Chapter 2

Japanese Traditional Industries and Archives: The Case of Toraya Confectionery

Naomi Aoki
Toraya

Translated by Sarah Ann Munton

Leveraging Corporate Assets: New Global Directions for Business Archives. (http://www.shibusawa.or.jp/english/center/network/01_icasbl/Tokyo/leveraging.html) April 2012.

English translation of:
Aoki, Naomi. "Nihon ni okeru Dento Sangyo to Akaibuzu: Toraya wo Chushin ni," in *Sekai no Bijinesu Akaibuzu: Kigyo Kachi no Gensen*. Resource Center for the History of Entrepreneurship, Shibusawa Eiichi Memorial Foundation, comps. Tokyo: Nichigai Associates, Inc. 2012.

April, 2012

Naomi Aoki

Research Director,
Toraya Archives

Naomi Aoki was born in 1954. He worked for the Kokubunji City Archives and as a Research Assistant in the Faculty of Letters at Rissho University before joining Toraya Confectionery in 1989. He is currently the Research Director of the Toraya Archives and has written numerous works including “Kinsei Kyoto Shinise Shoka ni okeru Keiei no Keisho to Yuisho” (Succession and History of Management in Long-established Mercantile Houses in Edo period Kyoto), *Zusetsu Wagashi no Konjaku* (An Illustrated History of Japanese Confectionery), and *Bakumatsu Tanshin Funin Kakyu Bushi no Shokunikki* (Late Tokugawa Period Dietary Journals of Junior Samurai Transferred from their Families).

Toraya Confectionery (Japan)

Toraya Confectionery was established in the late Muromachi period (1333-1573) in Kyoto and received an imperial order to make confectionery for the Imperial household during the reign of Emperor Go-Yozei (1586-1611). In 1869, when the imperial capital was transferred to Tokyo, Toraya opened a shop in Tokyo in addition to the Kyoto shop. Nowadays the head office is located in Akasaka, Tokyo and there are factories in Tokyo, Gotemba, and Kyoto as well as 76 retail shops, including one in Paris.

Toraya holds approximately 1100 historical documents from the Edo period (1600-1867), documents dating from the Meiji (1868-1912), Taisho (1912-1926), and early Showa periods (1926-1989), and modern documents from after Toraya’s incorporation as a public company in 1947. In addition to large collections of historical artifacts such as wooden molds and other confectionery tools, Toraya also collects ancient works of literature and other documents as reference data.

These historical records are conserved in the Toraya Bunko (Toraya Archives), established in 1973. In addition to conducting research on Toraya and the culture of Japanese confectionery, the main work of the Toraya Archives is to hold annual or bi-annual exhibitions related to Japanese confectionery and publish an annual journal with academic articles on Japanese confectionery. The Toraya Archives also collects documents and records related to the contemporary management of Toraya Confectionery and is dedicated to the provision of information related to its collections. This information is not limited to the over 3,000 varieties of confectionery Toraya has produced over its long history, but also includes information on new products. The Archives provides information internally within Toraya Confectionery to the public relations, sales, and other departments in addition to responding to over 1,000 in-house and external inquiries annually. Internally, the Archives also provides a chronology of the work accomplished by each department every month and assists with training conducted by the personnel and sales departments.

Image 1 – Entrance of Toraya Bunko,
Toraya Confectionery Headquarters

Japanese Traditional Industries and Archives: The Case of Toraya Confectionery[1]

Naomi Aoki
Research Director, Toraya Archives

Introduction

It is still uncommon for companies in Japan to actively use archives in management.[2] Traditional Japanese industries, such as sake brewers and confectionery makers, however, are relatively well-suited to utilizing archives. One reason for this is that many companies in these traditional industries have long histories and already see their corporate "history" as a managerial resource.

In this article I would like to use Toraya Confectionery Co., Ltd. as a case study to illustrate the use of archives by traditional Japanese industries. Since archives vary greatly depending on the size, industry, business conditions and, above all, the culture and customs of the company in question, however, I ask you to remember that this is just one example among many.

