THE TALE OF NISUKE

Peasant and Authorities in Higo around 1800.

Ph.D. Thesis submitted to the
University of London

by

Heinrich Martin Reinfried

September 1975

ProQuest Number: 10731313

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS
The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript
and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed,
a note will indicate the deletion.

ProQuest 10731313

Published by ProQuest LLC (2017). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.
This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

ABSTRACT

"The Tale of Nisuke," which deals with conditions in the Higo domain of Southern Japan around 1800 as experienced by the peasantry, forms the core of this thesis; it is here for the first time translated and studied in depth. Besides the translation of the text, I have set myself the task of establishing its value as illustrative source material for the student of Tokugawa society by identifying the background of its author and his intentions. In the absence of contemporary references to the "Tale" as well as other clues to assist me in my task, I have had to proceed by analyzing the "Tale"'s content and then to establish its position within the cultural context of Tokugawa society. The resulting socio-cultural portrait of Higo provides at the same time the clues to a correct understanding of the "Tale" as well as a comprehensive insight into rural life in a comparatively backward region of late Tokugawa Japan. The great variety of questions raised by the "Tale," a quality which makes this text so singularly suited as departure point of a cultural study, has forced me to concentrate more intensively on historical questions than would first seem warranted by the subject. All of my commentary must, however, be seen as of immediate importance to a full understanding of the "Tale". The first chapter contains a general introduction to the history of the Tokugawa period, with special reference to the developments in the village. The second chapter traces the political and economic history of the Higo domain in the 18th century to portray conditions which constitute the background to the "Tale". The third chapter contrasts peasant life in the economically advanced regions with conditions in the Higo domain and investigates the role played by the rural priesthood in the life of the peasantry. In the fourth chapter, an introduction to the tradition of critical writing in Tokugawa literature leads to a discussion of the "Tale," followed by my conclusions as to author and purpose of the "Tale". In Part Two, there then follows my annotated translation of the "Tale".

TABLE OF CONTENTS

page

List of Abbreviations 6

Introduction 7

PART ONE

1. Tokugawa Society and the Peasantry 14

   1.1. The Tokugawa Polity 14

      1.1.1. The Philosophical Basis of Feudal Authority 23

   1.2. Economic Difficulties and Reform 35

   1.3. The Village in Transition 48

2. Higo in the 18th Century 81

   2.1. The Reforms of the Hōreki Period, 1751-1764 90

      2.1.1. Administrative Reform 97

      2.1.2. Legal Reform 107

      2.1.3. Education 109

   2.2. The Economic Reform Measures 114

      2.2.1. Afforestation 121

      2.2.2. The Land Tax 139

      2.2.3. Land Reclamation 159

      2.2.4. The Sale of Rank 180

2.3. The Events of 1802/03 186

3. Peasant Life in Higo around 1800 202

3.1. The Annual Tax 233
3.2. The Peasants and the Priesthood 249

4. The Tale of Nisuke 282

4.1. The Content 296
4.2. Commentaries and Interpretation 304
4.3. The Tale of Nisuke as Political Allegory ... 311

PART TWO

The Tale of Nisuke (Nisuke Banashi) 335

Preface 336
1. Chapter 338
2. Chapter 358
3. Chapter 375
4. Chapter 383
5. Chapter 406
6. Chapter 414
7. Chapter 421

Appendices

I. Peasant Unrest in Higo, 1603-1867 435
II. List of Weights and Measures 437

Bibliography 438

Index 448

List of Abbreviations

EB	Encyclopedia Britannica, 1973.
HBS	Mutō Itsuo, et al., eds. Higo Bunken Sōsho.
JAS	Journal of Asian Studies (formerly Far Eastern Quarterly)
KS	Kumamoto Shigaku
KSJ	Kyōdoshi Jiten (Asakura, 1969)
NKBT	Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei
NKSJ	Nihon Keizaishi Jiten
NKT	Nihon Keizai Taiten
NRDJ	Nihon Rekishi Daijiten, 1956.
NSJ	Nihonshi Jiten (Kadokawa, 1966)
NSSSS	Nihon Shomin Seikatsu Shiryō Shūsei
TASJ	Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan
TN	Tale of Nisuke

Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to introduce the student of Late Tokugawa Literature and History to the "Tale of Nisuke" (hereafter TN), a piece of literary prose which is set among the peasants of the mountains of Higo in Southern Japan. Written in 1803[a] by an anonymous author - a samurai-administrator - in response to definite political circumstances, this tale deals with the economic and social problems of the Higo domain as they were experienced by the peasantry. It thus offers a unique opportunity to study Tokugawa society from the angle of the relationship between the peasantry and the samurai. From a reading of the TN, whose wide range of topics covers the most pressing problems of Higo society around 1800, there emerges a vivid picture of samurai and peasant in provincial Japan far from the cultural and economic centres. On the one hand the political ideal advocated by its author throws light on the world view of the ruling class, while on the other hand the focussing of action on the repercussions of government policies on village society enables the reader to draw conclusions on the historical experience of the peasantry.

I have embarked on this project mainly to study the condition of the common people in Tokugawa society, an aspect of Japanese cultural history which is often overshadowed in Western Literature on Japan by the more salient features of Tokugawa urban culture. Although the overwhelming majority of the common people in the Tokugawa period were peasants, rural areas, unlike the towns and cities, are hardly represented in the body of Tokugawa literature. Moreover, since peasant disabilites in the Tokugawa period are fairly typical of feudal society anywhere, the TN may not only be taken as an illustration of the little-studied life at the basis of Tokugawa civilization, but indeed, in a wider sense, of the human condition under feudal rule.

[a] I have not adjusted Japanese dates to the Western calendar.

Nevertheless, there did exist differences between the numerous domains of Tokugawa Japan, so that we may ask ourselves to what extent the example of Higo may be relevant to conditions elsewhere in Japan. Such differences as existed were evident above all in the degree of economic development, but also in institutions and political attitudes towards the larger issues of power politics. It was during the period immediately preceding the Meiji Restoration of 1868 that these differences crystallized as several domains, who had for several decades been preparing for a new role under a new political arrangement, took over the leadership of the nation. Differences between one of the leaders, the Chōshū domain, and the other domains in the early 19th century were described by Craig as having been "at least as pronounced as those existing between Prussia and some of the smaller counties and duchies in pre-Napoleonic Germany"[a].

In the economic sense, the Japan of the early 19th century constituted a unity. Over the previous two centuries, the forces of the money economy had welded the whole country into a single economic unit, with the fortunes of domain finances and that of samurai prosperity depending precariously on the notation of cereal prices at the main exchanges in Ōsaka and Edo. While the gradual shift from subsistence to cash crops had involved many domains in various degrees in the market economy, the Higo domain, owing to its fertile soil which favoured rice cultivation and its isolated geographical location away from the pull of the main centres of commerce and industry, appears to have been somewhat more successful than other domains in adhering to the Tokugawa period economic ideal of domain autarchy. Much like the domains of Chōshū and Satsuma, the Higo domain, too, had successfully restrained the new economic forces by keeping strict control over commerce; the bulk of its specie requirements - domain authorities had no right to coin specie themselves - were met mainly by exporting surplus rice to Ōsaka.

---

[a] Craig, _Chōshū_, 4.

