

Marriage Behavior in Preindustrial Northeastern Japanese Villages: An Analysis Using Marital Status Multistate Life Tables

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This study examines, from life course perspective, marriage behavior of men and women living in preindustrial northeastern Japanese villages. Using micro-level panel data drawn from the local population registers called *ninbetsu-aratame-cho* in two farming villages covering the 154 years from 1716 to 1870, we construct marital status multistate life tables. Enumerated annually based on the unit of household with only a small number of years missing, the population registers used by this study not only provide information on basic demographic characteristics such as sex, age, and relationship to household head, but also facilitate construction of data on marital status and demographic events including marriage and marital disruption as well as birth and death. In this paper, we first offer an overview of topography and population trends of the two study villages, followed by explanations of the main features of their population registers. We next delineate problems faced and ingenuity devised in constructing the micro-level panel data for our multistate life table analysis of marriage behavior of men and women in the villages under study. We then explain in a concise manner the processes of estimating the probabilities of transitions among marital statuses and the probabilities of dying by marital status. Finally, we present the results of our multistate life table analyses of marriage behavior of men and women in preindustrial northeastern Japanese villages and discuss their implications from life course perspective.

Keywords: marriage behavior, life course, marital status multistate life table, local population registers in preindustrial Japan, preindustrial northeastern Japanese villages