

Small-scale Fisheries in Japan

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Fishing with *kuji*

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Abstract Existing studies of early-modern and modern fishing maps from across Japan have not examined how they were used by fishers themselves. This paper focuses on practices of ‘fishing with *kuji*’ (籤, lottery), in which lottery systems are used to determine fishing area usage, to understand the folk customs associated with fishing area maps. This paper focuses primarily on coastal areas of the eastern Kii Peninsula. Diverse fishing methods, such as gill nets and four-armed scoop nets, are used by different villages in this region. However, the villages each face a limited availability of coastal fishing areas. Out of necessity, the fishing areas must be divided, giving rise to fishing area maps, and the practice of assigning areas to fishers using *kuji*. Each region has also developed unique practices which are used during fishing seasons. These *kuji* have their origins in religious practices. However, an examination of the *kuji* draws in these coastal fisheries reveals both a method to ensure the equal distribution of fishing opportunities, and a view of a world in which fishers are constantly subject to the harsh whims of nature.

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Keywords Coastal fishing. Map of fishing areas. Fishing regulation. Lottery. Festival.

1 Introduction

Until now, studies of maps of fishing areas discovered in the Japanese archipelago from the early modern and modern periods have not approached them from the perspective of how the maps were used by fishermen themselves. This paper explores the actual use of these maps in fishing areas, by focusing on how areas are assigned by drawing *kuji* (‘lottery’ – *kuji wo hīte kimeru*).

This paper focuses on coastal fishing villages from the eastern areas of the Kii Peninsula, to the end of the Ria coast at Nigi Shima Bay along the Shima Peninsula, and through Shionomisaki to Shichirihama. The main fisheries addressed in this paper are small scale coastal fisheries, including the *ise ebi* イセエビ (lobster) fishery in Hobo-cho, Kumano, Mie Prefecture,

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the *shiro uo* シロウオ (ice goby) fishery in Shimosato, Nachikatsuura in Wakayama Prefecture, and the *aori ika* アオリイカ (bigfin reef squid) in Tsuga, Kushimoto, Wakayama. These fisheries use various methods, including gill nets, four-armed scoop nets, and *tataki ami* (in which fishermen drive fish into nets by beating the sea surface with sticks), but they have in common the fact that they are concentrated in limited fishing areas along coasts. Out of necessity, the fishing areas are divided, so they then require the production of maps of the divisions. These divisions are distributed by *kuji* or lottery. Each region has its own method for operating its fisheries during fishing seasons.

For instance, fishermen in the *aori ika* fishery in Tsuga determine the borders of the fishing areas using a map drawn on a wall underneath a bridge, after which they assign divisions by *kuji*. The map of the fishing areas is not static, but it is understood by the fisherman to be fluid when in use.

In contrast, in Hobo and Nigishima (both in Kumano-shi) certain regulations mediate discussions over *ise ebi* fishing areas. These discussions result in the drawing of new fishing areas maps. These maps are reassessed whenever an event such as a boundary dispute occurs, which can result in new names for fishing areas. However, the fishermen themselves possess an embodied knowledge of the fishing areas, and do not need to refer to the map when they are on the sea.

In the *shiro uo* fishery of Shimosato, a similar *kuji* system is used to assign fishing areas, but no map for this purpose exists. This paper will begin by examining how these fishermen apprehend the intangible fishing areas that are not represented by visual maps, and how they divide fishing areas fairly among themselves. The paper will then compare this case with an example from elsewhere in Japan (the *Tataki* fishery in Mikata-ko, Fukui Prefecture).

In the following section, the paper will describe how *kuji* are used in the fisheries on the Kii Peninsula, Izu Peninsula, Oga Peninsula, and Shimokita Peninsula. The focus of this section will be on *bora* ボラ (flathead grey mullet) net fishing and *katsuo* カツオ (skipjack tuna) pole fishing in Iwachi, Izu Matsuzaki-cho, Shizuoka Prefecture, *takabe* タカベ (yellowstriped butterflyfish) and *isaki* イサキ (striped pigfish) *kincha* キンチャ (drive fishing) on Kouzu-shima, Tokyo, the *hatahata* ハタハタ (Japanese sandfish) fishery in Oga-shi, Akita Prefecture, and *tara* タラ (cod) net fishing in Wakinosawa, Mutsu-shi, Aomori Prefecture. In contrast to the fisheries of the Kii Peninsula presented in the first half of this paper, *kuji* are drawn in each of these areas the fishery's local shrine (Moro Iso Shrine, Monoi Minamikoto Shrine, Shinzan Shrine and Satake Shrine, and Ichikishima Shrine, respectively) on festival days. Moreover, these lotteries differ from those in Kii in that they are not used to determine the areas assigned to individual fishermen, but to assess the overall condition of the fishery, discern days when good catches can be expected, and identify the locations that should

be fished. In this respect, these *kuji* are a form of divination. However, both the *kuji* of the Kii peninsula, and those in the other areas discussed are similar in that they view the results of their *kuji* to be a reflection of the will of the gods. The first set of examples can then be seen as the extension of the *kuji* selection method to address more practical purposes, but they still must be understood against the background presented through the second set of examples.

In order to access fishermen's lived experiences through local vocabularies, this paper will rely on fishing terms used in the field sites, particularly in the use of terms that combine fish species and fishing method. For instance, *ikauchi*, which is addressed in the next section, combines *ika* (species) and *uchi* (fishing method) to refer to the use of Iso beating seine fishing methods to catch *aori ika*, whereas *ebiami* refers to the gill net (*sashi ami*) fishing of *ise ebi* (lobster).

2 *Ikauchi* and *ebiami* in Tsuga

This section will examine the *kuji* in fishing villages on the east coast of the Kii Peninsula, including Tsuga in Kishimoto-cho, Wakayama Prefecture, Hobo in Kumano-shi, Mie Prefecture, and Shimosato in Nachikatsuura, Wakayama Prefecture.

In Tsuga, the main part of the fishing year is devoted to the *ebiami* エビアミ (lobster gill net fishing), which operates from October 1 until April 30. Initially, this fishery involved only one household, but currently seven households participate. Following the end of the *ebiami* season, *ikauchi* イカウチ (Iso beating seine fishing of squid) is carried out from May 1 until July 31. In Tsuga, this fishery is also called *tachiika*, but in contrast to *ebiami*, *tachiika* is seen as a side occupation. However, there is a regulation that prevents people who are not involved in *ikauchi* from participating in *ebiami*. In addition, from March 1 until August 31, there is *kamasu* カマス (barracuda) fishing as well as dive fishing by men, known as Amairi. In Amairi, *tokobushi* (small abalone - *sulculus diversicolor supertexta*), *sazae* (horned turban), *awabi* アワビ (abalone), *funori* フノリ (*gloiopeltis* genus), *hijiki* ヒジキ (*sargassum fusiforme*), and *tengusa* テングサ (*Gelidiaceae* family) are collected on specified days. The majority of *ikauchi* fishing takes place during June, but there is no significant *ikauchi* in the three months from July to August, when fishermen focus on *amikiyori* (net mending). Here, the *kuji* pertains to *ebiami* and *ikauchi*.¹

1 As described on April 29, 2016 by Hide Kushino (born in 1927) of Tsuga, Kishimoto-chō, Wakayama Prefecture.

My actual observations of *ikauchi* in Tsuga took place on May 26, 2008, while I observed *kuji* draws on April 30, 2011 and April 29, 2016, before two *ikauchi* seasons. The next section reports on these observations, and discusses the *ebi* in relation to them.

As described in my book *The People Who Hunt Fish* (Kawashima 2011, 261-2), the *ikauchi* method was transmitted to Tsuga from Arita in Kushi-moto-cho after World War II, between 1952 and 1953.

As indicated by the origin of *uchi* in *ikauchi* from the verb *utsu* (to beat), the *ikauchi* method involves beating the surface of the water near the *takamo* 夕力毛 (a species of algae) where the reef squid spawn with a thick conical wooden stick used to drive them out called *ōtabō*. The bubbles produced in the water drive the squid out. A net is positioned towards the open water, and the sea surface is beaten with *ōtabō* to drive fish from the shore to the sea. This method is one type of *tataki ami* fishing. Male squid also gather as they pursue females. *Tataki ami* is only effective in calm waters rich in algae edged by U or V-shaped shores.

The *ōtabō* used for fishing is made from the hardwood of the ubame gashi oak [*quercus phillyraeoides*], which is also used to make charcoal. The bats are cone shaped and approximately 70 cm in length. The boats carefully follow the squid on a zigzag path, while fishermen alternately beat the sea surface on the starboard and port sides of their boats. This is because the squid are spawning, and do not easily leave the algae and can be left behind. In order to prevent squid that have left the shore from turning back, stones kept on the boats may be thrown into the water. The nets used are standing nets 100 *ken* long (181.8 m) and 3 *hiro* tall (3 fathoms, 5.49 m) which are placed just outside small bays. The squid are driven into the net from the shore.

The small boats called *isofune* used in *ikauchi* carry oars, but these are used only to quietly move the nets into position. Drive fishing is not limited to *auri ika*, but many boats continue to use oars because there is a cardinal rule that one must not be detected by the fish. After quietly manoeuvring the boat using an oar, the fisherman takes a rope tied to the *ōtabō* in his hand, and forcefully beats the sea surface alternating left and right. The sound of the *ōtabō* reverberates across the quiet shore, as they are thrown down into the water.

