should be used for mortgage settlement.

After this settlement, the business became stable and, in 1924, the 11th owner (1884 – 1944) took over at the age of 40. The new owner left operating the daily business to the veteran managers and devoted himself to research in social education and established a nanny school, the Research Center of Commerce, and the Association of Kyoto Historic Site Preservation.[47] He did not show interest in business because the business crisis of 1902 made him drop out of middle school.

The new owner consistently proposed terminating the business in the family meetings. The managers and his wife encouraged him to retain the business, but the depression that began in 1929 caused the owner to fear a repeat of the 1902 and 1920 crises.[48] Eventually, he decided to minimize the business, focusing only on white silk and artificial silk (rayon) fabrics for Kyoto textiles. Other divisions were handed over to new branch families with a certain amount of capital. Although the business downsized, it became stable and profitable after that.[49]

In 1933, there were approximately 45 workers at Chikichi and estimate its annual sales was 4 million yen.[50] The shop was eventually incorporated in 1934 with a capital of 500,000 yen. Finally, in 1943, the Second Business Integration Act caused the shop owner to terminate the business.

At the time of the closure, the shop owner sent account holders to every supplier and provided a monetary gift for the severance to thank for their long-term business relationship.[51] The owner also asked them about a possible future business relationship because he believed that his son, who was in the army at that time, would re-start the business when he came home. The 11th owner passed away in 1944 without meeting his son again.

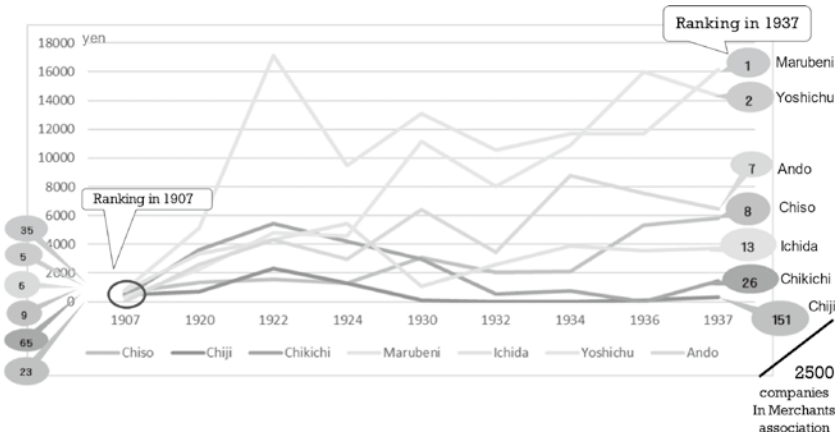
Daijiro Nishimura, was thankful for the way his father terminated the business when he became the 12th owner and reestablished the shop in 1948. Prior to this, he had left home in 1935 for high school in Nagoya and attended a university in Kobe, before joining the army in 1942. He returned to Kyoto in 1946. Even after he re-established the business, he never succeeded in advancing the family's first name, Kichiemon. According to people in the industry, he claimed that he was not mature enough for the name. In his 1989 book, he stated, "Whatever happens to myself, I can never, ever terminate the family business."[52] Succeeding a long-lived business seemed to place extra pressure on new owners, which, the author recognizes that the shop curtain symbolized.

Business growth during the first half of the 20th century

According to the Directory of Kyoto Commerce and Industries, the number of listed merchants who dealt with Kyoto textiles had tripled in 1938 compared to that in 1907.[53] By contrast, the number of merchants who dealt with non-silk textiles, such as cotton textiles for everyday clothing, had decreased. As a result, Kyoto became to be known as the production center of high-end silk kimono textiles, while simultaneously being one of the four main collection/distribution centers of textiles.[54]

Figure 4 shows the tax amounts paid between 1907 and 1938 by the Nishimura families and four other major Muromachi merchants.[55] Among the three Nishimura family shops, tax amounts paid by Chisō increased steadily, but the other two, Chiji and Chikichi, seemed to struggle. Chiji's taxes increased until the early 1920s, but there was no payment in 1932 and

Figure 4　Tax Amount Paid by Muromachi Merchants between 1907 and 1938



1934 when their business was in a critical situation. The Chikichi business had been relatively good until the 1930 downsizing. In 1938, the merchants' association comprised approximately 2500 members meaning that Chiji and Chikichi, which ranked at 151 and 26 respectively, were both big businesses at that time.