Unlike the Chōshū and Satsuma domains, however, which combined ultimately to bring down the Tokugawa régime, the Higo domain played an undistinguished role in the events leading up to the Restoration. As an economically backward and ideologically conservative domain, Higo receives little mention in studies on the Meiji Restoration[a]. I think, however, that it is important to bear in mind that the new Japan was shaped as much by the traditional elements in the old order as it was by the forward-thrusting verve of the few leaders, for as Higo, together with other domains which had hesitated to throw in their lot with the new régime, was ultimately integrated into the new polity of Meiji Japan, it presented the new society with a dowry of its philosophical tradition embodied in its leading men, who now became active on the national scene[b]. To name but two prominent examples: the Imperial Rescript on Education (1890)[c], which set down the guidelines for modern education of the Japanese youth along strongly traditionalist lines, was principally the work of Inoue Kowashi (1843-95), a Higo samurai known for his Chinese learning, while the Shinpūren (Divine Wind League), an extremely violent and xenophobe society which revolted in the early Meiji period against the progressive policies of the new government, was formed by over 170 Higo samurai[d]. Political conservatism of the Meiji régime was certainly not an innovation or even an influence from abroad, but a carry-over from the political ideas based on the social concept of the Tokugawa period. In order to reach a better understanding of

---

[a] See, for example, Beasley, Meiji Restoration. For an article on Higo in the Restoration, see, Morita, "Bakumatsu/Ishinki ni okeru Higo Kumamoto-han".

[b] Morita, "Bakumatsu/Ishinki ni okeru Higo Kumamoto-han," 273.

[c] See, de Bary, Sources, vol. 2, 139-40.

[d] Sansom, Western World, 329.

Modern Japan, where the world view of the Tokugawa ruling class is still evident in the realm of politics and economy, it will be well worthwile to take a look at the Higo domain, a stronghold of orthodoxy during the Tokugawa period.

The TN was written at a time of internal economic crisis of the Higo domain; it is an expression of the immense difficulties with which samurai-administrators were faced in the economic and social spheres. Clinging to the belief that superficial repairs to the steadily widening cracks in the political structure could stop the decay of the old order, the author proposes remedies which, he believes, are sure to bring relief. My commentary to the TN in Part One of this thesis thus aims above all at establishing the social and economic background of Higo in the 18th century and then at identifying the author's background in an analysis of the world view contained in the TN. The result of this investigation will then enable us to assess the value of the TN as source material for the student of History, whereas the student of Literature will be provided with the background information necessary for a full understanding not only of the TN but indeed quite generally of this genre of Tokugawa literature. From the outset I have been aware of the fact that a discussion of historical problems *per se* would have gone far beyond the scope of this thesis, yet I have found it essential to go into the political, social, economic, and philosophical history of the Tokugawa period, with special reference to the 18th century, in order to be able to explain the content of the TN satisfactorily. Owing to its comprehensive content, a study of the TN is therefore inevitably at the same time a study of the Higo domain. Moreover, looking at the problems of state and peasantry by juxtaposing information from the TN with such culled from other sources relating to Higo and other domains, will lead not only to a fair understanding of the TN, but also to a deeper insight into the problems of Tokugawa society.

For my commentary, I have used printed material only. Wherever

feasible, I have consulted contemporary sources, both to test information contained in the TN as well as to add depth to the emerging picture of peasant life in Higo. English language material has helped me above all to understand more general problems of Tokugawa history, whereas for information on the history of the peasantry in Higo I have had to rely heavily on Japanese language sources. For details on literature used, I would like to refer the reader to the bibliography attached to this thesis. As to footnotes, I have distinguished between lettered notes containing additional relevant information as well as cross-references and references to the relevant passages in my translation of the TN (for instance: TN: 290.) given on each page separately, and numbered notes referring the reader to the list of sources cited at the end of each chapter.

Now to my translation of the TN, which follows in Part Two. I have based it on the Morita edition[a], not only because it will be readily available to those interested in reading it in the Japanese original, but also because this edition represents the latest stand of textual criticism on the TN. In fact, we know very little today about the history of the MSS of the TN. According to Morita[b] the original MS is not extant; two of the existing three versions, each with slight textual variations, were copied not from the original but from another copy. The one MS most likely to have been copied directly from the original is the Harada-MS, called thus as it is in the possession of the family of Professor Harada Toshiaki[c]. The other is the Inoue-MS which was found in the personal library of the Higo samurai and later Minister of Education in the Itō cabinet, Inoue Kowashi[d]. Judging by the errors it contains, this MS was copied from some other copy, perhaps even the Harada-MS. It was in this version that the TN was made known for the first time to a wider circle of scholars when it was chosen by Ono Takeo

[a] (See, 12, 12n.)

[b] See, introductory notes by Morita in NSSSS, vol. 10, 81-2.

[c] Professor Harada was formerly Head of the Faculty of Law and Letters at Kumamoto University, and is today teaching at the Tōkai University in Tokyo.

[d] (See, 9.)

for inclusion in his collection of historical source material on the Japanese peasants[a]. The third version existing today is the first printed edition of the TN in vol. 35 of the Seiden Engi[b], a Higo government compilation of the second decade of the 19th century which again was presumably copied from the Harada-MS. It was only after World War II, that the TN came to attract the attention of students of local history in Kumamoto. Foremost among these scholars was Tamamuro Taijō. Devoting himself assiduously to textual studies of the various MSS, he reached the conclusion that the Harada-MS must be considered the one most faithful to the original. Taking the Harada-MS as basic text and taking variants of the other versions into consideration, Tamamuro evolved an edition which may today be regarded as the most authoritative. It was published in 1952 in a limited edition, and has since then been largely unavailable[c].

Recently, the TN has again been made available in a collection of source material on the history of the common people of Japan[d]. This new edition, by Professor Morita Sei'ichi of Kumamoto University, is largely based on the Tamamuro edition of the Harada-MS. Besides adding a useful list of annotations concerning the language and content of the TN, Professor Morita also subdivided the text into chapters and paragraphs and inserted punctuation signs lacking in the MS to facilitate comprehension.

Differences between individual copies are mainly due to copying errors and have no bearing upon the content. Neither are

---

[a] Ono Takeo, ed. Nihon nōmin shiryō shūsui. Vol. 9. Tokyo, 1941.

[b] Seiden Engi, 35 vols. Compiled at the beginning of the 19th century by Nakayama Shōrei, the head of the domain school Jishūkan. It contains mainly documents relating to political administration as well as to the economics of provincial Higo, besides a great abundance of statistical material concerning the financial situation of the Higo domain.

[c] Tamamuro Taijō, ed. Nisuke Banashi. Vol. 4 of the Kumamoto-ken shiryō shūsei. Kumamoto, 1952.

[d] Morita Sei'ichi, ed. Nisuke Banashi. NSSSS, vol. 10, 81-116.

they of philological interest, so that I have not paid closer attention to comparing the different manuscripts. I also refrained from textual criticism from a pure language point of view, except where mistakes are relevant to the interpretation of the _TN_.

1. Tokugawa Society and the Peasantry

The author of the TN is solely concerned with the Higo domain and does not generally refer to developments in other parts of Japan. Nevertheless, we cannot look at events in Higo without considering general trends of development common to all regions of Japan at that time, for Higo was firmly integrated in the political system of Tokugawa Japan. Let us therefore begin with a topical survey of the political and socio-economic characteristics of this period with special emphasis on the philosophical foundation of Tokugawa authority. In this introductory chapter I have paid attention only to those cultural aspects which are of immediate significance to a correct understanding of the situation of the peasantry in the Tokugawa period on the one hand, and the TN on the other[a].