Ikauchi takes place three times in one day. Each boat driving squid typically carries two members of the same family. The first *ikauchi* usually begins at 7 or 8 a.m. The squid are driven for only approximately five minutes, and the entire fishing process requires only twenty minutes. However, the fishermen say that this method is not effective unless the squid are driven carefully. When one session is completed, the fishermen must wait three hours because the squid do not like murky water. The second session thus takes place at around 1 p.m., while the third takes place from 3 to 4 p.m. Between the sessions, the fishermen may return home and nap,

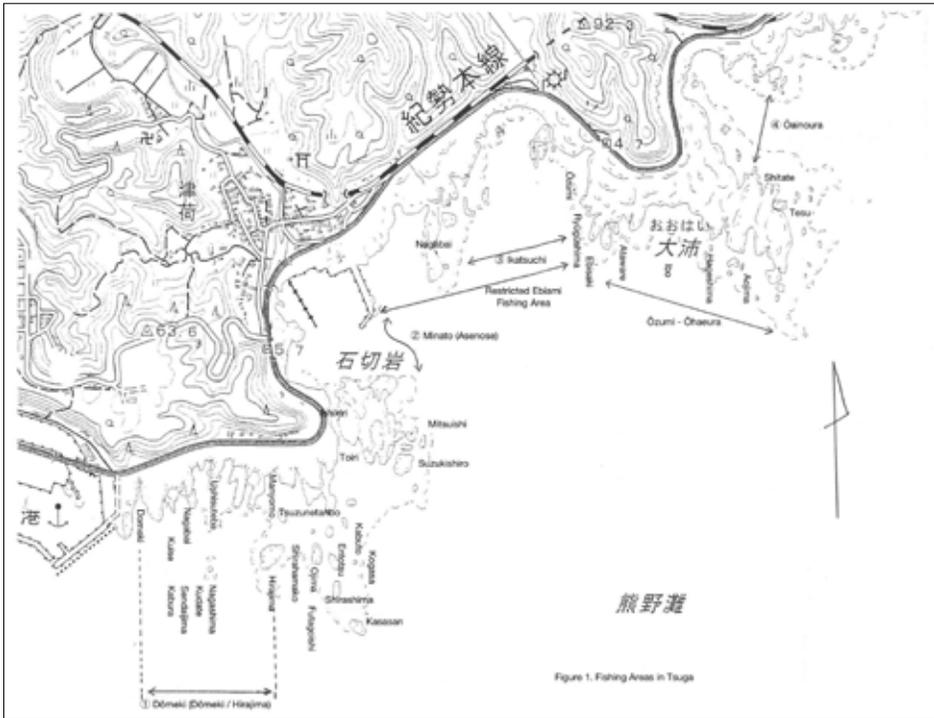


Figure 1. Fishing areas in Tsuga

making this a relaxed fishing method. Low tides are the best for fishing, while at high tide it can be difficult to find a good rhythm (*nori ga warui*). *Ikauchi* is a fishing method that depends on the ebbing of the tides. It takes advantage of the tendency of squid to go out to sea during low tide, but in actuality, most squid appear during high tide. The fishermen select their fishing times to balance the quantity of their potential catch with the likelihood of a good catch, making it resemble gambling.

Table 1. Changes in *Ikauchi* Fishing Areas in Tsuga

2007	2008	2011	2016
1 Asenose	Hirajima / Dōmeki	Dōmeki	Dōmeki
2 Ikatsuchiura	Asenose	Minato	Mitsuiso
3 Ōzumi	Ikatsuchi	Ōzumi / Ōhaeura	Ōzumi
4 Ōhaeura	Ōzumi / Ōhaeura	Ōainoura	Shitate

There are four fishing points in the Tsuga area. From east to west, they are Ohaeura, Ozumi, Ikatsuchiura, and Asanosu. However, these *wango* (ports) change slightly from year to year (table 1, fig. 1). Only one fishing boat can work each *wango*, so the nine boats involved in *ikauchi* in Tsuga in 2011 drew *kuji* to determine the order in which they would fish the areas, among which they would rotate each day.

Table 2. Fishing Vessels Operating on May 26, 2008

Vessel Name	Fishing Area
Hidemaru	Hirajima / Dōmeki
Tatsumaru (Father)	Asenose
Eikōmaru	Ikatsuchi
Ichieimaru	Ōzumi / Ōhaeura
Hisaemaru	Resting
Yamazakimaru	Resting
Rinkichimaru	Resting
Tatsumaru (Son)	Resting
Fukumaru	Resting
Seifukumaru	Resting

The following day, the Seifukumaru went to Hirajima / Dōmeki, and Hidemaru moved to Asenose. The Ichieimaru went to rest.

Similarly, ten boats participated in 2008; each of them would work different areas for four days. After finishing the *ikauchi*, they would fish for shrimp around Kii Oshima or work at night with *kenken* (trolling gear) for six days, as they waited for their next four-day opportunity. Clear days are best for this fishery, but the assigned order and place cannot be changed for reasons of bad weather, which means that the success of each boat can differ a great deal. The fishing order for boats in 2008 is shown in table 2. *Ikauchi* is said to be a form of fishing that is almost a hobby, but the price of the *aori ika* at market is quite high (approximately 1,500 yen per kilogram in 2008), making a good catch a significant source of income. Except for days when the weather is bad, few boats fail to take full advantage of the four days allotted to each of them.

3 Fishing Maps Beneath Bridges

This section describes how *kuji* draws are actually conducted. The *kuji* in Tsuga consists of two draws. The first preliminary draw (*yosen kuji*) determines the order that participants will draw *kuji* in the subsequent main draw (*hon kuji*). These two draws take different forms. In the preliminary



Figure 2. The *yosen kuji* (left) and *hon kuji* of Tsuga (April 30, 2011)

Figure 3. Dividing the fishing areas on a map beneath the bridge (April 30, 2011)



draw, wood blocks bearing stickers with Arabic numerals are placed in a bag marked *Ebi Ami Kuji Ire* えび網くじ入れ (shrimp net *kuji* bag). In the main draw, bamboo rods labelled with numbers – in the format Kanji numeral (Arabic Numeral) – on their ends are placed in a tin tea can, whose lid has a small opening (fig. 2).

In 2011, before assigning the four fishing areas, the nine groups of fishermen gathered on the draw day (April 30) beneath a bridge near the fishing port at 1 p.m. to determine whether the *ikauchi* draw should take place. The gathering can only be called by the *sewanin* 世話人 (person responsible for the fishery), or the person responsible for the *ebi* *ami*. In both *ikauchi* and *ebi* *ami*, siblings, parents, and children have the right to fish as one household even if they are living separately. In the past, as many as 37 or 38 households were involved in this fishery.

Fishing rights go into effect as soon as the *ikauchi* draw is completed, so the group takes the weather into account when deciding whether or not to begin fishing. This decision is made by gathering small stones scattered nearby and marking them with a permanent marker. A circle (○) indicates that they are in favour of holding the lottery, while an X indicates that they are against. These stones are placed face down on a board on the ground by the *sewanin* of the fishery. Once the stones have been placed, the *sewanin* turns over each stone and counts the number of circles and Xs. If a simple majority is in favour, then the *kuji* draw place. On the day observed, the group voted in favour of holding the draw.

Next, a rough topological map of the Tsuga area is drawn beneath the bridge, which is used to determine four equal fishing areas through discussion among the fishermen. The four areas are drawn so that the catch in each area will be equal, and the men make small adjustments with a wet cloth in hand as they draw the lines (fig. 3).

After the four areas have been determined, the preliminary *yosen kuji* draw begins. The order in which the people will draw in the preliminary *kuji* is determined through games of rock-paper-scissors. The *sewanin* holds the bag of blocks in his hands, and each person draws a block one by one. The blocks determine the order for the main draw. The people who draw the 1st to 4th positions in the main draw received fishing rights effective from that day, regardless of the weather. The other positions follow on subsequent days (fig. 3).

A similar *kuji* draw takes place at the beginning of the *ebi* *ami* season, but with several small differences. First, fishing areas are allotted to all participants at the same time, instead of being spread across several days. Second, the draw is held both on the first day of the season as well as at the *hatsuka yami*, or dusk on the twentieth day of the month on the lunar calendar. This is because *ebi* *ami* is a nighttime fishery that cannot take place when the moon is visible. During the fishing season, additional draws take place after the fishermen have rotated through all the fishing areas.



Figure 4. Drawing the *hon kuji*
(April 30, 2011)

Specifically, when there is an even number of fishing points to be allotted to an even number of fishermen, each rotation is completed quickly and in many cases the fishermen will return to their original fishing points. In these cases, fishermen may sometimes choose to 'skip one or two' (*hitotsu tobi* or *futatsu tobi*) of the intermediate points as they make their rounds. One of the reasons for skipping fishing points in this way is to avoid over-fishing nearby areas where fishing is restricted, which may provide good catches even if they are fished for two consecutive days. The restricted fishing areas are not included in the maps drawn beneath the bridge, and points to the west and east of the restricted areas are drawn on the walls on either side of the road that passes beneath the bridge. Third, regardless of the weather on any particular day, the fishing points are not moved. It is ultimately up to the *sewanin* to judge whether or not fishing will take place, meaning that there the dates in which all fishermen work are the same. In contrast, in *ikauchi* the fishing points move mechanically, and the judgement of whether to fish or not on a particular day is left to individual fishermen.

To discuss the introduction of *kuji* draws in the operation of the *ebi* fishery, the next section will describe the case of Hobo, Kumano-shi, in Mie Prefecture.

4 The Adoption of the Lottery Practice: The Case of Hobo, Kumano-shi

Currently, the primary fishery in Hobo, Kumano-shi, Mie Prefecture, is *ebi*ami, similar to the aforementioned Tsuga. The fishing season is from October 1 to April 30. During this season, one fishing period is defined to fit the twenty dark nights from the 19th of one month on the lunar calendar to the 9th of the following month. In fact, the fishing takes place on approximately fifteen days. From May, following the clean-up of the *ebi*ami, the fishermen troll for *katsuo*. At the beginning of autumn, *surumeika* (Japanese squid) fishing becomes primary. During the *ebi*ami season, some fishermen will also catch *yariika* (spear squid) from the end of December to January.