1. Overview of Toraya Confectionery

Toraya was established in Kyoto in the 16th century[3] by the Kurokawa family and has been making and selling Japanese confectionery every since. During the reign of Emperor Go-Yozei (1586-1611), Toraya received an order to provide sweets to the imperial household, a tradition that continues to be upheld today. In 1869 the imperial capital was moved from Kyoto to Tokyo and, while Toraya's Kyoto shop remained open, the owner's brother was dispatched to Tokyo to open a shop and continue serving the imperial family. Incidentally, during the Edo period (1600-1867) roughly half of Toraya's sales were to the imperial palace and the rest divided among nobles, officials in Kyoto, shogunal officials, daimyo (feudal lords), and upper-class merchants.

---

[1] This article is an edited and updated version of presentations by Naomi Aoki including at the international symposium "The Value of Business Archives: Their Use by Japanese Companies and New Global Trends" on Wednesday, May 11, 2011. The text includes personal opinions of the author that do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the organization as a whole.

[2] It has been common in Japan for business archives to be seen largely in terms of their role in the compilation of *shashi*, or company histories. In recent years, however, there has been a gradual increase in discussions of business archives as a managerial resource or their role in corporate social responsibility.

[3] Although there exists no document that definitively states the company's year of establishment, given the timing of the start of imperial orders, it is presumed the company began operations in the 1520s. (see Note 5 in *Toraya no Goseiki: Dento to Kakushin no Keiei*. Tsushihen. Tokyo: Toraya, 2003.)

Tokyo underwent a considerable population decrease early in the Meiji period (1868-1912) as the Tokugawa family (the shogun) and their retainers, along with the daimyo and their retainers, left the city. In short, the samurai class, the customers of high-quality confectioneries, left Tokyo in large numbers. In 1869 Tokyo's representative confectioneries – Suzuki Echigo and Kanazawa Tango[4] – closed. It was against this backdrop that, in the very same year, Toraya opened their new Tokyo shop. Ten years later Toraya's owner moved from Kyoto to Tokyo although the Kyoto shop continued operations.

The two shop system continued until the 1940s. After WWII Toraya increased the number of direct-sale shops and then, in 1962, began opening outlets in department stores. Today Toraya operates a total of 76 retail shops including the Toraya Tea Room and shop in Paris.[5] The company has its head office in Akasaka in Tokyo's Minato-ku and factories in Tokyo, Gotemba (Shizuoka prefecture), and Kyoto. Sales are around 18 billion yen and, as of April 2011, the company employed a total of 974 people.

2. About the Toraya Archives

The Toraya Archives was established in 1973 with the goal of preserving Toraya's artifacts and historical documents, collecting materials related to Japanese confectionery, and conducting research on related topics. The collections are divided into the following general categories: Edo period administrative records known as the *Toraya Kurokawa-ke monjo* (Toraya Kurokawa family Collection, named after the founder); administrative records from between the beginning of the Meiji period and the incorporation of the company in 1947; and business records dating from incorporation to the present day. In addition, the Archives also hold roughly 3000 volumes of old family registers, 500 confectionery tools, 3000 wooden molds, and books and journals for research use. The Archives is in charge of compiling *shashi* (company histories) as well as continuously collecting and caring for historical materials.[6] Today the Archives are located in the company's head office. The Archives previously housed the company's fine arts collection but archival facilities have been built in

[4] Suzuki Echigo was a shop famous for *yokan*, a sweet bean jelly. Kanazawa Tango prepared sweets for the shogunate and in 1755 had assets amounting to 11,566 *ryo*, equivalent in today's currency to approximately 300,000 – 400,000 yen. It is unclear what happened to other confectioneries to the shogunate, such as Okubo Monto, Utsunomiya Takumi, and Toraya Oribe, after the Meiji Restoration.
[5] In addition the Group also manages Toraya Café (three shops), and Toraya Kobo (one shop).
[6] In November 2003 the Toraya Archives published *Toraya no Goseiki: Dento to Kakushin no Keiei* (*Five Centuries of Toraya: Managing Tradition and Innovation*). Tsushihen (General history volume) / Shiryo-hen (Historical document volume) Copies have been donated to the prefectural libraries of all Japanese prefectures as well as some universities. The main text of the general history volume can also be viewed on the DNP Nenshi Center website *Shashi no mori* (a digital database of company histories).

Kyoto and both management of the collection and the collections themselves are in the process of being moved to the company's cultural affairs department in Kyoto.