1.1. The Tokugawa Polity

The year 1600 marked the end of a long succession of struggles for power which had brought immense suffering to the peasants of Japan during the 16th century. From unceasing military campaigns in which the contending parties had tried to secure a firm hold over large portions of the fertile alluvial rice land, there emerged successfully a coalition of warlords under the leadership of the Tokugawa house. Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542-1616), whose family alone held land producing around 7 million koku[b] of rice annually - one fourth of the national

[a] I have, for instance, not included a discussion of the Imperial Institution, for although its survival under centralistic feudal rule had been carefully guaranteed by Ieyasu, it had at the same time been effectively deprived of a say in practical politics. This state of isolation was to continue until the closing years of Tokugawa rule. On this topic, see, Webb, Imperial Institution, esp. 57-64. Further succinct surveys of Tokugawa history will be found in Beasley, Restoration, 13-40, and Jansen, Sakamoto, 3-20. For an introduction to life on all social levels during the Tokugawa period, see, Dunn, Everyday Life.

[b] For weights and measures, see, Appendix II.

total[1]- assumed the title of Shogun (Supreme Military Commander) and set out to refashion the political institutions of the nation to lend stability to the political situation created by his military victory. This, then, was the beginning of almost three centuries of what Jansen described as "in every sense the longest, most stable, and most successful system of social and political organization which Japan had yet known"[2].

The measures introduced under Ieyasu ushered in an era of re-organization of feudalism, characterized by centralization, bureaucratization and the replacement of personal tyranny by law. In the course of this development, which lasted until the early 18th century when the new polity had reached maturity, the feudal content of many social and political practices declined steadily[3] [a]. A hierarchical state organization was set up on the pattern of the house administration of the local hegemons of the 16th century, but now on a much larger scale. The bakuhan system, as it is known to Japanese historians, with the shogunate or bakufu as central political authority and the domains (han) administrated by vassals of the Shogun, bore distinct feudal traits as especially evident in the authority relationship between the Shogun and the lords by which the participation of the lords in government above the domain level was defined[b]. At the same time, the shogunate with its widespread lands, its direct control over many important towns and cities and many domains constituted in most senses a central authority[4]. In the words of Joüon des Longrais, the rigorously centralized bakufu government was the realization of a modern state, except for the theoretical principle of its structure as evident in the ties between lord and vassal[c].

---

[a] For a discussion on whether Tokugawa Japan can be called feudal or not, see, Hall, "Feudalism in Japan".

[b] The term "feudal" is used in this thesis only with reference to this authority relationship between lord and vassal.

[c] "Aussi bien le régime du Bakufu est-il, en dehors du principe théorique de sa structure, tout a fait la réalisation d'un état moderne du XVIIe ou du XVIIIe s."[5].

While Tokugawa lands, the tenryō, were administered by the shogunate, the other lands were redistributed among former allies and enemies of the leading coalition according to their merit and trustworthiness. The lords (daimyō), who were classified in different categories of vassalage[a], received their territories in return for the oath of allegiance with which they pledged to administer their territories according to bakufu law. While at least the smaller lords were allowed some autonomy in setting the basic pattern of local government, infringement of basic regulations could be punished by the Shogunate by ordering a lord to transfer to another domain.

Lords were not subject to regular taxation to the central authorities, but they had to fulfil certain obligations involving high costs. By this deliberate policy of indirectly depleting domain treasuries of surplus wealth, the shogunate preempted any possibility of the balance of power tipping over to their disadvantage. Obligations included the giving of gifts on certain occasions, maintaining a certain number of troops - the total number varied according to the officially assessed yield of agriculture and depended also on the strategic importance of the domain's position - the execution of large construction projects such as the building of castles, roads, bridges and river ameliorations for the shogunate. No doubt the heaviest burden of all, however, was the duty of alternate attendance (sankin kōtai)[b].

---

[a] The three categories of vassalage, namely shimpan, fudai, and tozama, are usually interpreted to signify collaterals of the Tokugawa house, former allies, and former enemies. Craig has pointed out, however, that while the interpretation of shimpan is undisputed, the distinction between tozama and fudai hinged on the question of vassalage and not on the question of who had fought on which side[6]. This explains why the Hosokawa house of Higo, who as tozama could not fill government posts in the shogunate, were entrusted with a domain of considerable strategic importance, much as shimpan and fudai were placed to guard the approaches to the Tokugawa heartland in the Kantō plain. (See, 93.)

[b] For an authoritative survey of the system of alternate attendance, see, Tsukahira, Feudal Control.

The sankin kōtai is considered to have significantly contributed to the economic expansion of the 17th century. Huge sums of money had to be spent by the lords on their cortège to Edo, where they had to attend the Shogun's court at periodical intervals, for the upkeep of one or several domain mansions in Edo with their numerous servants and retainers, and for the festivities when in residence there. Close relatives, wife and children in most cases, had to remain in Edo as hostages at all times. The costs of the sankin kōtai to lords are ordinarily estimated at an average of about 50 percent of their total normal expenditure - the figure could vary according to the distance from Edo[a] - not including costs for extraordinary events, such as rebuilding the domain mansion after fires, for marriages and funerals within the family of the lord, for entertaining the Shogun in the mansion, and for special levies by the central authorities. Since the lords had no right to coin money[b], the sankin kōtai was the major incentive to send maximum amounts of commodities collected as taxes to the market in Osaka and other centres, in order to convert them into cash.

While the sankin kōtai tied the lords to the Shogun and was thus instrumental in the preservation of the political equilibrium within the bakuhan system, the strict division of society into hereditary classes, with a detailed particularistic law code regulating their behaviour, played an important role in maintaining a stable political order by freezing the social structure of the early 17th century. In official parlance, these classes were - in descending order of merit - the samurai, peasants, artisans, and merchants (shinōkōshō). Each of these classes was again subtly

[a] The Hosokawa house of Higo, who belonged to the tozama category, had to spend as much as 70 to 80 percent of their total normal expenditure for the sankin kōtai owing to the long distance between Kumamoto and Edo[7] - again excluding extraordinary expenditure.

[b] Domains were, however, permitted to issue paper money (hansatsu) on application to the shogunate for internal use only. (See, 94-6.)

stratified so that the social structure was in reality far more complex than the term "four classes" would suggest. Within the samurai class, for instance, there could be as many as one hundred distinctions in position and duties, grouped in the two categories of upper and lower class[a]. The upper class - one third of the total number of samurai - consisted of the chief minister to the lord, the higher officials down to the Confucian scholars, physicians and personal attendants to the lord, while calligraphers, grooms, stablekeepers, keepers of the storehouses, attendants, and guards belonged to the lower class. The lowest position was held by the foot soldiers who were sometimes not even regarded as samurai[8]. Neither can the Tokugawa peasantry be thought of as even a fairly homogenous class; in Smith's words, "the upper strata of peasants were in many respects, not least in respect to standard of life, much nearer to the middle ranks of the warrior class than to the majority of peasants."[9]

In fact, the "four-classes-theory" had never accurately reflected social realities, not even when it was institutionalized officially in the early 17th century, but rather the ideal of Confucian state philosophy. At any rate, with the passing of time, these categories lost more and more of what little significance they may have had originally. So, by the late 18th century, it was by no means uncommon for impoverished samurai to take up farming or to go into some profession while wealthy peasants were able to purchase privileges previously associated only with samurai status.