In the past, *ebi*ami had been an occupation for the elderly. This is because, up until Japan's period of high economic growth, young men from Hobo, went to Shukutaso (in *Minami Ise-chō*, Mie) to work on boats pole fishing for *katsuo*, like many men from other fishing villages in Mie Prefecture. Traditionally, an *ebi*ami catch of 30 to 35 shrimp per day was considered good, but today twice as many may be caught in one day.

Both one-ply and three-ply nets are used in *ebi*ami. The one-ply nets have a mesh size of approximately 9 cm (3 *sun*) with each sheet or *jō* 81.8 metres (45 *ken*) long and 2.1 metres (1 *hiro* 1 *shaku*) deep. The three-ply nets have a mesh size of 7.5 cm (2.5 *sun*), with each *jō* 100 metres (55 *ken*) long and 1.5 metres (1.5 *hiro*) deep. It is standard practice for boats to carry four one-ply net mats and four three-ply nets for a total of 8 *jō*.

In *ebi*ami, nets are placed in the sea at approximately 3 p.m., after which the boats return to port. At 8 p.m., the boats go back out to sea to raise their nets, before heading home, until midnight, when the nets are placed again. They are raised once more at dawn at a time known as *majimi*, approximately 5 a.m. The fishermen do sleep for short periods, but the *ebi*ami season is a time during which rest is scarce.²

In the past, conflict over *ebi*ami fishing areas between Hobo, which is situated at the mouth of Nigishima Bay, and another village known as Nigishima, located further inside the bay, was intense. Both villages held rights to fish the surrounding sea. This situation was resolved by a fisherman, Toshi Yamashita (born in 1944) of Hobo, who created a set of fishing regulations.

In the late 1980s, Yamashita was involved in *ebi*ami during the winter, and troll fishing for *katsuo* when schools of tuna begin to disperse in July and August. At the time, Nigishima's *katsuo* troll netting was centred in

2 As described on November 16, 2008 by Toshi Yamashita (born in 1926) of Hobo-chō, Kumano-shi, Mie Prefecture.

Kushimoto, whereas Hobo's nets were based in Sue, by Kii Ōshima. To unload their catches, troll fishers from Sue would take their *katsuo* to the market at Nigishima, while those from Hobo would go to the market at Kushimoto. Through the relations that fishers from Sue and Hobo had through the *katsuo* fishery, Yamashita made friends with people based in Sue. Yamashita would bathe at friends' homes when he docked at Sue, and go with them to collect *biwa* (loquats) in wicker fish baskets (*banjō kago*), deepening their friendships.

One day, when the topic of conversation turned to the *ebi*, he mentioned the endless conflicts over fishing areas between Nigishima and Hobo, and learned from one of these friends that a set of rules existed in Sue. Yamashita received a copy of these rules to study. These rules were the 'Sue Shrimp Gill Netting Union Rules' (*Sue Ebi Sashiami Kumiai Kiyaku*), which went into effect on September 15, 1988. These were detailed rules that governed the fishery. For instance, one rule governed the fishing period, stating "Each *yami* begins on the 21st of the lunar calendar and ends on the morning of the 10th". In Sue, one *yami* ('hitoyami') refers to one period of fishing. In addition, the 5th section of article 5 of these rules referred to the *kuji* draw: "On the first day of fishing, at least one person from each boat must attend a *kuji* draw to divide their catches".

Yamashita took these rules back to the fisheries cooperative association at Hobo, and established a committee to create a set of rules. Following thorough discussions, the Hobo Ebi Kumi Rules were created and implemented on July 25, 1991. In 1993, two years later, Hobo reached an agreement with Nigishima for the two cooperative associations to share a common set of rules - the 'Joint Fishery Rights Usage Agreement' (*Kyōdō Gyogyō Kōshi Kyōteisho*).

From these rules, part 2, article 16 on the *kuji* is worth closer examination:

2. On the 19th of each month on the lunar calendar during the fishing season, at approximately 1 p.m., the fishing boats will draw *kuji* to determine their fishing areas.
3. The boats to be moored will be determined by *kuji* draws at the same time.
4. Except for non-fishing days determined by the association, the draws will assign consecutive days for fishing (*tōshi ban*).³
9. If a fisherman should decide to switch to a different catch, such as *ika*, their *ebi* *kuji* numbers will become invalid from that day.
10. Except for situations affected by important family ceremonies, official duties, or damaged vessels, any vessel that fails to fish for four or more consecutive days will have its *kuji* numbers invalidated.

3 This article was revised in September 1999.

14. When nets have been cast, no vessel shall go between boats that have begun casting their nets, regardless of their *kuji* number.
16. When *kuji* have been drawn for an even number of vessels, the first vessel shall be switched for the second round.
21. The maximum number of nets that can be cast for each *kuji* number (per two vessels) during fishing is 16. (Hobo Ebiami Kumiai 1994)

Provision 2 explains that fishing areas will be determined by lots drawn on the 19th of the lunar month at the beginning of the *yami* period, making this day also the first day of fishing each month. Provision 3 refers to “boats to be moored”; around 1990, *ebiami* was performed by pairs of boats, but today, only one boat is used. The *tōshi ban* (consecutive *kuji* numbers) mentioned in provision 4 refers to how fishing areas are rotated each day. Provision 9 is similar to how priority in a given fishing area is assigned for *auri ika* in Hobo, and how in both the area fished must correspond to the number drawn. They are also similar because the determination of fishing area is made by *tōshi ban*. However, in this fishery, fishermen are free to decide not to fish on any given day due to the weather, as in the *auri ika* fishery in Tsuga. Provision 10 draws directly on the rules of Sue, stating that any boat that does not fish for four consecutive days without a valid reason will lose the right to draw a number in the next *kuji* draw. Provisions 14, 16, and 21 also contain detailed rules.

The method of the *ebiami kuji* draw has not changed from the past. Slips of paper with numbers corresponding to the number of fishermen entering are folded into fourths and placed in a cardboard box. The person who will draw lots squats in a circle with the other fishermen, throws the papers out into the centre, and picks them up. In Sue, the papers are thrown to the ground. The following section will examine the fishing areas selected in this draw.

5 The Two Fishing Areas

The ‘fishing areas’ are determined in provisions 5 through 8 in article 16 of the rules.

5. The boundaries of the fishing areas will be drawn according to the conventions of the past, but may be partially modified according to the number of fishing vessels operating in a particular month (*yami*).
6. The expansion or shrinking of a fishing area must respect the association of fishing areas within the bay (*uchiura*) and outside the bay (*sotoumi*).
7. When a boat assigned to the East passes through Agonohana, or a boat assigned to the South passes through Tateishi, the *uchiura* (coastal) fishing area will be abandoned.

8. When the vessel assigned to the East casts its nets South, or the vessel assigned to the South casts its nets East, each vessel will have renounced its own fishing area. (Hobo Ebiami Kumiai 1994)

The rules governing fishing areas are complex, but as provision 5 indicates (“The boundaries of the fishing areas will be drawn according to the conventions of the past, but may be partially modified according to the number of fishing vessels operating in a particular month (*yami*)”), the extent of the *ebiami* fishery was more or less limited, even in the past. However, one characteristic of the rules of Hobo and Nigishima is that each pair of vessels doing *ebiami* is assigned two areas, one inside Nigishima Bay (*uchiura*) and one outside of the bay (*sotoumi*). Either of the areas can be fished, depending on the weather on a particular day. However, only one of the two areas can be fished on any day.

As specified in provisions 7 and 8, the outer *sotoumi* area is divided into the *Minami-ban* area to the south of the bay, and the *Higashi-ban* area to the east. Each of these areas is associated with rights to one inner *uchiura* area. Once a boat given the *Higashi-ban* goes past Agonohana at the mouth of the bay, it gives up its *uchiura-ban*, or its right to fish its assigned *uchiura* area. Similarly, when a boat given the *Minami-ban* passes Tateishi at the mouth of the bay, it gives up its *uchiura-ban*. In either case, other groups may fish for shrimp in the ceded areas. However, the groups that then fish in the *uchiura* area give up their right to fish in the corresponding area outside the bay, permitting other groups to fish these *sotoumi* points.

For example, in 1993, the *sotoumi* was made up of 7 areas in the *Minami-ban*, and 11 areas in the *Higashi-ban*, for a total of 18 areas. The *uchiura* also had 18 areas, meaning that 18 groups of fishing vessels could select from 36 areas (table 3). While groups have priority in the fishing areas determined by the *kuji* draw on each day, they must always give up their right to one area in either the *sotoumi* or the *uchiura*. The 18 groups each depart the harbour at the same time twice each day, so difficult negotiations would take place over fishing areas. Eventually, due to the large number of fishermen and fishing areas, relations between Nigishima and Hobo deteriorated.