The main activities of the Archives are: conducting research on Japanese confectionery culture,[7] holding exhibitions related to Japanese confectionery once or twice a year,[8] editing and publishing the journal *Wagashi*,[9] and organizing and caring for new records and historical documents. The Archives is also involved in other activities I will touch on later, including responding to over 1400 in-house and external inquiries annually.[10] The base of all of these activities is, of course, the collections that make up the Archives.

The Archives employs seven staff members. The managing director is a management position while the others, including one contract employee, are research positions.

3. Use of the Archives and Historical Materials

I would like to share an example of how Toraya uses its archives and historical documents as a managerial tool. Before I do so, however, I would like to clarify my use of terminology. For convenience I use the term "archives" to refer to inactive records including documents and books, and the term "historical materials" to refer to a wide variety of materials including old books and artifacts such as confectionery tools and containers.

Image 2 shows the Toraya brand shopping bag. The design for this bag came from historical materials once used by Toraya. In the Edo period, high-quality sweets were sold in large layered boxes known as *seiro*.[11] Some *seiro* were even made with gorgeous decorations of mother-of-pearl.

March 3rd is *Joshi no sekku*, or the Dolls' Festival (*hina matsuri*), a day to celebrate and pray for the healthy growth of girls. Clams and other foods are eaten as a part of special meals and special sweets such as *kusa mochi* (rice cakes made with *yomogi* or Japanese mugwort) and *hishi mochi* (multi-layered and multi-colored rhomboid-shaped rice cakes) are made. A variety of beautiful sweets are also made in miniature. All of these sweets became known as *hina-gashi* (sweets for the Dolls' Festival) and had their own special *seiro* cases. The Toraya *hina-seiro* (*seiro* for *hina-gashi*) in image 4 is one of 20 *seiro* made in 1776. Each

[7] Food science research is carried out in the Toraya Research Institute in Gotemba.
[8] The exhibition hall (Toraya Gallery) is roughly 90m^2. Visitor numbers vary depending on the exhibition but there are normally around five thousand visitors per month.
[9] *Wagashi* is a journal on Japanese confectionery containing academic articles and reprints of historical documents. The 18th edition (146 pages) was published in March 2011.
[10] In addition to inquiries made directly to the Toraya Archives, this number includes inquiries passed on to the archives from other departments. In 2010 there was a total of 1452 inquires (773 in-house, 679 from outside). External inquiries refer to those from customers, mass media, researchers, students, and others.
[11] Also known as *hokai*.

case had five levels, measured 18.3 centimeters tall, and would have been filled with *hina-gashi* before being delivered to the customer. The *hina-seiro* in image 4 also includes an outer box on which is written the number “503.” It is unclear, however, whether this was a serial number encompassing all *seiro* or if it was just for the *hina-seiro*. As “*tora*” means tiger, the *seiro* is decorated with a tiger motif and the same motif appears on the modern Toraya paper shopping bag. Introduced in 1970, the paper bag re-uses the historical design of the sweet-carrying *hina-seiro*.

Image 5 shows another use of the design, a paper recreation of the *hina-seiro* now sold by Toraya for the Girls’ Festival. The sweets in the paper *seiro* are smaller than usual sweets as the word *hina* also means “small” or “cute.” There are Edo period sales records that list the exact size of the diminutive sweets (image 6). The paper *hina-seiro* has been sold by Toraya since 1978 and, combined with the paper bag, provides an example of how one historical artifact has been used by Toraya to create both a product and a Toraya logo.

Image 2 – Tiger-emblazoned Toraya shopping bag

Image 3 – Mother-of-pearl *seiro* with designs of bamboo and tigers (circa1698)

Image 4 – Lacquer *hina-seiro* (1776)

Image 5 – Modern paper recreation of the *hina-seiro*

Image 6 – *Go-Yozei-in sama Miyoyori Goyo Shoshiki Kakinuki-tome*
(Register of Imperial Orders from Emperor Go-Yozei Onwards)
The left page is a record of *hina-gashi* ordered in the third month of 1779.
The end of the page has an illustration showing the size of the sweets.