To the ordinary peasant of the Tokugawa period, society may have appeared to consist of two main classes, divided by a deep gulf, namely on the one hand those "above" (o-kami), corresponding to what we might call a ruling class of samurai - both administrators

[a] As Professor Beasley has pointed out, neither Tokugawa writers nor modern scholars have established an accepted usage in the problem of subdivision of the samurai class, so that this subject remains full of pitfalls. For a discussion of this problem, see, Beasley, Restoration, 25-30.

and warriors - besides merchants and the priesthood, and on the other hand those "below" (shimo) which consisted above all of peasants and fishermen. The difference between these two classes was that of consumer and producer; according to traditional economic thought, peasants were the only productive class and therefore the only class to be regularly taxed. Although to view Tokugawa society at that time in this way may have struck the poorer sections of the peasantry as convincing, such a basic dichotomy of society could, in fact, never be upheld in reality with the rigidity implied in the relevant pieces of legislation or in the behaviour of samurai towards commoners[a]. This may best be shown with the example of rice. Peasants were in theory denied the consumption of rice, but as is indicated by article 11 of the Keian Ofuregaki[b] which deplores the fact that peasants were eating rice in autumns[10], such basic sumptuary legislation was ineffective already in the mid-17th century. Only where peasants could not produce sufficient rice to pay their tax and to feed their families until the next harvest, recourse had to be had to much simpler fare; the same article in the Keian Ofuregaki exhorts peasants to concentrate on producing sufficient amounts of cereals other than rice and vegetables so as not to suffer hardships during times of famine and to eat even the leaves of the various kinds of beans and potatoes. Another popular dish in times of famine was kinkayū - boiled dumplings made of nine parts of powdered millet and rice chaff mixed with one part of rice of the most inferior quality[11]. The

[a] In the mid-19th century, the British minister Sir Rutherford Alcock, after having witnessed the arrogant behaviour of samurai towards commoners on the Tōkaidō highway, wrote that there were but "two classes clearly marked, the oppressors, and the oppressed, and the only choice too often seems to lie between them."[12]

[b] The Keian Ofuregaki is a collection of 32 laws governing various aspects of peasant life. Issued by the shogunate in 1649, it stresses sumptuary legislation to guarantee full tax payments. The phrase "nobody can feel as free and easy as a peasant who has paid his tax" has gained notoriety as illustration of the attitude of the feudal authorities towards peasants. The basic laws set down in this collection retained validity as guidelines for peasant administration throughout the Tokugawa period. See, Kodama, Nōsei shiryō, vol. 1, 35-40. Also, Sansom, A History of Japan, vol. III, 99.

contrast between the official admonition in the Keian Ofuregaki on the one hand and on the other hand the great care with which rice was selected for the lord of a domain reflects again the social concept of the Tokugawa period rather than a balanced picture of the reality. In the Sendai domain in the North of Japan, six men worked one full day from morning till evening to select 1 shō of rice, grain by grain, for the lord's table while from the Matsushiro domain we learn that in this process of selecting the lord's rice (go-zenmai) about 70 percent of the grains were singled out as unfit for consumption[13]. The German physician Ph. von Siebold (1796-1866), who stayed in Edo during the 1820's, admitted that rice was "wantonly squandered at the tables of the highborn"[14, a], but at the same time, he took note of the fact that here, rice was everybody's daily fare, and that even the numerous dogs, cats and rats had their share of rice[15]. This indicates clearly that by the early 19th century, reality no longer conformed to the ideal expressed in the Keian Ofuregaki of rice consumption being a samurai prerogative. To what extent this held true not only in the urban areas but also in the rural regions is one of the questions to which we shall turn at a later stage[b].

Revenue from land, derived in the form of an annual tax levied on the peasantry, was the main source of revenue of the domains[c]. The chief principle of public finance during the Tokugawa period was to base expenditure upon revenue[16], and so, in theory at least, all that remained after state expenditure had been met, was shared out among retainers in the form of usufruct of land (kyūchi) or stipends (fuchi). This presupposed, however, the existence of sufficient revenue to cover expenditure - where this was not the case, payments to retainers were drastically cut[d].

[a] According to Siebold, "rice served on the lords' tables consists of specially picked, undamaged grains only, of which these exalted persons eat only that which is in the middle of the bowl"[17].

[b] (See, Chapter 3, 202 ff.)

[c] For domain revenue prior to the Meiji restoration, see, Beasley, "Feudal Revenue".

[d] (See, 93-94.)

To be sure, the domains could tap the remarkable profits of the merchants by levying forced contributions (go-yōkin). Such levies were often the last resort in instances when unexpectedly large expenditure was forced on the authorities, but they did not contribute to improving domain finances on a long-term basis. Until after the time of Tokugawa Yoshimune (1716-1745), merchants were not taxed regularly and were not required to make regular monetary contributions. This was because merchants had in the early days of the Tokugawa period been looked upon not as producers of wealth but rather as "essential servants of the economic needs of the samurai in the castle town and cities"[18]. Moreover, merchants were thought to be in a very insecure position as they were so vulnerable to fluctuations in the conditions of trade and production. Levying taxes on merchants could also backfire. This became evident when guilds were officially recognized for the first time during the Kyōhō reforms of the early 18th century and later, during the Tanuma period (ca. 1751-1786), when a large number of monopolistic rights were granted to merchants and trade associations in return for the payment of fees. In both cases, the exaction of fees from the merchants was found to contribute to raising prices, both as a result of monopolistic price regulation and of the bakufu fees which were passed on to the consumers[19].

With land being the basis of their power, the political leaders had since the mid-16th century taken uncompromising steps towards consolidating their hold on rice land. With Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-98), the predecessor of Tokugawa Ieyasu, the Shogun had come to be recognized as supreme proprietor of all land in the realm with the right to grant, confirm, or withdraw the exercise of proprietorship (chigyō)[20] - a position which was based on the somewhat fictitious[21] delegation of powers by the Emperor to the Shogun as head of the hierarchy of vassals and allies and the foremost military official of the realm. The arable was thus entrusted to the tiller of the soil in a series of delegations which imposed on the peasant the responsibility for land cultivation and the production of taxes. Only the authorities had the right to dispose of land, right of usufruct, or of the products grown thereon. The sale and purchase of land had been prohibited in 1643 and the division of land among heirs was strictly regulated to prevent

landholdings from getting too small to support the tiller and his family[a]. To guarantee tax payments, the tax collection procedure was perfected and land surveys (kenchi) were carried out to detect previously untaxed arable land, while minute stipulations laid down the crop which had to be grown on each piece of land.

The intricate structures of local administration which were evolved throughout Japan in the 17th century were geared primarily to ensuring the authorities of a steady inflow of tax revenue. Efficient and above all superlatively authoritarian in concept and implementation[22], administration was perfected to such a degree that one may justifiably state that "few countries have been as 'heavily administered' as Japan under the Tokugawa shogunate"[23]. Detailed legislation, strict law enforcement, close surveillance with censors (metsuke) and police (yokome) in every town and village, contributed to preserving the social order, while corps of warriors were kept ready to quell popular uprisings. On most of the occasions on which samurai were called to arms during the Tokugawa period, it was, in the words of Sir George Sansom, "to suppress a mob of starving indigents"[24].

---

[a] Only landholdings of 1 chō yielding over 10 koku could be split up among heirs [25].