Table 3. Sotoumi and Uchiura Pairings (November 1993)

Sotoumi	Uchiura	
1 Inatsuka	From the hana of Tateishi to Jingūshima	
2 Hiraishi	From Jingūshima to <i>Uchiura</i>	
3 Sasa no hana	From the border of Shiritsubohama Nigishima to Ochiyagoroshi	
4 Mā	From Ochiyagoroshi to the sea at the left edge of the mouth of Iguimo	
5 Takeyashiri	From the sea at the left edge of the mouth of Iguimo to the border of the restricted fishing zone,	No. 3
6 Ōhama	//	No. 2
7 Shinsukeochi	//	No. 1
8 Minowa	From the Kataokake Kana-ami nai to Akoshi Funatsuke	
9 Mutsumiya	From the restricted zone border to Koboehana	
10 Obera	From Koboehana to Ugazurokuchi	
11 Sazashiri	From Ugazurokuchi to the Ōtani border	
12 Gamanokuchi	From the Ōtani border to the Kataokake Kana-ami gai	
13 Ohama	From Akoshi Funatsuke to Ōshiki Kana-ami nai	
14 Suno no hama	From Ōshiki Kana-ami gai to the right edge of Jingūshima,	No. 2
15 Maeboshi	//	No. 1
16 Oyanazuro	Agonohama,	No. 3
17 Kamisu 2	//	No. 3
18 Kamisu 1	//	No. 1

6 Towards Fishing Areas Exclusive to Hobo

Ten years after the creation of the Hobo Ebiami Kumiai Rules, which include Nigishima, Hobo and Nigishima merged under the Kumano Fisheries Cooperative (*Kumano Gyogyō Kyōdō Kumiai*) in 2001. It was from this period that the relationship between Nigishima and Hobo worsened.

According to documentary archives at the Yukichō office of the Kumano Fisheries Cooperative, there were protests over the “excessive disregard of Nigishima *ebiami* operators toward Hobo *ebiami* vessels in the past” (Hobo Ebiami Kumiai 1994). No agreement could be reached with Nigishima, and the fishermen drew sea boundaries themselves. Essentially, the *Minami*-ban of the *sotoumi* was handed over to Nigishima, while Hobo obtained exclusive rights to the *Higashi*-ban area. In addition, *uchiura* areas were also divided between the two. This arrangement was approved on August 31, 2003, leading to “an agreement regarding the clear division of fishing areas with the Nigishima Ebiami Cooperative” (Hobo Ebiami Kumiai 1994).

In other words, of the *sotoumi* areas shown in table 3, 1-7 were given to Nigishima, while 8-18 were given to Hobo. Of the *uchiura* areas, 1 and 2 went to Nigishima, while 3-18 became fishing areas for Hobo. The divi-

sion was drawn on the sea so as to extend the existing land border. Hobo was in any case in a better position for *ebi*mi, with *ebi*mi beginning later in Nigishima compared to Hobo. The current fishing areas and pairs of *sotoumi* and *uchiura* areas are shown in table 4 and figure 5.

As shown in table 4, in 2013, the *uchiura* areas are indicated by ranges - 'From X to Y' - while from the following year, they are indicated by specific fishing area names. Some areas indicated by the name of the location are shown in the following year by the name of the fishing area.

Table 4. Pairings of Sotoumi and Uchiura Fishing Areas (October 2003 and October 2004)

Sotoumi	Uchiura (2003)	Uchiura (2004)
Minowa	The white line from the border of Shiritsubohama Nigishima to Ochiyagoroshi	Shiritsubonohama
Mutsumiya	From the white line at Ochiyagoroshi to the sea at the left edge of the mouth of Iguimo	Iguimo
Obera	From the above to the border of the restricted area	Matsukake
	Restricted fishing area 2	Restricted fishing area 2
	Restricted fishing area 1	Restricted fishing area 1
Sazashiri	From the border of Ishiyama to Yamashitake Tsubo-ami Kana-ami	Kobae
Gamanokuchi	From Yamashitake Kana-ami-gai to the border of Ugazuro	Nayanoshita
Ohama	From the border of Ugazuro to the border of Ōtani	Senohana
Sunonohama	From the border of Ōtani to the Kataokake Kana-ami	Ōtani
Maeboshi	From Akoshijinja Funatsuke to Ōshiki Kana-ami	Nakatonouchi
Oyanazuro	From Ōshiki Kana-ami-gai to the right edge of Jingūshima	Nakatonosoto
Miagenoshima right edge	Akonohama 2	Akonohama 2
Outwards from right edge	Akonohama 1	Akonohama 1

For example, "From the border between Shiritsubo no Hama to Nigishima to the white line at Ochagoroshi" became "Shitsutsubo no Hama"; "From Ochagoroshi Hakusen to the shallows to the left of the bay mouth" became "Iguimo"; and "From the Ōtani border to the Kataoka-ke Kanaami" became "Ōtani". This shows the possibility of ongoing changes in fishing areas and fishing area names related to changes in the number of *ebi*mi participants.

Table 5. Joint fishing activities within the restricted fishing areas in 2013

Date	Total number of <i>ise ebi</i> (lobster) fished by each cheam	Fishing area 1	Fishing area 2	Fishing area 3
October 6	268	108 (A team)	76 (B team)	84 (C team)
October 7	261	117 (B team)	53 (C team)	91 (A team)
October 8	135	54 (C team)	32 (A team)	49 (B team)

Total number of fishermen is 10, A team consists 3, B team consists 4, and C team consists 3.
(Hobo Ebiami Kumiai 2013)

As in Tsuga, restricted fishing areas are placed adjacent to the village. However, the restricted areas are opened once every three years, when the weather is unfavourable, and the catches are bad. According to a record of the general meeting of the Small-scale Ebiami Cooperative on September 13, 2015, “Three vessels can operate in the forbidden areas with one three-ply net per person, when fishing is halted due to weather conditions. Shrimp must be distributed among the fishermen, but the fish caught by a fisherman will be the property of that fisherman” (Hobo Ebiami Kumiai 2015). In fact, the restricted area was fished that year for a period of three days from October 6 (see table 5). It can be seen that ten people in the three groups (groups A to C) fished the areas 1 to 3 in turns.⁴ From the fact that immature fish are released during the fishing season in the restricted areas suggests that these areas are being cultivated for use during emergencies.

Moreover, currently, due to aging and the declining population of *ebiami* fishers, numbers are not drawn by pairs of households (*niken moyai*); *uchiura* and *sotoumi* areas are allotted to individual fishermen, who place their nets in one or the other on any given day. This practice is unchanged from the past. Other fishermen can enter vacant *uchiura* areas at certain times. This is based not on a geographic indicator, such as the passing of a vessel to the *sotoumi* area around the *Agono Hana*, but it is based on time.

For example, if a vessel is placing nets in an *uchiura* area from 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., others can place nets in the *sotoumi* area assigned to that vessel after that time. Similarly, if a vessel is placing nets in a *sotoumi* area between 3:30 p.m. and 4 p.m., others may place in that vessel’s assigned *uchiura* area after that time. Because it takes vessels departing the

4 *Ebiami Kumiai Kirokucho Heisei 25-nen 9-gatsu 12-nichi* 2013. This special use of restricted fishing areas can be seen in other examples. The area by the mouth of the river in Kure, Nakatosa-chō, Kōchi Prefecture is a restricted area for *ise ebi*. However, the area is opened to raise funds for the repair of shrines associated with the fishing cooperative, such as Sumiyoshi Shrine or Ebisu-sama.

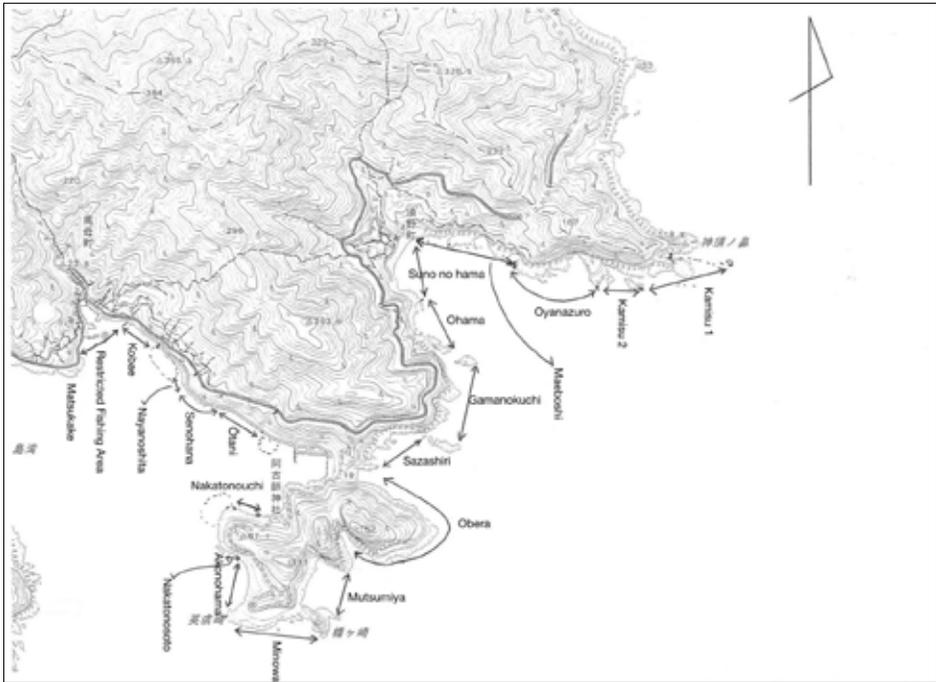


Figure 5. Fishing areas in Hobo

port at Hobo thirty minutes longer to reach *sotoumi* areas compared to *uchiura* areas, the time limit for selecting *sotoumi* fishing areas is thirty minutes longer. At the beginning of spring, as days become longer, *uchiura* nets are placed beginning at 4:00 p.m., while fishing in the *sotoumi* areas begins at 4:30 p.m.

The following conclusions can be drawn from the disputes over fishing areas between Nigishima and Hobo. Though there are differences in the histories of the fisheries in these two places, the relatively large number of participants in the *kuji* draw (18 people), combined with the large fishing areas, the allotment of rights to two areas at a time, and the free use of assigned but unfished areas were the indirect causes of the dissolution of joint fishing activities between the two villages.

