



Gender Existence in Japanese Bushu Kanji

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ABSTRACT: The term gender refers to differences in the character of men and women based on socio-cultural construction, which is related to their nature, status, position, and role in society. Gender is a human perspective or perception of women or men that is not based on natural biological sex differences. This research aims to describe the existence of gender in the female bushu kanji by looking for the interpretation of the kanji, and then explaining it descriptively. The research approach used in this research is a qualitative approach with the type of research being descriptive research with a population of all kanji that have the kanji for women, with a sample of kanji that have the bushu kanji for women. The results of the research show that the kanji have the bushu kanji for women to interpret the nature of women in society. The gender existence seen in the female bushu kanji is divided into: women have attributes; women have social status in both the imperial environment, ordinary society, and the family; women as drivers; and, women and their vices.

KEYWORDS: bushu onna, gender existence, kanji interpretation.

INTRODUCTION

The Gender terms have been widely discussed and viewed as people's behavior based on their task in specifics. Kessler and McKenna (Keuning & de Ruuter, 1988) explained Gender definition as psychological, cultural, and social aspects of both men and women. The equality between men and women's gender issues and their problems has been questioned and spread over the world, especially in Japan. In 2009, Japan was criticized by the United Nations and mentioned in the CEDAW (*The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*) document, stating that there is a high discrepancy between men's and women's gender in Japan (Rusli & Pujiwioto, 2016); (Rudiono, 2022). According to Jahar (Hasanah, 2013) Gender violence against women is encouraged by discriminative laws and norms to create exclusion, so it ruined education, economics, and women's freedom. Gender problems in Japanese can be found in domestic life. The ideology, not only put the men as the head of household, but also the highest position at home. However, apart from existing gender issues, there is a bunch of its existence that describes women's identities in Japanese Kanji.

By learning Kanji letters, learners would study *Bushu*. *Bushu* terms are a part of Kanji Letters to determine the basis of its classification (BADRIYAH, 2016)). Nelson, (Sastria, 2016) noted *bushu* can be determined as 'characters. Besides as a key to disclosing and comprehending the core sense of Kanji in general, it becomes a method for Japanese, students or learners to breakthrough through Kanji Kanwa Jiten, either its pronunciation or meaning.

Some of the research in women's Bushu, like Chitarilda's work (2011) entitled "Female Identity in Onna Kanji". The result showed that Onna Kanji means smooth and supple, so the letter of Onna Kanji prefers smooth and it indicates Japanese women's features as female identity clearly, due to their characteristics in general. Furthermore, Astari Research (2014) entitled "*The Analysis of Kanji Onna Bushu in 'Jukugo' And Its Kanji (Morphologies - Semantics Study)*" concluded that approximately 29 kanji letters have meanings related to women if Kanji Onna Bushu put in the beginning, while 4 letters on the contrary. Meanwhile, Kanji letter which is put at the end of Kanji Onna Bushu, at least 7 kanji have meanings related to women, while 2 letters are on the contrary (Dzakwan et al., n.d.).

Aswin and Soepardjo (Atabik, 2014) to their work entitled "The Relation Between Bushu 女 features with Kanji in Ero Manga Sensei Novel by Fushimi Tsukasa". The research disclosed Kanji letters with Bushu features 女 which possessed the women's activities for a long time ago, applying the simplified line of its Kanji letter to be used now. The form of a simplified line to this kanji or its derivation is *naritachi*. Moreover, kanji *bushu* features having 2 (two) relation types, namely polysemy, and



hyponymy. Kanji with polysemy has an indirect relation to 女 kanji which means women. Otherwise, Kanji with hyponymy has a direct relation to 女 Kanji. Furthermore, Putri (Mauludyani et al., 2021) in her research entitled “The Interpretation of Kanji Symbolics Meaning in *Bushu Koromo Hen* and *Onna Hen*” pointed out that 「衤」 Bushu means ‘Clothes’ and 「女」 Bushu refers to ‘Women’ were from China and brought to Japan. This form of Bushu is called *Shokei Moji*. It is a Kanji style of writing by imitating its original forms. Still, the meaning of 「衣/衤」 and 「女」 Bushu with other kanji forms are not related, both element and new meanings. Then, the meaning is only produced in one of its forming features.

Different from the research mentioned above, this research aims to disclose the existence of Women’s gender by using Kanji Bushu letters with Women’s features.

THE METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this research was a Qualitative-Descriptive method. The data were not collected by numbers but presented based on presentation, field notes, personal documents, common notes, memos,s, and other official documents, so it fulfilled the objective of the research and represented the empirical reality behind the phenomenon in detail, deep and clear (Moleong, 2006). The population is all the Women’s kanji letters in Nelson’s Kanji Dictionary (Neno Rizkianto, 2018), meanwhile, the sample in this research is Women’s Bushu Kanji.