In comparison, Marubeni, Ichida, Yoshichu, and Ando, all of which were established during the late 19th century,[56] paid tax about the same amount as Nishimura families in 1907 ranging between 300 and 800 yen. However, in the late 1930s, new shops had about 200 workers each and paid taxes were about 3 to 15 times as much as did Chiji and Chikichi. The new merchants' businesses grew at a much faster pace. The Muromachi merchants' business association recalled, in 1957, that the best time for Kyoto textile businesses was in the 1930s.[57]

Sadly, the Sumptuary Law issued in 1940 prevented the industry from manufacturing and selling high-quality silk textiles and, in 1941, the First Business Integration Act reduced the number of Muromachi merchants in the business association to 275 from 2500. Again in 1943, the Second Business Integration Act compelled all the Muromachi merchants to close or merge the business except for 21. Since then, until 1949, the silk business was restricted.[58]

Discussion

After the Meiji Restoration, the Nishimura family led the Kyoto textile industry by supporting the development of dyeing technologies and introducing Kyoto textile skills overseas. The owners also held social positions around the turn of the 20th century. Their daily businesses were supervised by managers and decisions were made in family meetings, as was done in the previous era. However, those business styles seemed to gradually fall apart in the 1920s and beyond.

In those days, it was still very important for individuals in the family business to understand the connotation of the shop curtain: trustworthiness, loyalty, and perseverance. The shop prioritized being trusted by its customers, suppliers, and the society. For example, when Chikichi owed a debt as a result of the bank run in 1902, Chiji financially helped them (and that eventually helped the bank depositors). Chiji also invested in the Daimaru Department Store and a woven textile company. Chikichi provided severance pay to its suppliers at the time of its closure. Thereby, they prioritized social wellness rather than their business profits. It is assumed that the society was thankful to the Nishimura family in those days.

Individuals such as shop owners, managers, and workers understood their social commitment and they worked for the shop, the house, and for their master. For example, Chiji's apprentice, Tsutomu worked hard over the years but never once complained about the shop, house, master, or his designation, even though he did not agree with the management style of the shop, as mentioned in his manuscript.

Regarding the on-the-job training, workers generally began working as apprentices and learned how to become good account holders. However, they did not have the opportunity to learn how to be a good manager. There were no articles stating the management of the business in the family rules, not even among the additional sections in the later period. The rule book repeatedly mentioned that "(anyone involved in the business should) not ruin the shop curtain," which implied that the shop should not have a negative reputation in the society and this interpretation lasted at least until the mid-20th century.

In 1989, the 12th Chikichi owner wrote in his book[59] that a shop master had to possess business management skills and the ability was deeply dependent on an individual's capabilities

or willingness. Moreover, he mentioned that the family business should turn into an enterprise when pre-war business styles were terminated after World War II. However, he did not mention what kind of management skills are required or how to turn the shop into an enterprise. What he repeatedly emphasized was the importance of the trustworthiness, fighting spirit, and mutual understanding – all of which were embedded on the shop curtain.

The author observed how sincerely the Nishimura family confronted their business rather than how they managed it for profit. They were always concerned with how the society viewed them and how they should respond to them. The shop curtain, *noren,* which hung on the store front (Figure. 5), was literally the face of the shop, the owners, and workers so that no one was allowed to disgrace it.

Between 1900 and 1944, two significant aspects of the Nishimura family business are witnessed: (1) ownership and management, and (2) branding. Long term ownership and the stability of the businesses were reflected in the 12th Chiji and 10th Chikichi owners' era. Both of the owners were adopted sons and both of them served social positions. They depended on managers for daily business as in the old days, which functioned well until the 1910s, but in the Chiji case, it gradually failed to work effectively. What was worse for Chiji was that his successor, the 14th, was too young to lead the business.

On the contrary, Chikichi's manager-conducted-business and family meetings functioned well, as seen when they appended the family rules and decided to concentrate on the white silk fabric business. This was largely due to the fact that the shop owner made each decision and took the responsibility. Having said that, neither the Nishimura family's family meetings nor manager-conducted-business style could make the shop competitive in the industry where new merchants energetically expanded their businesses. The two shop's management style finally started to change, but the goal had not yet been defined.