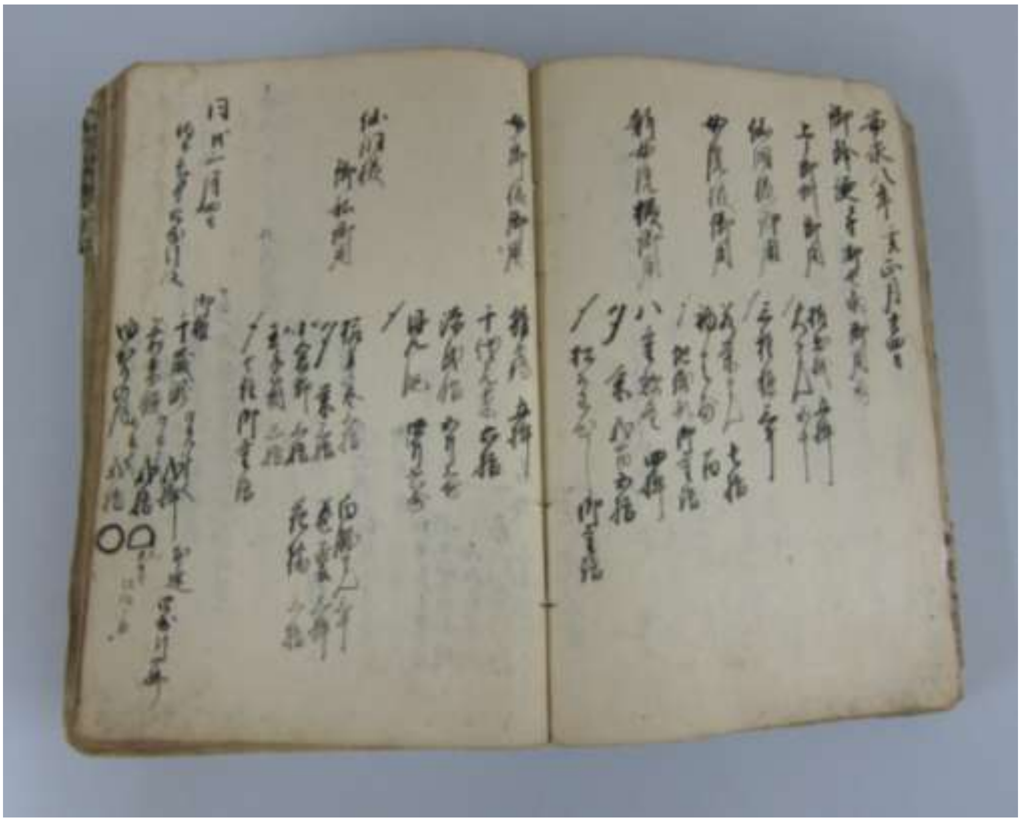

Image 7 – *Ouchi-cho* (Palace Account Book) 1837
Record of *hina-gashi* delivered to the Imperial Palace.

4. Confectionery Sample Books – The Archival History of Japanese Confectionery

Toraya holds roughly 1100 Edo period historical records (the Toraya Kurokawa family Collection),[12] a collection including important documents about the history of Japanese food culture. The long history of Japanese confectionery dates back to the prehistoric Jomon period (10000-400 BC). It was in the late 17th century in Kyoto, however, that the current shape of traditional Japanese confectionery was largely set. At that time Kyoto was the center of authority, tradition, religious life, industrial technology, and finance; and was also home to cultural salons made up of court nobles, samurai, and upper class merchants. In the midst of the vibrant culture of the late 17th century, confectioneries were refined and their shapes developed in cultural salons and through the tea ceremony. Some sweets were given elegant names known as *kamei* that came from classical poetry collections such as the 10th century *Kokin Waka-shu* (Collection of Japanese Poems of Ancient and Modern Times). The new designs and addition of special names were a success for Japanese confectionery.[13]

Japanese confectionery is said to be an art for all five senses. You listen to the elegant poetic name with your ears (hearing), appreciate the physical appearance with your eyes (sight), enjoy the delicate fragrance of the adzuki beans and other ingredients (smell), feel the texture when you cut it and when you put it in your mouth (touch), and savor the flavor (taste).