1.1.1. The Philosophical Basis of Feudal Authority

The philosophical rationale to Tokugawa rule was provided by the Confucian teachers who acted as advisers to the Shogun and the feudal lords. Their activities moulded the intellectual climate of Tokugawa Japan more than any other single philosophy, as they had a direct influence on legislation and education. Before 1600, Buddhist priests had occupied the influential positions as advisers to the feudal lords in spiritual and political matters; as such they had had a virtual monopoly on scholarship. Buddhists had also transmitted and studied the basic Confucian texts together with the Sung period (960-1126) Neo-Confucian commentaries since these had been transmitted for the first time to Japan in the 13th century. It was only in the late 16th century that Ieyasu's patronage made it possible for the priest Fujiwara Seika (1561-1619) to break away from the Buddhist establishment and found a school of his own to teach the Confucian classics. There is evidence suggesting that this alliance of political leadership with a sinophile scholar as top adviser had initially come about at the instigation of commercial interests who hoped to profit from increased Sino-Japanese trade[26]. Be that as it may, there can be no question that the teachings of Confucianism, which were above all concerned with social and political problems, were of more immediate practical value to samurai who were faced with the task of restoring law and order to Japan than the other-worldly Buddhist religion.

Official patronage of Confucianism, however, did not mean that Buddhist priests could no longer actively participate in government. It is interesting to see that while the Confucian scholars polemicized against the Buddhist religion in varying degrees of intensity throughout the Tokugawa period[a], the feudal authorities showed themselves to be rather more pragmatic about the use of philosophy for political ends. However much the monastic

[a] (See, 251-2.)

ideal of Buddhism may have appeared to scholars as incompatible with the command of filial piety in Confucianism, the authorities on their part could not but realize their indebtedness to the millenia of Buddhist influence on Japanese culture, during which this alien religion had shaped the world view of the Japanese people[a]. Temples in every village continued to manifest the influence of the Buddhist sects among the rural population so that it was far wiser for the authorities to integrate the religious institutions created by the Buddhist sects into the state rather than attempt to break their influence. Important to the authorities were not the minor details of doctrine - such matters were left to theologians to deal with - but the fact that a system of thought submitted to the political authorities and preached submission of the common people to the authorities. The prevailing opinion was that from each of the major systems of ethics those aspects should be picked which were favourable to cementing the social order. We find this attitude expressed in the words of the lord of Bizen, Ikeda Mitsumasa (1609-82):

> "According to the view of Lord Gongen (Ieyasu), Shintō, Confucianism, and Buddhism should all three be used. Shintō is the way of inner truth and of inner purity. Confucianism is the way of sincerity, love, and benevolence. Buddhism emphasizes selflessness and desirelessness, teaching forbearance and compassion"[27].

This piece of advice, which betrays the Japanese liking for eclectic syncretism, was heeded throughout the Tokugawa period. Buddhism, Shintō, and Confucianism were each assigned its own sphere of influence in the state, while the authorities thought nothing of drawing upon different religious and ethical traditions to back up the legitimacy of their rule. An illustration of the easy-handed mixing of religious concepts is provided in a pamphlet called _Shiki Nōkaisho_ (Remonstrances to the Peasants for the Four Seasons), in which its author, the military commander Naoe Kane-

---

[a] See, Bellah, _Religion_, 82-4, where the intrinsic importance of religious ethical values to the political system is discussed; as superiors are established on a sacred pedestal, obligations performed to them assume a religious dimension.

tsugu (1560-1609), postulates that the ruler of a domain should be looked upon as sun and moon , his provincial deputy as clan god (ujigami), and the village headman as true parent[28]. Even in the course of later history, clear-cut separation of religious tenets appears to have been a matter of concern of a small circle of theologians only. Syncretic tendencies continued to hold their own with all those whose personal interests were not immediately tied up with one particular religious sect. So, for instance, the "Peasant Sage" Ninomiya Sontoku (1787-1856) proposed as a panacea for mankind a "pill containing the essence of Shintō, Confucianism, and Buddhism"[29].

Shintō, which, as the native cult of ancestor worship, was intimately tied to localities, governed above all the political sphere of the village community, as we shall see in greater detail later in this chapter[a]. On the national level, Shintō played a role in connection with the cult of Tokugawa Ieyasu who was enshrined on Mt. Nikko . Throughout the country, shrines dedicated to Tōshōgū - the religious title conferred upon Ieyasu posthumously - were established. Here, each year ceremonies were held in commemoration of the first Tokugawa Shogun. Shintō shrines were also commissioned by the domain authorities to recite prayers for good harvests and quite generally for the well-being of the state, the health of the lord and his officials. Apart from these instances, however, Shintō appears to have been less of a shaping influence on government ideals above the village level than were Buddhism and Confucianism. Although Shintō shrines had been organized in the mid-17th century on a national scale in the same manner as the Buddhist temples[b], the pantheistic nature of the Shintō beliefs obstructed the development of inter-regional links between local cults and could thus not be used by the domain authorities to integrate the villages in the domain polity. It was this factor

---

a (See,

b (See,

which in the final analysis determined the subordinate role of Shintō in domain administration. Furthermore, Shintō had failed to develop a body of sacred texts which could compare in sophistication with those developed by Buddhism[a]. Shintō elements were integrated in the other main philosophical systems, however; in the course of their development on Japanese soil, both Buddhism and Confucianism had absorbed Shintō elements in order to strike roots in the psyche of the Japanese people[b]. It was only in the early 19th century that the efforts by kokugaku scholars (School of National Learning) to isolate the "pure" Shintō elements and to bolster them with early Japanese myths culled from the earliest Japanese literature had made sufficient headway for Shintō to become a national religion in its own right. Nevertheless, Shintō occupied a firm position in the hearts of the Japanese common people throughout the Tokugawa period[c].

As to the Buddhist priests, skilful use was made of them by the authorities by integrating Buddhist institutions, which had been firmly established for centuries, in their scheme of local administration. It was only during the Tokugawa period, that Buddhism spread from the ruling class among the common people and lay Buddhism was established on a broad basis[d]. The outward

---

[a] Kumazawa Banzan (1619-91) wrote in 1686: "In truth, there is no original Shintō scripture. The three divine symbols (the gem, the mirror, and the sword, H.M.R.) are the only Shintō scriptures of Nihon"[30].

[b] See, de Bary, "Common Tendencies," 47.

[c] An indication of this is afforded by the fact that the sporadic outbreaks of collective religious hysteria commonly expressed themselves in mass pilgrimages to the Ise Shintō Shrines, so in 1650, 1705, 1718, 1723, 1771, 1830, and 1867. On the journey from Nagasaki to Edo in 1776, the Swedish botanist Thunberg noticed "thousands of such pilgrims," who were often so destitute that they had to beg their bread on their way to Ise[31]. See, Fujitani, Okagemairi. For a 17th century description of pilgrimages to Ise in a Western source, see, Kämpfer, Japan, vol. I, 225-31.

[d] With the exception of the Shinshū sect, which had from the outset concentrated its activities on the common people. (See, 268 ff.)

sign of this process was the fact that in spite of strict government prohibitions, the number of temples in town and village greatly increased during the Tokugawa period. The belfry in every village, which tolled the hours and alarmed the villagers in times of emergency, was a symbol of the extent to which Buddhist philosophy was influencing popular thought - it was through the influence of the priests that concepts like "reward in accordance with a deed done in a past incarnation" (inga ōhō), "rewarding the good and punishing the evil" (kanzen chōaku), and "resignated submission" (ninjūteikan) came to be deeply rooted among the Japanese peasants[32].