Regarding the brand, the Nishimura family's shop names and the shop curtain with the family crest was already a well-established brand and this was further enhanced when the family prioritized society over themselves. Because of that, they spent huge amounts of money and struggled with the consequences until the 1930s. The Nishimura family brand may have prevented the business to expand during this period.

When a business was operated by managers and decisions were made in a family meeting, their actions were slow and the decisions may not have been the best ones for the shop, especially when the industry was rapidly expanding[60] and becoming competitive. Their business recovery towards the end of the 1930s was largely due to the upward trend of the industry where *yūzen* and white textile trading experienced a significant increase.

Figure 5　Chiji's shop front with a shop curtain

Conclusion

Compared to some of the rapid-growing new businesses in the 1920s and 1930s, the Nishimura family's businesses were relatively slow and followed their traditional business style. Up until 1919, when their capital was sufficient, the Nishimura family played important roles among Muromachi merchants. As the economy became unstable, they could not follow rapidly changing business environments resulting their business became less competitive. However, it could be said that they did not want to chase the unstable business trends of fashion. They cautiously practiced their conventional beliefs, and social wellness, which was more important for them than pursuing short-term profits.

In order for the family business to be sustainable in the industry and to be passed on to the next generation, the Nishimura family decided to scale down their businesses and make them compact and concise. They concentrated on a line of merchandise known as Chiji's Kyoto textiles and Chikichi's white fabrics for Kyoto textiles. These decisions were made in a meeting with the consent of all parties involved and everyone worked hard under the connotation of the shop curtain, *noren*. It represented the Nishimura family business and its connotation was remained before, during, and beyond World War II.

Even though both the Nishimura family and other newly established Muromachi merchants engaged in Japanese family businesses, their performances resulted in different outcomes. Future research is needed to compare the businesses of the Nishimura family with the newly established shops such as how long the connotation of the shop curtain was retained in everyone's mind, how and when the management style was changed, or when the family meeting was switched from a traditional family meeting style to a board meeting style.

Alternatively, we could employ a different perspective by considering all the Muromachi merchants, manufacturers, and artisans in Kyoto as a whole, and focusing on how they introduced "fashion" into the kimono market in the first and second halves of the 20th century. Many shops, including Chiji and Chikichi, that were forced to close during the war, reestablished the business and revived the industry in the second half of the 20th century.

Without Muromachi merchants' efforts before and after World War II, mass-manufactured artisanal Kyoto textiles for the kimono, as we admire today, would not have been developed, manufactured or distributed throughout Japan.

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Note

1) Nagasawa & Rosovsky, "The Case of the Dying Kimono," pp.60–68; Hashino & Kurosawa, "Beyond Marshallian Agglomeration Economies," pp.492–497.
2) Woven silk textiles manufactured in Kyoto are called Nishijin textiles.
3) Adachi, "The History of Muromachi and Muromachi Merchants".
4) Murakami, *History of Modern Yūzen.*
5) The industry structure and the role of Muromachi Merchants are described in Okamoto, "Tameji Ueno: A livin National Treasure of Kyoto Textiles"
6) Francks, *Kimono Fashion*. Nakagawa, "The Case of Dying Kimono".
7) Jackson, "Dress in Taishō and Early Shōwa Periods."; Yamanobe, "Modern Textile Dyeing in Kyoto."
8) Adachi, "History of Muromachi"; Adachi, "Business Administration in the early modern period in Muromachi, Kyoto."
9) Nishimura, "*The Life of My Father*," 1968, "*Iridescent Clouds*," 1989 "*The Setting Sun*," 1993.
10) Teikoku Koshinjo Kyoto Shisho.
11) Tokyo Shin'yo Koshinjo.
12) The Directory of Kyoto Commerce and Industry published in 1907, 1920, 1922, 1924, 1930, 1934, and 1936; Mase ed, The Directory of Kyoto Commerce and Industry, 1903; Kyoto Chamber of Commerce and Industry, ed., Annual Reports of Kyoto Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Shōwa 12–17.
13) Nakamura, "The Structure of Muromachi Textile Wholesale Market and Textile Wholesalers."
14) The Heian Capital Relocation was in 794.
15) Inui, Nakagawa, "Businesses of Muromachi Textile Wholesalers and their Successions and Branch Families," pp. 310–352. For example, branch families were established when shop owners had more than one son and when the owner allowed a worker to open a branch shop.
16) The family crest on a shop curtain was dyed using paste-resist pattern and brush dye.
17) Adachi, "Business Administration in the Early Modern Period in Muromachi, Kyoto," p191. He quotes Mataji Miyamoto, "Taimen, Hōkō, Bungen."
18) Nishimura, *Iridescent Clouds*, p.29

