

## Instructions for Mail Request for Family Register Documents

Koseki (family register) documents are a fundamental source of information for developing your personal family history if you are of Japanese descent. Japan does not have birth, marriage, or death certificates – instead, all of this vital information is recorded on koseki documents.

A basic challenge in requesting the koseki documents is that they are maintained by the local municipal (city, town, or village) offices – however, the relevant municipal office has likely changed through numerous mergers since your ancestors left Japan.

As of May 1, 2019, there are 1,896 municipal offices in Japan (i.e., 198 urban wards in large cities, 772 other cities, 743 towns, and 183 villages). Each of these municipal offices has their own individual Japanese language form for requesting koseki documents; however, our team has developed a standardized English language request form which can be used to request koseki documents. A brief description of the required fields is provided below.

**Permanent Residence:** this is the multi-generational permanent address of your ancestor's home. In general, this will be the address listed in various immigration documents. At a minimum, you will need to provide the following:

- Prefecture (“-ken” for most prefectures, “-fu” for Kyōto, Ōsaka, and early Tōkyō; and “-to” for later Tōkyō)
- District (“-gun”); not applicable if located in a city [“-shi”])
- Town (“-chō” or “-machi”) or Village (“-mura” or “-son”); not applicable if located in a city [“-shi”])

Any additional address information beyond this should also be included.

**Hittōsha:** typically translated as “head of household” or “principal person”. In general, this will be the father of the issei immigrant. This field can be left blank if not known.

**Birthdate (Hittōsha):** This field is optional, but may be helpful in cases of common surnames.

**Hitsuyō na kata:** typically translated as “requested individual”. In general, this will be the issei immigrant. This is a required field.

**Birthdate (Hitsuyō na kata):** This field is optional, but may be helpful in cases of common surnames.

**Relationship:** This field indicates the relationship between the requestor and the “Hitsuyō na kata” (e.g., child, grandchild, great-grandchild). Please note that there must be a direct blood or adoptive relationship to request koseki documents.

**Outline of Relationship:** List the names of the requestor, “Hittōsha”, “Hitsuyō na kata”, AND any individuals from generations in between.

**Reason for Request:** Best answer is “respect for ancestors”. Should avoid “searching for ancestors”.

**Requestor Name:** Use the full name that is on your government-issued ID (usually your drivers license).

**Requestor Address:** Use the address on your government-issued ID – as long as your mail is delivered there. If you do not have mail delivery to your house and use a P.O. Box, you will need to obtain some sort of document that has both addresses (e.g., insurance policy, property tax documents)

**Requestor Birthdate:** Self-explanatory.

**Requestor Email:** Be sure that this is very legible – if not, the municipal offices will have difficulty contacting you.

**Requestor Signature:** Self-explanatory.

**Date of Request:** Self-explanatory.

\*Asterisked Japanese text indicates that you would like to request as many family registry documents as you possibly can. There is also a supplemental request for maternal line records as well (if they are at this specific municipal office). Finally, there is an explanation that since you do not know exactly how many family registry documents are available, you have not included payment. After the municipal office notifies you via email about the number of documents, you will send payment.