The respect commanded by priests among peasants made them attractive to the authorities as local officials in all but name. Although they no longer had a direct say in policy making on the highest level of domain government, they continued to wield tremendous influence in the villages where they had been entrusted with the census register (shūmon ninbetsuchō) by the authorities. The aura of unassailable authority surrounding the holder of a religious office was not only at times abused by the priests themselves, whose livelihood depended on the donations of the peasants, but often by the authorities as well, who harnessed the priesthood for their own purposes whenever it was necessary to lend special emphasis to some new policy unlikely to meet with enthusiasm among the peasants. So, for instance, the Zen monk Suzuki Shōsan (1579-1655), who had volunteered to join the bakufu forces sent to quell the "Christian" uprising of Amakusa in 1637, was commissioned by the Amakusa authorities in 1639 to set down guidelines for sermons to peasants[33]. In the resulting pamphlet, called Hakirishitan (On Destroying the Christians), which was distributed to all temples in the area, he wrote that since peasants had been installed by Heaven as officials responsible for the nourishment of the world, they had the duty to devote themselves wholly to agriculture in the service of Heaven. Whenever they dug their spade into the soil, they should invoke the name of the Buddha, to purify fields and the five cereals grown on it. Food

grown on such fields would then be like medicine to expiate all evil desire in man[a].

Let us now turn to Japanese Confucianism . During the Tokugawa period, in which Confucianism enjoyed the protection and active encouragement of the authorities, a great number of schools developed - a discussion of the differences between them would fill volumes. However, if we are to get an impression of how the authorities made use of philosophy to cement the social order, we ought to look above all at the doctrines which all of the individual schools held in common. Indeed, looking at the different doctrines and the different shades of meaning in the writings of the many Confucian scholars, one might be led to believe that a great diversity of opinion existed among Tokugawa Confucianists. In fact, however, we must recognize that almost all of Tokugawa philosophy emanated from an officially subsidized ruling stratum[34], who supported the social order set up by the political authorities. It is therefore not astonishing that apart from differences in the interpretation of finer points of doctrine, they all accepted what Hayashi Razan (1583-1657) expressed early in the 17th century:

> "When we look at the multitude of things we see that everywhere there is the distinction between high and low. To say that there is no distinction between high and low is to be ignorant of the law of Heaven (ri)"[35].

Before we look at the ideas contained in Confucianism which were made use of by the authorities, first a brief survey of the development of Confucianism in the Tokugawa period.

The first official recognition of Confucianism took place in 1632, when Tokugawa Yoshinao, the ninth son of Ieyasu, sponsored the erection of a Sage's Hall in Edo for Hayashi Razan - a pupil of Fujiwara Seika[b] - who had occupied the post of adviser to the shogunate since 1605. In 1633, the first ceremonies in honour of Confucius were held there with the Shogun Iemitsu paying official homage to Confucius. Large scale dissemination of

---

[a](See also, 266-7.)

[b] (See, 23.)

Confucian values as part of a deliberate government policy began in 1682, when notice boards were put up throughout Japan on which loyalty and filial piety - central values of Chu Hsi Neo-Confucianism - were extolled. An important stage in the struggle for influence at the Shogun's court was reached in 1690, when the fifth Shogun, Tsunayoshi, ordered the construction of the Paragon Hall (Taiseiden) and appointed the head of the Hayashi family to serve as master of ceremonies. It was by the reign of Tsunayoshi, who usually attended Spring and Autumn ceremonies together with the assembled lords, that Confucianism had made a lasting imprint on institutions and culture in general, and it mattered little that later Shogun considered personal attendance at the ceremonies less important than Tsunayoshi had done.

Parallel with the growing influence of the Hayashi school on the shogunate, a number of individual philosophers emerged in the 17th century, whose teachings were in contradiction to the official Neo-Confucian orthodoxy. Depending on the central values in their teachings, such philosophers either met with prosecution by the authorities or, in less severe cases, were only just tolerated. Domain authorities were not on principle averse to lending an ear to unorthodox teachings where they felt that such doctrines could supplement the teachings of the official Hayashi school in a favourable fashion. This was the case with the Ancient School (kogaku), whose main proponents Yamaga Sokō (1622-85), Itō Jinsai (1627-1705)[a], and Ogyū Sorai (1666-1728)[b] had strong leanings towards Chinese legalist philosophy and glorified the Way of the Warrior (bushidō), whereas the Ōyōmei school (chin. Wang Yang Ming), as taught by Nakae Tōjū (1608-48) and his pupil Kumazawa Banzan[c], with its stress on the innate moral sense in man and the doctrine of the unity of knowledge and action constituted a potential threat to the authoritarian patterns of govern-

[a] See, Spae, Itō Jinsai.

[b] See, McEwan, Ogyū Sorai.

[c] See, Fisher, "Kumazawa Banzan".

ment and was therefore suppressed. The 18th century saw the rise of various academies[a] under the patronage of feudal lords where, depending on the bent of mind of the dominant factions in government, one or the other school of Confucianism was emphasized. At the same time, the obvious economic difficulties of the 18th century prompted the scholars to go beyond the limits of traditional Confucian doctrines in their investigations of the economy, while Western scientific writings, especially in the fields of astronomy and medicine, were attracting increasing attention among literate men. These developments naturally led men to question not only traditional theories in the economic, astronomic, and medical field, but also in the field of political theory.

Liberal tendencies, which appeared even within the ranks of the orthodox school in the interpretation of Chinese texts such as were attempted by Nakai Chikuzan (1730-1804), finally prompted the shogunate to implement a strict prohibition against heterodox teachings. In 1790, a directive to this effect was issued to the head of the Hayashi school as part of the Kansei reform (<u>Kansei igaku no kin</u>); it was repeated in 1795 when it was applied to all domain schools. It is not clear, however, how rigorously this regulation was enforced by domain authorities all over Japan[b].

Throughout the 18th century, Neo-Confucian philosophy constituted in a wide sense the cornerstone of all philosophical activities in Japan. All learned men at that time, regardless of their special field of study, began their studies with the Confucian classics and the commentaries of the Sung period by Chu Hsi (1130-1200). Virtually all of the non-medical scientific writings as late as the early 19th century were written within the framework of Neo-Confucianism[36].

---

[a] See, Dore, <u>Education in Tokugawa Japan</u>.

[b] The Higo domain school, for example, changed its adherence from the Ancient School to the official Neo-Confucian school only in 1804.

What then were the ideas in Neo-Confucianism which had such great appeal to the feudal authorities? Most important, perhaps, is to realize that the doctrines taught in the name of Neo-Confucianism under the patronage of the Japanese authorities had undergone a long selective process to eliminate all that could possibly be of any danger to the state. This process had not begun in Japan; already in China of the Han period (206 B.C. - 220 A.D.) and later, state Confucianism, as embodied in the legal-bureaucratic structure, was a Legalist-Confucian synthesis. Legalist philosophy found its expression implicitly in the outward forms and the rigour of the state administration, while Confucian values were enunciated explicitly in proclamations and laws. After the Sung period, the Confucian element in this state philosophy was weakened while the Legalist element was strengthened[37]. It was this amalgam of authoritarian and paternalistic ideas which appealed primarily to the Tokugawa ruling class when they adopted Sung Neo-Confucianism as their philosophy. In Japan, this selection process was continued, in many cases to the point where "the Japanese brand of 'Confucianism' would not have been recognized as such in China"[38].

It is difficult to conceive of two philosophies further apart than Confucianism and Legalism, yet the two existed side by side in a blend of their useful elements. The former maintained on principle that man was a social being by nature, and that he endeavoured to learn and cultivate himself. Knowledge and virtue were regarded as closely related - accordingly, great emphasis was placed on education. Opposed to this dynamic conception of man was the basic tenet of Legalism, according to which man's nature was evil and therefore had to be restrained by laws to prevent chaos. The Legalist disbelief in the virtue of human beings called for strong leadership and authoritarian measures. While values inculcated in the minds of Japanese administrators by Confucian ethics fulfilled an important function in tempering potentially harsh policies, it was Legalism which in the final analysis decisively determined the shaping of policy in most regions of Tokugawa Japan.