7 *Shiro uo* Fishery in Ōtagawa

Another fishery with a large *kuji* draw is the *shiro uo* 白魚 (ice goby) four-armed scoop net fishery of the Ōtagawa river in Shimosato, Nachikatsuura-chō, Wakayama Prefecture. In the past, fish were caught using four-armed

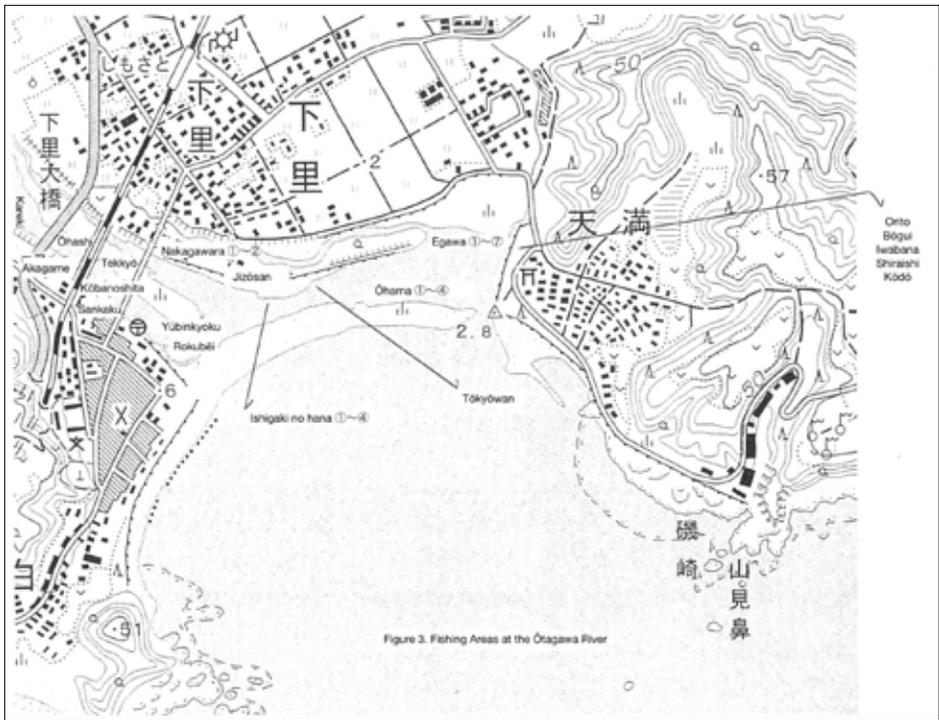


Figure 3. Fishing Areas at the Ōtagawa River

Figure 6. Fishing areas of the Ōtagawa river

scoop nets hung from scaffoldings placed in the river, similarly to the fishery of Hirokawa, Yuasa-chō (also in Wakayama). However, since 1998, the method has changed, and they use nets cast from boats fixed to stumps placed in the river.

The four-armed scoop nets consist of a large external square net measuring 255 cm on each side. At the centre of this net, finer square nets (125 cm per side) which actually catch the fish are sewn together. From the open sea by Kumano, *shiro uo* ascend the Ōtagawa river. These nets are hung from the boats. The fishers net the fish by pulling the nets up when the fish pass over them.

The fishing season extends from approximately January 10 until the middle of April. The season reaches its peak when the mountain cherry trees bloom, and is marked by the full blossoming of the Somei-Yoshino trees at the mouth of the river. The sign of the end of the fishing season is said to be the blossoming of the pear trees.

The *shiro uo* fishing area covers approximately 1 km of the river, from its mouth up to the Shimosato Ōhashi bridge. It is a narrow section, where the river is only 150 metres wide. In contrast, the number of fishers numbered



Figure 7. The *kuji* boxes of the Shimosato *shiro uo* Fishing Cooperative

up to 40, at times leaving only a boat's length between them. Today, there are only 2 or 3 active fishermen, so no *kuji* draw takes place, but when the number was greater, fishing points had to be assigned by *kuji*. The days fishing was to take place, areas were assigned by *kuji* draws; however, the numbers drawn did not have any special correspondence with particular fishing areas. Instead, the draw determined the order in which fishermen would be allowed to select their preferred area. The person who drew number 1 would have first selection of an area, which they would fish for that day (see fig. 6).

The "Shimosato *shiro uo* Fishing Cooperative" was established in 1985, and managed the fishing areas from the river's mouth to the Shimosato Ōhashi bridge. The cooperative currently possesses two *kuji* boxes, the *zakuji* 座籤 and *honkuji* 本籤 (fig. 7) These boxes are made from sections of tortoise-shell bamboo carved into a hexagonal shape. The *zakuji* is 25 cm high, and 9 cm on each side. The *honkuji* is 27 cm high and 12 cm on a side. The *kuji* themselves are also made of bamboo. Each is a rod sharpened on one end and painted black. The other end carries a kanji numeral written in ink.

The draw takes place before fishing begins each day. Any fishermen arriving more than five minutes late is assigned the last spot. The *kuji* method used at Shimosato has some special characteristics. First, the fishermen form a circle, and each person takes a turn shaking the hexagonal boxes. Afterwards, the people who drew the last two positions (the two largest numbers) from the *zakuji* during the previous lottery are left standing next to each other in the circle. They each draw a number from the *zakuji* and compare them. The box is then passed to the person adjacent to the fisherman who drew the smaller number, and the box goes around the circle with each person drawing a number. The *honkuji* draw, which takes place after the *zakuji*, begins similarly, with the two who drew the largest numbers in the previous *honkuji* standing next to each other. On occasion, a person may draw the largest number for two days in a row. When this special case occurs, that person is allowed to draw from the *honkuji* first on the third day.⁵ Without the complex method described above, the equal distribution of fishing opportunities may not be possible.

The previous pages have only described several examples of *kuji* draws in the fisheries on the eastern coast of the Kii peninsula. These fisheries use few tools, meaning that they require fishermen to rely on techniques developed over many years. Insofar as the fishing areas are near the coast, and are typical of small coastal fisheries, the barriers to participation are low. Consequently, accessibility to fishing areas is constrained. As a result, the selection of fishing areas by *kuji* draw has maintained equality among the fishermen.

Moving away from the Kii peninsula, there is another fishery that employs a *kuji* draw due to the ease of access and resulting constraints on fishing areas: the *tataki ami* fishery of Koi on the Mikata-kō Lake in Fukui Prefecture.

8 The *tataki ami* fishery of Mikatakō Lake

Mikata-kō lake is the furthest inland of the five Mikata-go-kō lakes facing Wakasa-wan Bay in Fukui Prefecture. The *tataki ami* fisher of Koi takes place today, as discussed in my previous publications (Kawashima 2011, 249-54). The fishing season here is roughly four months from November 23 until mid-March of the following year. However, because of daily changes in the weather, boats leave port on only about one-third of the days during the fishing season.

When fishing begins, boats depart the banks of Hasugawa river for the lake, and gather at one location on the shore. The order in which these

5 As described on March 7, 2016 by Osamu Shimoji (born 1941) of Shimosato, Nachi Katsuura-chō, Wakayama Prefecture.

small vessels, known as *sanpa*, will position themselves in the fishing area is determined by a draw. All fishermen participate in a morning discussion to determine which fishing areas will be selected. The vessels that have arrived at the fishing area spread their nets from the shore out into the lake, beginning with the boat that drew number 1. The draw employs numbered cards, handed by the head of the cooperative to one of his colleagues. The colleague shuffles them face down like playing cards, after which the head of the cooperative calls the name of each participating fisherman. For each name, the colleague reveals the number of the card on top of the deck.

The nets used are each 17 or 18 metres long, and 1 metre high. Fishermen unfold four nets, totalling 280 metres in length. The lake itself is only approximately two metres deep, making these nets sufficient. When the nets are placed, their positions are marked by small yellow buoys at the beginning and end of each net, as well as the centre (two nets in). Only about 10 metres separate the boats from each other. The fishermen stand on their boats and place their nets in the lake. After all of the nets are in the water, the boats carefully accelerate in the opposite direction, and the fishermen strike the surface of the water with green bamboo rods 4 to 5 metres in length, from the port side. Paying attention to the net of the boat to their starboard, each fisherman strikes the water with their rod several times. The area around the boat that can be struck is called the boat's *mae*.

Once their boat has returned to the beginning of the net, the fisherman will sit and carefully raise the net. *Koi* caught in the net are skilfully scooped up in a landing net, and are placed in the boat's *kame* or holding tank. This process is repeated. Each round is called a *kachi*. Thus, in the past, the fishery was not called *tataki ami* but *kachi ami*.

At their most numerous, 40 vessels would work on Mikata-kō lake, but since the mid-1950s, people left the fishery to pursue other wage labor. In 2008, only seven vessels were operating.⁶

In this fishery, nets are not often laid straight. This has long been an issue in *tataki ami*. Each fisherman tries to make the *mae* area, which they strike, as large as possible, meaning that it always slightly expands. In this *tataki ami*, each fisherman's portion is determined by their individual catch.

However, the reason that they work cooperatively and draw *kuji* to determine the order that they line up is that the chances of a good catch would be lower if they each were doing *tataki ami* individually. Conversely, if the total catch were distributed evenly among the vessels, then individual fishermen would have little incentive to fish seriously, making the fishery itself something of a pastime, and reducing the amount of the catch. Fish can be caught because the fishery is both collectively operated and also relies on the skills of individual fishermen. Such a dilemma has been

6 The author was aboard a *tataki ami* boat on December 2, 2008 and December 15, 2009.

a part of *tataki ami* since it began. There is the same dilemma faced by the *ebi ami* in Hobo, mentioned above.