Books called *kashi mihon-cho* (confectionery sample books) or *kashi ezu-cho* (illustrated books of confections) contain colored illustrations of sweets and list the name and occasionally the ingredients as well. These books once served as confectionery catalogues. In the Edo period, customers would have sent their orders to Toraya via an errand boy. These orders would have normally listed the sweets and a specific date and time for delivery of the completed order. Since confectionery sample books were used as a reference for choosing sweets, it is believed that copies were made for regular and valued customers. At the time they were created, these books were a catalogue or a record of the production and selling of sweets. Nowadays they are an invaluable resource for the Toraya Archives.

[12] Given the scope and history of the company, this number seems extremely low but it is likely due to numerous fires in the modern period as well as supposed "organization" of the records which further decreased their numbers. The Toraya Kurokawa family Collection is available on microfilm at the library of the Doshisha Women's College of Liberal Arts. More information on the collection is available in Japanese on the Toraya and Doshisha Women's College Library websites.
[13] In particular the type of sweets that gained popularity at this time were those made from highly expensive white sugar. It is believed that sweets in general became widely enjoyed by all people, both urban and rural, in the late Edo period, particularly the Bunka-Bunsei eras (circa 1804-1830).

Image 8 – *Okashi no Ezu* (Illustrations of Confections) 1695

Image 8 is the *Okashi no Ezu* (Illustrations of Confections) dating from 1695, that showcases Japanese confectionery during a period of great accomplishment. This document is the oldest illustrated confections book to be dated and, as such, has been featured many times in newspapers and on television and has also often appeared in Toraya's advertisements and publicity as well as being an important object in exhibitions on Japanese confectionery by the Toraya Archives.[14] Since some of the sweets depicted are still being made and sold by Toraya, the *Okashi no Ezu* can be used to provide a historical backing. Confectionery sample books continue to be made today and Toraya holds a dozen or so, with a focus on those from the Edo period.

5. Looking at Edo Period Sales Records

Toraya's sales records include the names of successive generations of emperors and members of the imperial family, court nobles, daimyo, shogunal officials in Kyoto, shrines and temples, and wealthy merchants such as the Mitsui family. Records also include a report of delivering sweets to the shogun in the inner citadel of Edo castle as well as an order from the shogun Tokugawa Iemochi in 1863 when he was in Kyoto on the first visit by a shogun to the imperial capital in 229 years.

Among the figures who appear in the sales records we also see many historical figures widely known among the general public. For example there are records of purchases by: the famous 17th century artist Ogata Korin; Kira Kozuke-no-suke Yoshinaka, the shogunal official famous for his involvement in the incident of the forty-seven *ronin*; Tokugawa Mitsukuni (also known as Mito Komon); and others.

[14] Replicas have been produced to prevent deterioration through over-use.

Image 9 is of a record of sweets ordered from Toraya by Mitsukuni on the 13th day of the 4th month of 1700. To celebrate the 70th birthday of his close friend Nakanoin Michishige, Mitsukuni wanted to send 100 *manju* (steamed buns with a sweet filling), each weighing 70 *monme* (approximately 260 grams) to match his age. Mitsukuni's instructions requested that the characters *fuku* and *ju*, for good fortune and long life, be written on the sweets in red. This document has been used in exhibitions by the Archives, has been picked up by mass media numerous times, and its contents have been showcased on the Toraya website. As a result, there have been orders for "Tokugawa Mitsukuni's *fuku-ju manju*" from those who have heard about the document.

Image 9 – *Shokata Goyo no Tome* (Register of Various Orders) 1694- Entry for the 13th day of the 4th month of 1700
Record of order from Tokugawa Mitsukuni for *manju* to celebrate the birthday of Nakanoin Michishige. The *manju* is also noted in the records of Ando Tameakira, who was in the service of Mitsukuni at the time.

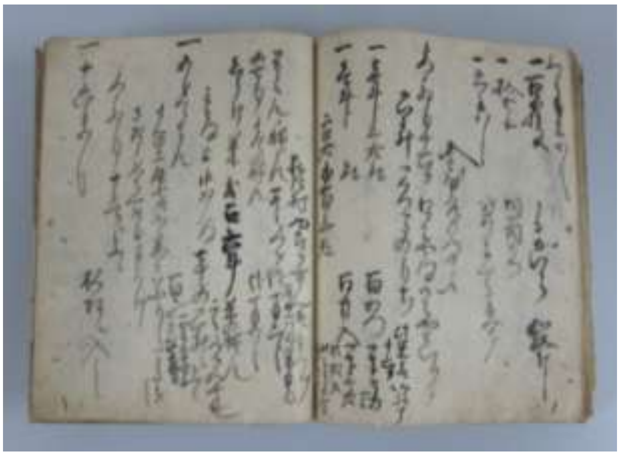

Image 10 – Reproduction of the "*fuku-ju manju*" ordered by Tokugawa Mitsukuni

Toraya has a special sweets club where members pay an annual fee to have specially made *namagashi* (fresh sweets) delivered to their home or other address. Annual themes have included historical personages or events and Edo or Meiji period records have been used to decide on the sweets. Information from these records is slowly being compiled into a confectionery database.