Like Buddhism and Shintō, Neo-Confucian philosophy, too, legitimized the rule of samurai by linking the social order with the cosmic order. Chu Hsi's teaching centres on the dogma that the cause of the universe is a principle, the ri, which gives rise to the two elements of yin and yang by movement and quiescence which in turn create all phenomena of nature and determine the order of society by their interaction. With one principle linking man, nature, and society in a chain of cause and effect, the good order of each element in this triad depended vitally on the good order of the other two. According to this mechanical concept of the cosmos, nature was benevolent if every member of society acted dutifully; conversely, the individual and society could be upset by interfering with nature[a].

This idea was the basis for the conservatism of Neo-Confucianism in the realm of politics. Any tampering with conditions on earth brought with it the danger of disrupting the circulation of the cosmic forces, thereby disturbing the balance of the universe. Even the concept of yin and yang, originally dynamic, was re-interpreted by the Neo-Confucians in support of their static view of society[39]. In their world view, development was

[a] This close link between nature and society is illustrated in the Kuan Tzu, a composite work combining various schools of philosophy such as Taoism, yin-yang, five element cosmologists, and Confucianism, written about 300 B.C. In chapter 14, water is explained to be the blood of the earth, flowing through its muscles and veins. Water is described as a spiritual substance of vital importance to all beings. "The reason why creatures can realize their potentialities and grow to the norm is that the inner regulation of their water is in accord..."[40]. From this, Kuan Tzu infers that the quality of water in a state is a sure sign of its condition. With the cosmos being a clockwork-like mechanism, he concludes logically that "the solution for the Sage who would transform the world lies in water. Therefore when water is uncontaminated, men's hearts are upright. When water is pure, the people's hearts are at ease. Men's hearts being upright, their conduct is without evil. Hence the Sage, when he rules the world, does not teach men one by one, or house by house, but takes water as his key"[41]. (See, TN: 406 ff.)

suspect wherever it occurred - be it in the economic field, in political or social circumstances of a domain. The vision guiding the Neo-Confucian scholar was that of a Golden Past, when reality had still corresponded to names. In China, this Golden Past was the age of Yao and Shun; in Japan, scholars writing for the shogunate expressed their yearning for the days of Ieyasu, while other scholars writing for domain authorities evoked memories of a local leader who lived at the same time as Ieyasu[a]. These rulers were portrayed in Confucian historiography as father-figures to whom the welfare of their subjects was a matter of personal concern (shinsei).

Legalism, too, departed from the assumption that the existence of high and low in society was the reflection of a natural order; it did, however, differ from Confucianism by the means it advocated to maintain this basic distinction. While Confucianism assigned education a central place of attention in the belief that moral cultivation would bring every man to realize his place in society, Legalism advocated firm guidance by the ruler to preserve the world the way nature intended it to be. Its conviction that only strict laws and the skilful application of the "two handles"[42] of punishment and favour could maintain order among men provided many rulers through the ages with a guide for practical politics.

The philosophy of Legalism as it influenced domain politics in the Tokugawa period is lucidly expressed in the writings of Hsün Tzu[b], a Chinese philosopher of the 3rd century B.C. Although he himself is not counted among Legalist philosophers, his doctrine of the evil nature of man made him the mentor of Legalism and a decisive influence on the most famous Legalists in Chinese History[c]. To Hsün Tzu, the division of high and low in society

---

[a] (See, TN: 385n.)

[b] For a representative selection of Hsün Tzu's writings in translation, see, Watson, Hsün Tzu.

[c] See, Watson, Han Fei Tzu.

is of vital importance - without it, the people could not be nourished since the abundance of food is not due to the peasants but to the achievement of former kings who, in their prudence, established these distinctions between rich and poor, eminent and humble, thus "making it possible for those above to join together and watch over those below"[43]. He argued against equality among men by claiming that there would not be enough material goods to satisfy all[44], and - most important - that with equality instituted among men, the masses could no longer be employed by the ruling class[45]. While other philosophers praised the joys of human relationships, Hsün Tzu was convinced that only hierarchical divisions to keep men at bay could keep society viable. The welfare of the people is only to be taken into account by the authorities because "if the common people are frightened of the government, then the gentleman cannot occupy his post in safety"[46]. The common people will feel safe and at ease with their government only when worthy men have been selected for government, when filial piety and brotherly affection have been encouraged, when orphans and widows and the poor are assisted. Humanitarian ideas in Legalism served in consequence above all as a means to an end, namely to achieve a strong state which would not be "took weak to conquer other beings"[47].

It is fair to say that it was this pragmatic Legalist component in Sung Neo-Confucianism which had aided its adoption by the Tokugawa authorities as official philosophy. With Confucian influence mitigating the harsh aspects of Legalism, Neo-Confucianism provided the shogunate and the domain authorities with a well-ordered philosophical system which was hallowed by time and historical precedent to bolster the Tokugawa polity.

1.2. Economic Difficulties and Reform

The hopes based on legislative and administrative measures to protect the agrarian basis of the feudal economy were not fulfilled. Even the 17th century saw the beginnings of a money economy, a development which was to have far-reaching consequences on every sector of life. In the course of the three centuries of the Tokugawa period, money all but replaced feudal ties between authorities and subjects by those between debtor and creditor. Once money had gained a momentum of its own in the 18th century, all the authorities could do was to try to gain time with stopgap reforms[a].

How did this come about and what was the impact of money on rural society? Foremost among the factors furthering the growth of a nationwide money economy was the sankin kōtai[b]. The many expenses connected with it had to be defrayed with money, so that the domain authorities had to entrust their surplus agricultural products - beside rice, each domain had by the 17th century specialized in certain local products for sale on the national market - to merchant-agents in the big market towns of Ōsaka and Edo. With the increase in the volume of national trade, merchants came to acquire a key position in the national economy, while the samurai increasingly depended on the merchants to have their rice stipends converted into indispensable currency or, when need arose, to obtain loans. Whereas initially merchants had been subservient to the lords and subjected to strict regulations under an appointment system, they had now reached the position of bankers to the authorities. Within one century of the foundation of the Tokugawa state, money had effected a shift in the balance of power to the disadvantage of the feudal authorities. Although the samurai still wielded factual power, they now

---

[a] See also, Sheldon, Merchant Class, 100-30.

[b] (See, 17.)

depended precariously on the merchant houses for their finances. The feudal authorities exercised their political power over the merchants sparingly - where rules of conduct had been flouted too brazenly, they confiscated private fortunes, but as long as the merchants were not too ostentatious, few fetters were imposed on their activities.

For storing and selling rice which had been entrusted to them by the lords, merchants received only a modest commission - between 2 and 4 percent of the market value[48]. The bulk of merchant income derived from loans to lords and samurai, whose spending tended to run far ahead of income, on the security of crops not yet harvested[49]. Interest rates for such loans ranged between 5 to 6 percent for lords of high credit standing and up to 15 and 20 percent for high risk loans to others[50 a]. The gradually developing instruments of a money economy, such as bills and stock exchange, made the handling of the huge volume of trade easier, but permitted also speculative deals. Those among the merchants who managed to survive in the competitive world of balance sheets and price manipulation by a combination of thrift, ability, and good luck could go from strength to strength and amass huge fortunes[b]. Their

[a] The latter rate is commonly taken to represent the usual rate of interest during the Tokugawa period, as it frequently appears in loan agreements; it has been suggested, however, that this figure may be fictitiously low since 20 percent per annum was the legal maximum[51]. Provincial merchants appear to have been less bound by legal provisos regarding interest rates as far as loans to peasants were concerned; the TN claims that interest rates for loans given by wealthy villagers to peasants who were unable to pay their annual tax ran as high as 40 to 50 percent per annum (See, TN: 363.). Although there may well be an element of exaggeration in this statement, a similar case reported by Smith of oil makers in the Kinai who charged as much as 10 percent per month for money advances to the small holder or tenant against the latter's crop[52] suggests that such cases were not altogether impossible. As Dr. Sheldon has pointed out, however, interest on loans was generally kept within what was thought proper, partly because of the fear of confiscation of excess wealth by the authorities, partly out of the strong desire for social esteem in a society whose ideals called for the sacrifice of individual to group interest[53].