The next section will describe cases of larger scale coastal fisheries employing *kuji* on the Izu peninsula and the Izu islands, the Oga peninsula, and the Shimokita peninsula.

9 *Tairyō kuji* and Bonten *kuji* of Izu Iwachi

Iwachi, in Izu Hamamatsu-chō of Shizuoka Prefecture, is a settlement where the *bora*, or flathead grey mullet, was fished with blanket nets, as described in the second volume of *Shizuoka-ken Suisan-shi* (1894): “In the western areas of the Izu region, *bora* is fished in the spring only at Iwashinamura Iwachi”. Saitō Iseuemon, when writing about the festivals of Moroison Shrine in his *Kyōdo ni ikita haichijūnen*, writes the following:

The festival of the 28th day of the 2nd month is called *Ura Matsuri*. It is where many decisions about the fisheries were made.

Through a *kuji* draw, the first and second vessels of the land (*riku*), and the first and second vessels of the sea (*oki*) to begin fishing were determined for *bora* blanket netting, as were the four western sections for troll nettings, with the first section as the beach.

In addition, the captain of the fishing vessel which would carry the *tairyō* 大漁 (plentiful catches) flag of the Bonten *maru*, a religious ornament, was also determined by lottery. The vessel that receives this flag will have safety on the sea and a plentiful catch. In addition, there is a practice of divining three *tairyō-bi* (days of plentiful catches), which were divined by drawing the *kamikuji* for *katsuo* fishing during the summer. On these days, fishermen work more aggressively to increase their catches. (Saito Iseuemon s.d., 6; Author’s translation)

The *kuji* mentioned here is of a slightly different kind than the other examples discussed above. First, this *kuji* takes place as part of a festival of the settlement’s shrine. Second, the lottery does not determine the fishing areas allotted to fishermen, but the role each vessel plays in the *bora* *ami*, the order in which the troll nets are brought up on the beach, and even the divination of good fishing days in the *katsuo* fishery. Most important, however, is that the lottery determines who will be designated the Bonten *maru* 梵天丸, which will have the right to carry the Bonten *maru* flag – a banner roughly five metres long – for the year, and consequently who will have special rights to good areas in several different fisheries.

Blanket and troll net fishing of *bora* and pole fishing of *katsuo* have disappeared from Iwachi, and the remaining fisheries are focused on the coast. However, the Bonten *Kuji* 梵天籤 for selecting the Bonten-*maru*, and



Figure 8. The *kuji* box of Iwachi
(October 22, 2016)

the *tairyō Kuji* to divine the three best fishing days of the season, still take place today. Festivals take place at the shrine on February 28 and October 28, but the *kuji* draws are held only in February, during the Bonten *Matsuri* 梵天祭り festival.

At the beginning of the lottery, the ten people who will be drawing lots and *ujiko* – constituents of the shrine carrying offerings and *shinshu* (wine) on a *sanpo* platform – pass between two banners bearing the name ‘Moroiso Shrine’ standing on the beach. This is called the *hama kudari* 浜下り. Next, the *tairyō kuji* draw begins at the hall of worship. The chief priest shakes the *kuji* box, removes three *kuji*, and gives them to the chief representative of the shrine. This representative reads out the months and days written on the three *kuji*. These are the days of the coming season which are blessed with plentiful catches. The fishermen of Iwachi remember these days, and continue to believe in them today.

The Bonten *kuji* then follows. This draw consists of the *junban kuji* 順番籤 and the main *hon kuji* 本籤. For both draws, a fisherman takes one *kuji*, in this case a *koyori* 紙繕り (a string of twisted paper), from among those atop the *sanpo* held by the chief priest. The lots of the *junban kuji* carry numbers. In the *hon kuji*, only one of the lots is marked with a circle symbol. It is the duty of the chief representative of the shrine to make

these *koyori* from folded pieces of paper. In the past, they were made by the *ōya* of Iwachi (the owner of the ship in the main household of Iwachi). The *Bonten maru* determined by this draw receives the right to raise the *Bonten Maru* banner from that day.

In the past, the *Bonten kuji* was drawn by the captain of a boat involved in *katsuo* pole fishing. This is because around the late 1950s, there were five vessels fishing *katsuo*. Today, representatives from five cooperatives – the *ebiami* Cooperative, the small vessel cooperative, the *ōami* (large net) cooperative, *kibinago* キビナゴ (silver stripe round herring) cooperative, and the dragnet fishing cooperative – draw the *kuji*.

The *tairyō kuji* box was formerly kept by the *ōya*, but it is now stored at Iwachi's assembly hall. The box is rectangular, measuring 30.5 cm by 3 cm. The bamboo rods used as *kuji* are marked with all of the days from April to August (fig. 8). These dates correspond to the *katsuo* pole fishing season. The writing on the front face of the box says “Offering of the *kuji* Box”, while on the rear, in ink, it is written: “28th day of the 10th month of the year Shōwa 29, Shizuoka-ken, Kamo-gun, Iwashina-mura, Iwachi. Written by Saitō Saburō”.⁷

10 The *kuji matsuri* Festival of Kōzushima

The Monoiminanomikoto Shrine is located in Kōzushima, one of the seven Izu Shichitō islands. Every year, on January 14, a festival called the *kuji Matsuri* 籤祭, in which *kuji* are drawn to assign fishing areas, is still held. Today, only the form of the ritual remains, but in the past, the festival was where the fishing areas for the *kincha*, or drive fishing of *takabe* (yellow-striped butterfish) and *isaki* (striped pigfish) were selected.

The word *kincha* possibly derives from the word *kinchaku ami* 巾着 (purse seine), but despite the similarity of the words, the fishing method and net structure are quite different. The fishery uses bulk nets (*tatekiri ami* 建切網) and blanket nets. This is because the waters around Kōzushima are said to be too shallow to draw the bottom of nets shut.

A detailed description of *kincha* is provided in *oikomi ryō* (Kawashima 2008, 257-66), and so it will not be repeated here, but briefly, it involves two vessels using a *honkake ami* 本掛網 (bulk net) which move from the direction of the tide to encircle the fish. *Kincha* is based on a traditional method called *sumoguri* 素潜り, and has been influenced by the drive fishing methods of Okinawa. In other words, it is a fishing method of southern areas that takes advantage of the *kuroshio* 黒潮 current.

7 奉納御圖箱。On the rear is written: 昭和二十九年十月二十八日 静岡縣賀茂郡岩科村岩地 齋藤三郎書之。

A letter dating from 1865 (Meiji 28)⁸ requesting permission to fish using *kincha* submitted by four island residents to the island's administrative office still exists, showing that this is the period in which *kincha* began. *Kincha* is also said to be a refined version of the *makase ami* まかせ網, but the *makase ami* relies on the tide to net the fish, and it therefore requires a careful reading of the tides.

The *kincha* was initially organized under the *funamoto* 船元制度 (Funamoto system), in which the *funamoto* 船元, the senior household and the owner of the fishing vessel, employed members of several *funago* 船子 households, or who worked on that vessel. However, at the end of the Meiji period, the younger members of the *funago* households who were excluded from this system of hereditary succession, began to resist. As a result, the *ami gumi* 網組, a cooperative association, was born, and eight *ami* groups were established. The *ami gumi* was centered on the *yado* 宿 (the buildings that housed young people), as the *yado* system had been an important support for the fishery. However, as differences in the catches among the eight *ami* emerged, less successful groups disappeared. Two groups dissolved in 1935 (Shōwa 10), while an additional group ended in 1940 (Shōwa 15). Two more groups disappeared in 1961 (Shōwa 36), leaving three groups remaining.

Around 1965 (Shōwa 40), the area of Zenisu began to be exploited for fishing by Kōzushima, which is four to five hours away by hot-bulb engine boat. It was formerly a place rich in *takabe* and *mejina* (smallscale blackfish), but today Zenisu is surrounded by recreational boats, making *kincha* impossible. The discovery of Zenisu became an opportunity for the three remaining groups to work jointly, resulting in the effective disappearance of the *Ami* cooperatives.

However, fishermen still participate in the *kuji matsuri* as three separate groups every 14th of January, maintaining the festival if only in formality. In the past, the caretakers of Monoiminanomikoto Shrine gathered in the night of the 13th to offer prayers with a 18-liter pot of *shōchū* 焼酎 (a distilled spirit) nearby. Afterwards, the people who would participate in the draw would come before the break of dawn and jump into the sea before the Naga, and purify themselves (*shiogori* 塩垢離). It is said that those who perform this act later than others will not have successful catches, so the fishermen begin loosening their belts as they descend the stone stairs from the shrine, and compete to jump into the sea first. The draw takes place after this, beginning with the *suwari kuji* 座り籤, which determines their seating order. After this, the main *kami kuji* 神籤 takes place. The draw determines the first fishing area for each fisherman, after which

8 Suzuki Tōjirō and other four residents made a letter to officer of Kōzushima requesting permission from the office to fish with nets within the coastal fishing ground. This letter is in the possession of Kōzushima fishery cooperative.