The Collection of the Data was a complete participative Observation (*complete participation*), so the writer was fully involved in collecting the data sources. Next, the documentation by using notes, transcripts, books, newspapers, and magazines related to research problems. Also, the referring documents involved kanji letters with Women’s Bushu which was interpreted by Henshall’s Book (Chanthinok et al., 2015) in this research. Apart from those methods above, there was a triangulation, ie. combined some of the existing data and its sources. Moreover, the writer applied different data collection to achieve the data from the same sources. The writer also implemented the participative observation and documentation to obtain the same source of data simultaneously.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

According to the data, Kanji letters have been collected, classified, and interpreted based on the basic letters of Women’s Bushu. This interpretation needs to find out, classify, and then examine the Women’s gender existence in Japanese based on their Bushu Kanji which have been collected.

The table shows the Kanji letters and their meanings which were collected and interpreted as follows:

Table 1. Kanji Interpretation with Women’s Bushu

No	Kanji	Original	Pronunciation	Pictographic	Meaning
1	女	女	Onna	Someone/somebody wears a long dress and open arms	Woman
2	奴	女 + 又	Yakko	Woman with hands behind	Slave/Servant
3	妄	亡 + 女	Mida-ri	Bad luck woman/misfortunes	Sloopy
4	妁	女 + 勺	Shaku	A woman carries a ladle	Mediator
5	妃	女 + 己	Kisaki	A woman is loved/worshipped by the man	Queen
6	如	女 + 口	Jo	Woman speaks politely	Alike/As if
7	奸	女 + 王	Kan	A woman owns a weapon	Crime



No	Kanji	Original	Pronunciation	Pictographic	Meaning
8	好	女 + 子	Su-ki	A woman carries a baby	Like
9	妥	女 + 爪	Da	Woman raises hands	Peace
10	姉	女 + 市	Ane	A woman goes to the market	Sister
11	妬	女 + 石	Neta- mashii	A woman holds a stone	Jealous/Envy
12	妣	女 + 比	Hi	Incomparable Woman	Mother
13	妓	女 + 支	Gi	A branch woman/talented woman	A Courtesan
14	妍	女 + 开	Ken	20 years old woman/High level	Beauty
15	妨	女 + 方	Samata- geru	A Woman who loses the way	Disturbing/ Attracting
16	妊	女 + 壬	Hara-mu	A woman with a diamond	Pregnant
17	妖	女 + 夭	You	A woman who leans forward	Seducing/Disaster
18	妙	女 + 少	Myou	A potential woman	Smooth/Mysterious
19	妾	女 + 立	Shou	A woman stands on another woman	Mistress
20	委	女 + 禾	I	A woman grows rice	Entrusting/Dedication
21	姆	女 + 母	Bo	A mother	Wet Nurse
22	姑	女 + 古	Shuuto	The older woman	Mother-in-law
23	姐	女 + 且	So	A woman spoils her eyes	Older sister/maid
24	姓	女 + 生	Sei	A living woman	Family's name
25	妹	女 + 未	Imouto	Immature girls	Younger sister
26	妻	女 + 笄	Tsuma	A woman holds broom	Wife
27	始	女 + 台	Haji-meru	A woman stands in a high place/podium	Beginning
28	威	女 + 戈	I	A woman holds a spear	Dignity/Intimidating
29	娜	女 + 那	Da	A woman with disheveled hairs	Elegant
30	姪	女 + 至	Mei	The archery woman	Niece
31	姥	女 + 老	Uba	A hoar woman	An old woman
32	姻	女 + 因	In	A woman sleeps with someone (husband)	Marriage Relationship



