A Study on Miyaoi's "Shugibo" on the Record of Gifts—the Rite of Passage and the Child-rearing Consciousness of the Farmers' Families in Early Modern Japan.

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Studies on the rite of passage have been one of popular themes which cultural anthropologists and folklorists deal with.

The historical approach, however, which studies the changes of the rite of passage chronologically, is very few.

The subject of this study is "Shugibo (1799—1845)" or the Record of Gifts, which was written as a child-rearing record by Yasumasa Miyaoi, and his son Sadao, who were local officials in Matsuzawa village Katori-Gun Shimohusa (now Chiba prefecture). In "Shugibo" the Miyaois recorded the gifts which their neighbors and relatives presented to their children at the time of their rites of passage. It was the custom to accurately record the gifts given to them, because the parents had to give equally valuable gifts to their neighbors' and relatives' children. That is the reason why I analysed the "Shugibo", in order to see the human relations concerning their children's rite of passage.

Compared with another area at the same time, there are some obvious differences concerning the rite of passage. In one case, the first year's birth celebration seems to be most important. In the other cases, the boy's adulthood celebration, at age 15, and the girls' obi or sash celebration, at age 7, seem to be more important. The former, emphasized the age of the baby, the latter, the celebration of adulthood. This difference is related to the difference in the attitudes of child-rearing. The custom of Matsuzawa seems to be older. And the differences how to celebrate, between the eldest son and the other children, as well as boys and girls, represent the character of people's consciousness toward child-rearing.