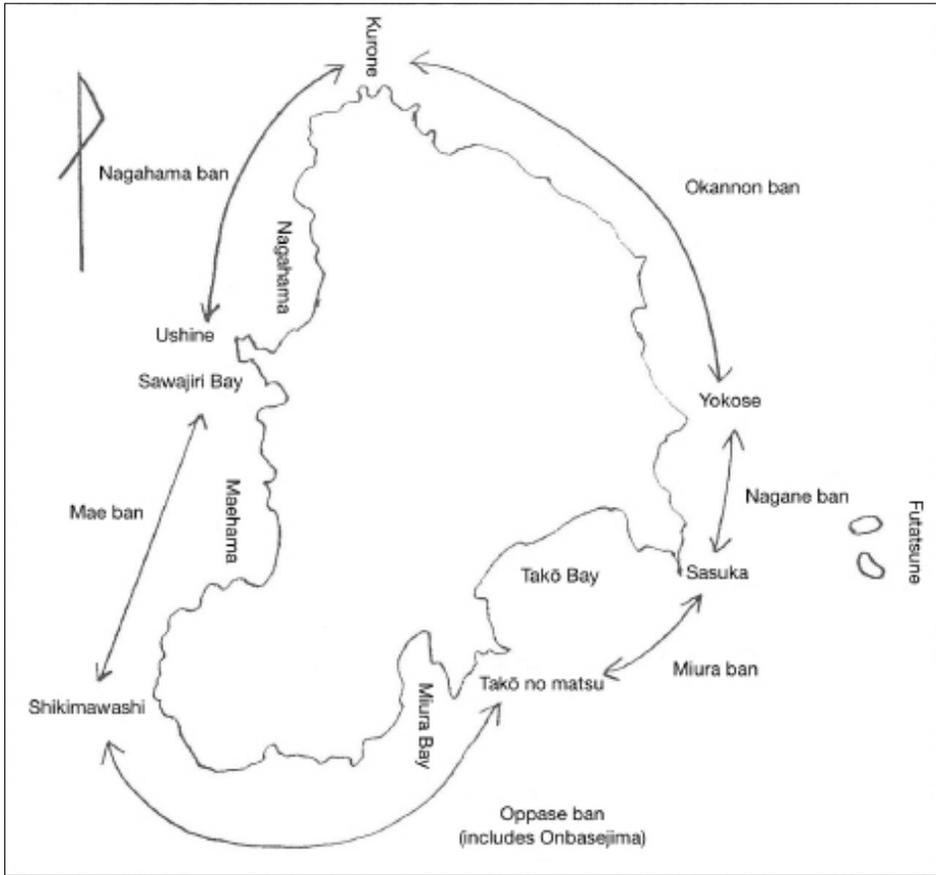


Figure 9. Ada divisions at Kōzushima (during period of 6 equal divisions)

the fishing areas rotate each day in a counterclockwise direction around Kōzushima. These fishing areas are called *ada* アダ, and the right to fish is called *ada no ban ken* (the right to an ada number). This is a right that can be used from the day of the *Kuji* Festival. In the past when there were eight groups, fishing areas were divided into eight equal areas around the coast. This was also the case for *kincha*.

When Kichirō Maeda 吉郎, 前田 (born in 1921) was active, there were six groups, named Matsumori *gumi* 松盛組, Matsunan *gumi* 松南組, Ishika *gumi* 石嘉組, Seigen *gumi* 清源組, Seishō *gumi* 清庄組, and Heishichi *gumi* 平七組. Most of these names are derived from the first character of the family name and the first letter of the *yagō* 屋号 (house name - also the name

of the first generation), which have been shortened from Matsue Sakari 松江盛, Matsumoto Mambei 松本南兵, Ishida Kaemon 石田嘉衛門, Shimizu Genpachi 清水源八, Shimizu Shōsuke 清水庄助, and Shimizu Shichihei 清水平七. These six groups divide the seas around Kōzushima into six areas – Oppase ban オツパセ (恩馳) 番, Mae ban 前番, Nagahama ban 長浜番, Okannon ban 御観音番, Nagane ban 長根番, and Miura ban 三浦番 – rotating among them each day.

In the *kuji* draw, *Oppase ban* corresponds to number 1. Oppase shima island is an important fishing area, which is also known as *Shima no Kura* 島の蔵. Its *ada* ranges from Tako no matsu to Tōdai shita (*Shikimawashi*) to account for days with strong winds when the island may not be accessible. The *Mae ban* is from Shikimawashi to Sawajiri Bay, while *Nagahama ban* is from Ushine to Kurone. *Okannon ban* reaches from Kurone to Yokose, *Nagane ban* from Yokose to Sasuka, and *Miura ban* from Sasuka back to Tako no matsu (fig. 9). For these areas, the draw does not simply divide the coast into six equal parts; the effect of sea conditions on potential catches is also taken into account. Fishermen rotate among these areas each day, and the first ban is considered to be the luckiest, although the conditions of any given area may differ from year to year.

The right to fish an area begins on the day of the lottery, and each group has the exclusive right to fish their area from dawn until dusk. In some cases, the violation of this rule resulted in the confiscation of the violator's catch. In the *kincha*, there had to be at least two vessels fishing for the right to the area to be recognized. In some cases, fishermen would be criticized for “not using their area”.⁹

In Itoman, Okinawa, where drive fishing employed a ‘round up’ method, fishermen were forced to move around to other places for work, but on Kōzushima, the custom of *Ada* helped to manage the use of fishing areas. When the surrounding seas are used as a single shared fishing area, competition among fishing groups intensifies resulting in the decline of stocks. For this reason, *ada* were specified for the fishing groups, and were rotated among them each day, beginning in 1901 or 1902 (Meiji 34 or 35). The determinations of *ada* by *kuji* draws were carried out under the name of the gods, to which nobody could object. This shows the important role played by the gods in the fishing villages.

9 As described on September 11, 2006 by Kichirō Maeda (born in 1921) of Kōzushima-mura, Tokyo.



Figure 10. *Hatahata* cut from a bundle of paper money

11 The *Hatahata* Festival of Oga

At a shrine on the Oga Peninsula of Akita Prefecture, a *kuji* draw is held in a ceremony to divine the catch at the beginning of the *hatahata* 八咫八咫 [鱒] (sandfish) fishery. The Oga Peninsula, which extends out into the Sea of Japan, is broadly divided into the Kitaiso and Minamiiso regions. In the Kitaiso region, the ceremony is held at Shinzan Shrine, while in Minamiiso, it takes place at Satake Shrine.

The *kuji* at Shinzan Shrine is used to select five days: the first day of the *hatahata* season, and four days of good catches in the fishing season. The fishing season is approximately one month long, from December 1 to 25. In the past, the *kuji* took place on the festival days of the shrines associated with each village. Thus, in Kitaura on the festival day of Kitaura Shrine of November 14, 3 representatives of the 15 lineages involved in *hatahata ami* participated in the lottery. In Aikawa, which has six lineages in the *hatahata ami*, a draw took place on the festival day of Uga Shrine on November 17. In Kitaura and Aikawa, fishing areas are given out first to the earliest groups. The draw is used to determine fishing areas by the fishing cooperative only for the first day. At each of Nomura and Yunojiri, there are three lineages in the *hatahata ami*.



Figure 11. *Omikuji no gi* at Satake Shrine (November 9, 2016)

The *hatahata* fishery is a dangerous one, because the catches are greatest in stormy conditions. In the past, accidents on the sea were frequent. In the mid-1950s, fishermen asked for those lost at sea to be memorialized, and to pray for safety and plentiful catches. This was the beginning of the current *hatahata* Festival of Shinzan Shrine.

However, during the early modern era, during a period of Buddhist-Shinto syncretism for Shinzan Shrine and Kōbōji Temple, an event called the *Hatahata Matsuri* 鱸祭り was held by the temple on the first day of the 10th month of the lunar calendar. According to the *Rokugun Saijiki*:

When the people of the fishing households of each village bring many small stones, the priest of the temple writes one character of the *Kōmyō Shingon*¹⁰ on each stone. The stones are placed before the altar and prayers are offered. The fishermen take these stones home, mix them with five types of grain (*gomoku*), and scatter them in the waters of their fishing area. This is an offering to wish for success in fishing, but is also to mourn the spirits of many tens of thousands of fish. (*Rokugun Saijiki* 1929, 453)

10 Buddhist Mantra of Light.

It was a festival in which not only those lost at sea but also fish such as the *hatahata* were memorialized. This festival was revived in the mid-1950s.¹¹ In the current *Hatahata Matsuri*, nearly all of the fishermen of the Kitaiso region gather at the shrine before fishing, when the head priest of Shinzan Shrine performs the draw to divine the first day of the season and the four days of rich catches. At the end of the ceremony during the *Naorai*, when the participants eat and drink the offerings, *hatahata* is also eaten. There is a saying that one fish eaten will become thousands of fish [caught].

In the Minamiiso region, a *kuji* draw for the *hatahata* fishery is held during the important Reitaisai Festival of Satake Shrine in Funagawa (November 9). According to accounts of the construction of Satake Shrine, when Satake Yoshinobu was transferred from Hitachi to Dewa, he also transferred Horyō Shrine, an event which became associated with a large catch of *hatahata*. This shrine was the predecessor of Satake Shrine, also commonly known as *hatahata jinja*, and it holds a *tantou* 短刀 (a dagger), measuring 9 *sun* 寸 7 *bu* 分 (about 29 cm). On the day of the draw, the ceremony begins by “putting life into” (*tamashii wo ireru*) the dagger.

Three *kuji* are then drawn by the chief priest. The priest then hooks *koyori* laid out on a *sanpō* platform using a bundle of paper money. This is the same as the *kuji* draw of Shinzan Shrine in Kitaiso. The shape of the bundle of money is meant to resemble the *hatahata* (fig. 10). The first draw divines the *ryōbi*, or the day on which the fish will approach. In Funagawa, the fishing season is from the first of December until the 7th of January, but the *kuji* themselves show only a number to indicate the days up to and including December 31, while the seven days of the season in January are indicated simply by the month, *Ichigatsu* 一月 (January). Seven *ryōbi* days are selected from these 38 *kuji*. After this, the *umi ku* draw is held, which determines the first fishing area to be used that season. Nine locations are written on *koyori*: (from the most distant to the nearest): *Oki no oki*, *oki no naka*, *oki no oka*, *naka no oki*, *naka no naka*, *naka no oka*, *oka no oki*, *oka no naka* and *oka no oka*. These locations are not precisely defined. Three *kuji* or locations are drawn from among these nine. Finally, the *Ryō no Kikkyō* is drawn to determine the fortune of the fishery: (from the best to the worst) *Tai-tai-ryō*, *tai-ryō*, *chū-ryō*, *shō-ryō*, and *mu*. *Tai-tai-ryō* and *mu* are represented by a single blank paper, to make a total of four *kuji*. This paper is called the *shiro fuda*. When the *shiro fuda* is drawn, it is the chief priest who decides whether it signifies *tai-tai-ryō* or *mu*.