6. The Archives and In-house Sharing of Information

Customers often ask about the origin and history of particular sweets, either in-store or over the phone. In anticipation of these types of questions, an explanation of the sweets on sale every month is prepared for distribution to all shops. This information is compiled from historical records and reference materials by the Toraya Archives before the Sales Department arranges it to be shared throughout the company.

Toraya's intranet, generally accessible to all Toraya employees, includes an "Archives Corner" and information from the Archives about the origins and history of Toraya sweets as part of the "Explanation of the Names of Toraya Sweets"[15] section. This type of system is not limited to Toraya and is but one example of how information from the Archives is being directly used in operations. Again, the basis of information provided to the manufacturing and other departments is the historical collections of the Archives.

7. The Archives and the Collection and Use of Active Documents

My discussion up to now has been somewhat biased towards Toraya's Edo period archival collections. Before I conclude, however, I would like to briefly look at the collection of more recent materials. At Toraya, active documents (including semi-active documents) are stored and managed in a decentralized manner by each department. These documents and files are stored for a pre-determined length of time before being destroyed. Before they are destroyed, however, the records are collected in cardboard boxes and brought to a set location. Toraya Archives staff check the records and remove any that are thought to have historical value. These documents are then stored by the Archives with the rest of the collections. In general, all departments have been asked to notify the Archives when they have records for disposal. There are also instances of documents being brought to the Archives by retiring employees.

Image 11 – Cardboard boxes holding documents for disposal

[15] In addition, there is also information on: the history of Toraya, the journal *Wagashi*, materials in the collections, lectures, and exhibitions.

In recent years, the digitization of documents has increased and different institutions have taken different approaches to the preservation and use of digital records. I would like to share the Toraya example with you. In many companies large numbers of documents are published on the intranet every day. Although different companies may use the same document and record names, the actual contents of the documents may be widely different depending on the business.[16] The main document types used by Toraya are “approval records,” “business requests,” “business reports,” “written reports,” “minutes,” and “notices.” In addition a large amount of other information is made available, including that related to human resources, regulations, and welfare programs.

Image 12 – Storage of printed copies of digital documents

Access to some documents may be restricted to certain departments or individuals based on professional role or level of authority. The Toraya Archives requests to be included from the start so that when records are made available they can be printed onto paper and preserved for the future in various folders.[17] In addition, the Archives also gathers information we see as important from available documents and compiles this information into spreadsheets which are then made available within the company as monthly chronologies. These chronologies become a valuable business tool for each employee to find out about the

[16] These differences can cause difficulties in gaining mutual understanding between records management and archives staff in different businesses. Instead of seeking similarization, however, I feel it is important to understand these differences as differences between various corporate cultures and ways of doing business. A similar situation can be said to exist between business (private sector) vs. government / public sector records management and archives.

[17] The conservation of electronic information is also carried out by the applicable department.

company's current movements and learn from the past. There are those who might argue that these types of digital records are active records and thus should not be the purview of the archives but should instead be looked after by a records manager. We feel, however, that notices and other documents with limited circulation should be collected at the time they are created. Furthermore, since the monthly chronologies are based on chronologies produced during the compilation of *shashi* and the Toraya Archives are the department in charge of the compilation of *shashi*, it makes sense that the Archives would be in charge of this process along with the collection and preservation of historical records.

As part of the process of compiling *shashi*, the Archives conducted interviews with many people including past and present employees, management, and others in the profession and related associations. We were thus able to uncover information not normally contained in records and historical documents. Following the publication of the *shashi*, the Archives has continued to gather oral histories by carrying out interviews with retiring employees.[18]

[18] The full text of audio recordings is being recorded onto tapes.