

In March 1617, the *bakufu* called Jin'emon and other representatives to the court of the Edo magistrates and awarded them a piece of land outside Edo, an area of close to 11.8 acres, and appointed Jin'emon head of the area (*nanushi*) now referred to as Moto-Yoshiwara. The grant was accompanied by five rules:

1. No establishment shall be permitted to operate outside the licensed quarter. Regardless of the origin of requests, courtesans shall not be sent out for prostitution beyond the walls of the quarter.
2. No bordello client shall be permitted to stay longer than a day and a night.
3. Courtesans shall not wear luxurious clothing embroidered or appliqued in gold and silver. They shall wear simple blue cotton clothes wherever they are.
4. The buildings in the pleasure quarter shall not be sumptuous, and they shall conform to the Edo architectural style.
5. Anyone of unknown origin or strange behavior found wandering within the quarter shall give his address regardless of his class—whether he is a samurai or of the merchant class. If still under suspicion, he shall be reported immediately to the district police.'

•Excerpt from *Keichô kenmonshû* (Personal observations of the Keichô era) by Miura Jôshin, circa 1620:

“Recently, with the prosperity of Edo, the exalted and the mean, the old and the young, the wise and the foolish, all are willing prey of seductive women. As you examine the Yoshiwara, the prostitutes vie for attention, their faces made up with powder. Looking at the women standing at the doors of their houses, someone groaned, ‘My god, even the powdered and rouged faces of empresses and concubines of China couldn't be more beautiful.’ Then a broker sneered at him, ‘Don't you know that they use cosmetics to hide their inferior faces? Besides these women, there are incomparably beautiful courtesans called *oshô*, who are true natural beauties, who know nothing of cosmetics. Their faces are more beautiful than flowers and the moon!’ . . . To entrap the hearts of these window-shoppers, bordello keepers schemed and erected no and kabuki stages here and there and advertised performances. When men of all classes crowded around, performers of flute, drum, and singing were ready and made gay music as an *oshô* appeared on the stage and showed to the utmost her dance techniques. The spectators watched the movement of her sleeves in ecstasy, wondering whether she was a heavenly angel.

‘Oh, this life is but a dream!’

‘I don't care if I lose my life, I have no other use for money!’

They rushed to spend all their savings and valuables on these women. After that, they could do nothing but coax others into lending; many lost their houses and fled; some men gambled and were punished by the law; others rebelled against their parents and employers and eloped. Some committed robbery and were beheaded; others stabbed their courtesans and killed themselves. Some even became servants of the bordello. Their fateful ends varied.”

•Excerpt from *Waga komoro* (My robe) by Katô Eibian, circa 1820:

“It is said that the prosperity of the bad place [the Yoshiwara] during the Genroku to Hôei era [1688-1710] was like Paradise during the day and like the Dragon Palace at night. The rarest foods of various provinces were all brought to this place because it was the best market, and exotic fragrances filled the houses.... If one customer spent a hundred gold pieces at a bordello, another would claim he had spent a thousand, making profligacy the criterion of the quarter. But after the Kyôho era [1716], if one client spent ten pieces of gold, another would boast he had spent only five and then go home feeling clever that he had not spent more. The men of the Genroku era would have laughed at him, saying, ‘The pleasure quarter is a place where one should throw away gold a silver. If one doesn't want to waste money why go there?’”