Every year, on the day of the *kuji* draw, four or five executives representing the approximately 20 members of the *Gyogyō Dōshi Kai* (the fishermen’s association) for *hatahata* observe the draw, and note the results

11 On the simultaneous commemoration of fish and people lost at sea, see Kawashima 2013, 235-56.



Figure 12. Five fishing grounds more prominent were chose.
Uroko [△] and *Ichiyamajyō* [全] are the marks of the houses on duty

before departing (fig. 11). It is said that the *ryōbi* days divined in this way are accurate about 80% of the time. Today, the *naorai* is omitted, but the name of the *kuji* is written as *okami kuchi*, to invoke the meaning of ‘oracle’ through its similar pronunciation.

12 The *batori* of Shimokita

The *tara* (cod) fishery of Wakinosawa-mura (current Mutsu-shi) in Aomori Prefecture, peaked in 1989, involving up to 125 vessels placing some five hundred nets. Today, only 24 vessels remain active fishing 70 to 80 locations, as the number of fishermen and fish has decreased sharply. It is thought that the increase in scallop farming has blocked the seasonal migration of *tara*.

Nevertheless, the custom of *batori* at the beginning of the *tara* season continues to this day. *batori* is a set of strict rules that maintain the equality of fishing opportunities among fisherman in a shared fishing area. The *tara* fishing season begins at the beginning of December. The custom is for 24 *tara* fishing boats to depart in a convoy from the coastal *oka* area to the *oki*, or open waters. After lining up, a signal is given to open fishing, and each boat can freely head to the areas that they expect to be on the *taras'* route to place their nets.

Only four *tara* nets can be loaded each day, three of which are placed. But from the following day, boats are free to move where they wish. There are no *tara* boats in the main village of Wakinosawa, but in the West, a total of 23 vessels take part in the *batori*: four vessels in Seno, three in Araida,



Figure 13. The *Tairyō Kuji* at the Kure Fish Market in Nakatosa-chō (October 14, 2011)

seven in Kinami, three in Takoda, and six in Kusodomari. If the Shimokita peninsula is compared to an axe, then the point where the axe first touches the log corresponds to the location of Kusodomari.

In the past, the *batori* days differed between Wakinosawa and Kusodomari. In Kusodomari *batori* took place on November 24, while in Wakinosawa later in the year, holding it on December 1. On the day of the *batori*, people from one village went to help their friends and relatives in the other.

Moreover, the manner in which the *batori* was conducted used to differ between Wakinosawa and Kusodomari. In Kusodomari, the dropping of an anchor was enough to receive the right to a fishing area, while in Wakinosawa nets had to be loaded into a boat and placed. This difference remains today. In order to place one net, an area of approximately 500 square metres is needed.

In Kusodomari, fishermen of the village gather at the Ikishima Shrine on the auspicious *Taian* day, which occurs in the tenth day before the *batori*, and they participate in a *kuji* divination called *Omikiage*. The *kuji* is used to divine the location of that year's migration route, the success of the catch, and the wind conditions during the season. The *betto* (head) of the shrine waves *gohei* paper streamers, then he reads aloud what is written on the caught *koyori*.

The *gyodō* or path of the fish is a favourable place to lay *tara* nets. In Wakinosawa, the sea sections where *tara* nets are placed are divided along the axes of Oka, Naka, and Oki, and Ue, Naka, and Shita (from south to north), defining nine areas. Five are selected from these areas and their names written on paper, which are each posted near the *kamidana* (household shrine) in each home (fig. 12).

At the *batori*, these oracles are consulted, but each fisherman has their own store of experience and knows the routes of the *tara* well. Today, these oracles do not influence the fishermen very much. In addition, because this divination is performed at the shrines in each of the five villages, their results also differ. However, the form in which this kind of fortune telling is written, (*omikujī* - as 御神口, also pronounced *omikujī*), is the same at Satake Shrine in Oga. This indicates that in the past this was an oracle given through a person possessed by a god.

Kushibiki Risaburō of Kusodomari (born in 1929) has been a part of the *tara* fishery for many years. In the past, some 25,600 *tara* were caught during the more successful seasons, with small vessels catching even more than 5,000. Fishermen would make 5 million yen in just one *tara* season. Mr. Kushibiki remarks that “a person could live quietly for three years by fishing *tara* for just one”.

On the day before the *batori*, a rice cake with red bean jam known as *batori mochi* 場取り餅 would be made in the houses of *tara* fishermen and distributed among family and relatives in hopes of receiving a good fishing area. During the winter months when the weather is changeable, the fishermen of Kusodomari would judge that day’s weather early in the morning, and decide whether the *batori* would take place or not. This is because the start line is in the area of the Hokkai cape near Kusodomari. The order in which boats line up on the start line is not predetermined, but boats are penalized as *ihan sen* 違反船 if they begin moving before the signal to depart is given.

The first violating boat must bring 1 *to* (18 liters) of sake to the financial statement report meeting in May, while the second and third violating boats must bring 5 *sho* (9 liters) and 3 *sho* (5.4 liters), respectively.¹² This suggests that in the past there were boats that started early in spite of the penalty.

13 Conclusion

The previous chapters have described examples of ‘fishing with *kuji*’ in several places across Japan. The level of detail given has varied among the examples, but a sufficient overview has been presented.

The fact that these *kuji* derive from Shintō *kuji* rituals can be understood from the rituals described in the latter part of this paper. The initial motivation for these *kuji* draws may have been to pray at the beginning of the fishing season for a good catch, and to consult the oracle of the gods

¹² As described on December 9, 2008 by Risaburō Kushibiki (born in 1929) of Kusodomari, Wakinosawa-mura, Mutsu-shi, Aomori Prefecture.

to discern the best days and locations to fish. This is evident from the use of the kanji 御神口 to depict the word *omikuji* 御神籤 (fortune, lottery). The *Hama kudari* of Iwachi in Izu, and the *Shiogori* ritual performed prior to the draw in Kōzushima similarly show the practice to be a Shintō one.

However, the Iwachi *kuji* indicates that, in addition to the divination of days of good fishing, *kuji* draws can also be used to maintain the spatial equality of access to opportunities for fishing in coastal fisheries, because it specifies positions to place *bora ami* or draw troll nets. In contrast, the ambiguous expression '*tairyō suru hi*' 大漁する日 (days of plentiful catches) used in the *katsuo* fishery *kuji* draw is motivated by the fact that this fishery takes place in large areas on the open sea.

This spatial equality of access eventually was separated from Shintō ritual, and became used to determine each individual's fishing area before the start of the fishing season. The examples from the Izu peninsula presented in the first half of this paper are exemplars of this. Moreover, equal access to fishing opportunities can also be distributed across time; that is the case when fishing areas are rotated daily. This produced complex practices in each place, that in some cases have been codified in regulations.

The fairness of *kuji* draws themselves was also refined. In general, this has been achieved through the *za kuji* which determines the order in which the *kuji* will be subsequently drawn. However, in other cases there are customs that seek to ensure the fairness of the draw, as in the *Shiro uo* lottery case of Ōdagawa.

Whether in group fishing or individual fishing, the diversity of how fishing areas are determined can be regarded through *kuji* draws.

The pursuit of fairness through *kuji* is not just related to coastal fisheries and farm fishing, but it may be found in many fisheries. For instance, in the port of Kure in Nakatosachō in Kōchi Prefecture, the order in which boats unload their catches to market is determined by *kuji*, and is called *tairō kuji*. The boats are actually all unloaded simultaneously, meaning that the *kuji* does not aim to reduce confusion at the market. However, the first boat to unload will always end up selling its fish at a lower price at auction, because its catch cannot be compared with others. The person who draws the first position can place part of their catch up for auction first, but is also given the right to another spot in the auction order. For example, a boat with a catch of 10 tons may divide it into two five-ton amounts, and put them up for auction separately. This method is also used for pole-fished *katsuo* at the ports of Kesenuma in Miyagi Prefecture, and Katsuura in Chiba Prefecture. It is said that when there are many boats unloading at the port, the fourth and fifth boats receive the best prices, while others sell

for cheaper.¹³ The box used for the *Tairyō Kuji* at the fish market in Kure is a hollowed-out section of bamboo 27 cm long with a diameter of 7.5 cm (fig. 13). The *kuji* themselves are lacquered chopsticks whose heads have been sanded, and numbers written on. At Setoura in Ashibe-chō, the lottery is called *Ebisu Mukae* 蛭子迎え; it requires that a junior fisherman whose parents are both healthy and whose home has not met impurity over the past year draws the *ban kuji* 番籤 and *tō kuji* 当籤. The two people who are thus selected must skin dive into the sea and raise a divine stone by the time of *ushimitsudoki* (2:00-2:30 a.m.) at night.

The worlds that become visible through the custom of *kuji* in coastal fisheries not only show the characteristics of fishery in different places, but, behind the function of ensuring fairness, they reveal the difficult conditions of fishery, in which people are at the mercy of nature.

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