The Life of a Village Headman's Son in the Closing Years of
Tokugawa Regime

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The life of a boy, named Shintaro Fukutomi, who was born in a village called Fukumitsu Shimomura in Iwami (Shimane Prefecture) in 1847 and died of disease in 1866 shows a typical life of a village headman's son in the last years of Edo bakufu. He played, by no means, any significant social role in the transition period. He was just an ordinary person who died young in the expectation of inheriting a large acquaintance and a vast wealth cultivated by his grandfather, who had been a village headman under the local supervisor from the Tokugawa regime and an influential man who ran a brewery and a large estate. The life of this ordinary man, however, gives us one of the very rare examples of what it was like to be a child about three generations ago. His life also indicates one of the early examples of youth, many of whom later in the pre-modern days lived in-between the village society and the metropolitan world.