19）Ibid., p.32.
20）Adachi, “Business Administration,” pp.78–83.
21）Ibid., pp.195–196.
22）Ibid., pp.186–187.
23）Ibid., pp. 143–174.
24）Ibid., p.155.
25）Nishimura, “Iridescent Clouds,” pp.28–37.
26）Another way to get a son–in–law is find a husband for the daughter of the owner.
27）Ichida, *The Sound of Tree Rings*, p41.
28）Chiso, A History of Chiso, p. 88. Murakami, *History of Modern Yūzen*. As of 2020, Chiso has an Institute for Chiso Arts and Culture for research so that much about Chiso is not covered in this paper.
29）A.D. 1603–1868.
30）The invited party consisted of Eiichi Shibusawa and six chairmen of the Chamber of Commerce in Japan.
Kimura, The United States–Japan economic relations after the Russo–Japanese War. p.81.
31）Nishimura, *life of My Father.*
32）According to the family tree of the Nishimura family after the Meiji Restoration, 7 out of 12 owners were adopted sons.
33）Tsugita, *My Life Sugoroku*. He came to Osaka to look for a job in the textile industry after he graduated from the elementary school in Obama, Fukui Prefecture. He recalls that many shops displayed a sign that read, “Now hiring apprentices.”
34）Ichida, Ichibun, and Inanishi
35）Nihon Hyakkaten Tsushinsha, *Twenty Years of Daimaru*; Ichida, *Sound of Tree Rings*.
36）Tsugita, My Life Sugoroku.
37）Kyoto Commerce and Industry Yearbook, 1928; Ichida, *Sound of Tree Rings*, p.42.
38）Ibid., p40; The Directory of Kyoto Textile Wholesalers, 1933.
39）Tsugita, *My Life Sugoroku*.; Ichibun, *Sound of Tree Rings*, p.40.
40）Ichida. *Ichida Create*, p.242.
41）Tsugita, *My Life Sugoroku*.
42）Tsutomu Takenaka married into the Tsugita family in 1927 becoming a son–in–law. The money he invested was from the family.
43）Tokyo Shin’yō Kōkanjo Kyoto Shikyoku, Ed. *The Directory of Textile Wholesalers in Kyoto*, p79.
44）Nishimura, *life of My Father*.
45）Chikichi also helped during Chiji’s crisis in 1920.
46）Adachi, “Business Administration,” p.197.
47）His research archives are available at Kyoto Rekisaikan Library.
48）Nishimura. *Life of My Father*, p.322; Nishimura, *Setting Sun*, p.ii–iii.
49）Nakamura, “Structure of Muromachi Textile,” pp.327–328. The white fabric business in the late 1930s in the Muromachi district was profitable.
50）Tokyo Shin’yō Kōkanjo Kyoto Shikyoku, Ed. *The Directory of Textile Wholesalers in Kyoto*, p.51.
51）Nishimura, *Setting Sun*, p.ii.
52）Nishimura, *Iridescent Clouds*, pp. 36–37.
53）Merchants who paid more than 10 yen in 1907 and 300 yen in 1938.
54）Nakamura, “Structure of Muromachi Textile,” p.326.
55）*The Directory of Kyoto Commerce and Industry*.
56）These four shops were said to be four leading Muromachi merchants in the early Showa period (1926–1989).
57）Orikyō Sōritsu Jushunen Kinenshi Henshu Iinkai, Ed. *The Overview of Textile Wholesale Market in Kyoto*, p.52.
58）Ibid., pp.57–58.
59）Nishimura, *Iridescent Clouds*. P. 37.
60）Based on the data from: Kyoto Chamber of Commerce and Industry, ed. Annual Reports of Kyoto Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Shōwa 12 – Shōwa 17. pp. 96–97; Kyōzomekai, Kyōzome Tōkei Shiryō.