No	Kanji	Original	Pronunciation	Pictographic	Meaning
33	姿	女 + 次	Sugata	The next woman	Figure
34	姫	女 + 臣	Hime	A little girl is cared by the servant	The Princess Royal
35	姦	女 + 女	Kashima-shii	3 girls assembled	Noisy
36	娩	女 + 免	Ben	A woman is always to set free of	Giving Birth
37	娠	女 + 辰	Shin	A woman raises a little dragon	Pregnancy
38	娟	女 + 月	Ken	A woman like a moon	Lovely face
39	娑	女 + 沙	Sha	A woman plays with sands	Dancing
40	娘	女 + 良	Musume	A kind woman	Daughter
41	娛	女 + 吳	Go	Given by a woman	Pleasure/Joyful
42	婪	女 + 木	Ran	A woman with 2 trees	Ambition
43	婁	女 + 畫	Rou	A woman holds ropes/threads	Bonding
44	娶	女 + 取	Meto-ru	Choosing a woman	Marrying a woman
45	媿	女 + 取	Shu	A chosen woman	A woman's marriage
46	嫁	女 + 家	Yome	Woman at home	A bride
47	婉	女 + 宛	En	A twisting woman	Elegant
48	婆	女 + 波	Ba	A wavy hair woman	Grandmother/Older woman
49	媚	女 + 昌	Shou	A prettifying girl	Harlot
50	婚	女 + 昏	Kon	A woman in twilight	Marriage
51	婦	女 + 帚	Fu	A woman holds a broom	Wife/Woman
52	嫂	女 + 叟	Aniyome	The older woman	Sister-in-law
53	嫻	女 + 弱	Jou	A twisting woman	Flexure
54	嫉	女 + 疾	Sone-mu	A hurt woman	Jealous/Envy
55	媛	女 + 爰	En	An elegant woman	The Princess
56	媚	女 + 眉	Ko-biru	A bushy eyebrows woman	The vamp
57	媒	女 + 某	Nakadachi	A woman sits on a fruit trees	Intermediary
58	媽	女 + 馬	Bo	A woman rides a horse	A mother



No	Kanji	Original	Pronunciation	Pictographic	Meaning
59	媪	女 + 媪	Ou	A woman in warmth	Grandmother/An older woman
60	嫌	女 + 兼	Kira-i	A woman feels dissatisfied	Hate/Dislike
61	嬉	女 + 喜	Ure-shii	A Happy woman	Cheerful
62	嫡	女 + 商	Chaku	A primary Woman	A legal wife
63	孃	女 + 襄	Jou	A woman reaches the highest place	A young girl
64	娛	女 + 吳	Go	A spoken woman	Joyful
65	嬖	女 + 2男	Nabu-ru	A woman flanked by two men	Seducing
66	孀	女 + 霜	yamome	A frozen woman	A widow

By analyzing Women’s Bushu Kanji interpretation above, disclosed Women’s existence in society since Kanji Era in China History a long time ago brought into Japan and fulfilled compulsory Letters.

These are Women’s gender existences in society based on their Previous analysis Bushu Kanji:

1. Women in their attributes

Following *bushu* kanji 女 (*onna*) analysis interpretation, it has shown that there are identical attributes in women. Those refer to beauty, mildness, and their identities. Some of the appropriate Kanji for those attributes are 妍 (*ken*), 妙 (*myou*), 娜 (*da*), 娟 (*ken*), 婉 (*en*), 妊 (*hara-mu*), etc.

2. Women in their social status

In society, their social status is classified into 3 (three) classes, namely:

- a. Social status in royal/Empire class. The Appropriate Kanji are 妃 (*kisaki*) dan 姬 (*hime*) kanji.
- b. Social status in common society. Kanji are pointed out to this status, namely 奴 (*yakko*), 妓 (*gi*), 娼 (*shou*), 婆 (*ba*), and 媚 (*ko-biru*) kanji. These kanji represent women’s status in society.
- c. Social Status in Family. In accordance with *bushu* kanji analysis above, their appropriate kanji are 姉 (*ane*), 妣 (*hi*), 姆 (*bo*), 姑 (*shuuto*), 妹 (*imouto*), 妻 (*tsuma*), 姪 (*mei*), 婦 (*fu*), 嫂 (*aniyome*), 嫡 (*chaku*), and 孀 (*yamome*) kanji.

3. Women as a motivator/human force

Based on *bushu* kanji 女 (*onna*) classification, it has been discovered that women could be motivators/human forces, regarding their activities. Their existence and influences in life change greatly. Its kanji refer to 妁 (*shaku*), 妥 (*da*), 始 (*haji-meru*), 姿 (*sugata*), 娶 (*meto-ru*), kanji 媿 (*shu*), and 媒 (*nakadachi*) kanji.

4. Women in disrepute/bad manners

Kanji Bushu with nasty/bad meaning emphasized Women's influence causing havoc. Kanji like 奸 (*kan*), 妄 (*mida-ri*), 妬 (*netamashii*), 妨 (*samata-geru*), 威, (i), 妖 (*you*), 姦 (*Kashima-shii*), 嫉 (*sone-mu*), and 嫌 (*kira-i*) kanji showed Women in bad manners.

CONCLUSION

In under analyze and discussion of gender existence in Women’s Bushu Kanji, we sum up the conclusion that many of women’s kanji are modified to Bushu and combined with other kanji by creating lexicons, revealing women’s roles and their existence in life.



Thus, the existence of women's gender in regards to their Bushu kanji analysis is Their attributes; social status (Royal/Empire class, common class, and family); activities as human forces; and their disrepute/bad manners.

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