[b] The competitive spirit prevailing in mercantile circles in the early 18th century is revealed in a joke included in the Chōninbukuro (1719): "A merchant is like a folding screen - unless he is crooked, he will not have a firm stand"[54].

money sponsored the cultural life in the towns and cities; artisans and craftsmen found generous patrons in the affluent merchants, while men of letters immortalized the urban way of life in belles-lettres. A first zenith of Tokugawa prosperity was reached during the Genroku period (1688-1703) in the cultural centres of Ōsaka and Kyōto; later, in the 1780's, Edo was established as the centre of plebeian art and literature[55].

The extravagance of the late 18th century belle-époque of Edo society coincided with the Tenmei famine, which brought untold harm to the peasantry in wide areas of Japan between 1783 and 1787. Food supplies of peasants had been severely decreased by a series of bad harvests and natural catastrophes, with the area hardest hit ranging from Kozuke in the north, where an eruption of the Asama volcano had devastated a huge area of land, to Izumo on the West Coast. Starvation and epidemic disease drove peasants to desperate action; the number of peasant uprisings increased from 35 in the period 1773-1782 to 101 between 1783 and 1792[56]. To many speculators, however, famine was a windfall. By withholding their stocks of cereals, they forced prices up even further, well beyond the reach of the poor, and thus realized considerable profits.

The impact of the economic forces had been all the greater for the seclusion policy of the Tokugawa, which had rendered expansion abroad impossible[57]. The vigour of commercial interests, all focused on developing domestic commerce and banking, resulted already in the late 17th century in growing economic difficulties of the <u>tenryō</u> and the economically advanced domains. By that time, the money economy had ramified to such an extent that its effects were felt in all spheres of life, with money in use in even the most remote villages[58].

Peasants who were unable to make ends meet were forced to take up loans with local merchants, for which they had to pledge land as security. Those peasants who could not pay back principal and interest eventually lost their land - where land changed its

owner, foreclosure was more common than the purchase of land[59]. This process, which vulnerably exposed the economic basis of the feudal state, had by 1700 nearly everywhere significantly altered patterns of landholding, although it varied in intensity depending on the region[60]. Shogunal legislation, although not enforced throughout the country, mirrors the difficulties which all feudal authorities encountered to varying degrees. In 1718, the shogunate declared that all land which had not been redeemed for a period of ten years could no longer be claimed by its former owner. In 1721, eternal ownership of land was recognized in the Pawn Forfeiture Act (shichi-nagare), which made the sale and purchase of land even easier. An amendment to this law, promulgated the following year by the shogunate, according to which pawned land could be redeemed against payment of the original debt, resulted in severe rural disturbances as peasants in Echigo and Dewa banded together to force the money-lenders to return their former land. In 1740, the shogunate declared that the tenant's payments to the landlord were to be regarded in the same way as the tax payments to the authorities. In 1744, all sanctions against the sale of land were withdrawn[61]. Among those who profited most from the lifting of these restrictions - where similar legislation had not been issued, there were a number of ways of getting around non-alienation laws[62] - were the wealthy peasants (gōnō). Typically, such families combined landed wealth and business acumen; qualities which were both applied to expanding their activities on a regional level. By the 18th century, every village in even remote regions had its one or two families occupied in either trade or craft[63]. In the villages, the prosperity of those who had seized the opportunities offered by the growing market for agricultural products, by commerce, moneylending, and often industry as well[64] contrasted with the poverty of those who had failed to adjust to the money economy. New and freer forms of employment which became available in lumbering, transport, trade, handicraft, industry, and eventually in agriculture, enabled those peasants who had lost their land to make a living. To pay their debts, insolvent

debtors could, beside pawning their crop and their household possessions[a], apply to someone to take one or several members of their families into their service as hōkōnin - an indentured status which, depending on the type of agreement, could be resolved only upon repayment of the original loan by the family of the hōkōnin or by his own labour during a fixed period of time. For the poorer peasants, it was above all the least free among the three main types of hōkōnin[b] - the pledged person served as security on the loan without a possibility to redeem himself by his own labour - which was often the last resort to procure sufficient financial means to pay their tax or to buy food for their families. Indentured labour contracted on such unfavourable terms sprang, in Smith's words, "from poverty, not enterprise"[65]; indeed, if a family could not pay back the sum they had received on these conditions, the only hope of redemption for the hōkōnin was the legal time limit of ten years imposed on pawn service by the Tokugawa[66]. Besides this type of agreement, there were yet other forms of hōkōnin contracts which allowed for partial or full redemption of the pledged person by his own labour by specifying wages for the time of his service. These forms, which granted more freedom to the indentured person, represented different stages in the development of wage labour (hiyatoi) - a form of employment which around 1800 appears to have been known everywhere in Japan[67].

An illegal means of escaping demands of the authorities or of money-lenders was to abscond and try one's luck in the castle-town or another commercial centre. As a consequence of the go-nin gumi system of mutual surveillance[c], land flight would, at least in the later Tokugawa period, as a rule assume the form

[a] For a mortgage agreement which, according to Smith, illustrates the spirit of at least many of the loans made by provincial merchants to peasants, see, Smith, Agrarian Origins, 150, note h.

[b] For the different forms of hōkōnin, see, Smith, Agrarian Origins, 112-5.

[c] (See, 53, 53n.)

of corporate land flight. In doing so, the fugitive peasants increased the tax burden on their fellow villagers who now had to pay, in addition to their own tax, the share of those who had absconded, thus adding force to the impetus of the remaining peasants to leave their land, too. Legal opportunities for peasants to leave their land and move to a town by entering an artisan's or a merchant's family as an apprentice decreased in numbers after 1700 as a result of the general economic stagnation and the tightening of guild control over employment by which the number of apprentices was limited and openings were as a rule reserved for relatives of guild members[68]. In consequence, the principal reason for migration to the towns and cities in the 18th century were calamities, such as regional famines, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and fires - possibly also epidemics - which set in motion vast outward waves of migrants that washed into the large towns[69] [a].

---

[a] Measurement of urbanization in Tokugawa Japan is rendered rather difficult for the lack of statistical material relating to the smaller commercial and industrial centers and the castle towns[70]; existing official figures suggest that by 1700 most cities had reached their maximum growth[71]. As Taeuber has pointed out, however, it was only the "normal" and permanently resident population of commoners which fluctuated relatively little in the last century and a quarter of the period of seclusion, while the most mobile elements in the population were by definition excluded from registration and periodic reporting; among them, besides the samurai with their families and numerous servants, the seasonal labourers who came to Edo in large numbers but remained registered in their villages. The disparity between the official count and the actual numbers of population in a town was greatest in times of famine, however. For instance, in 1786, at the height of the Tenmei famine, when a special census of the total urban population was taken to serve as a basis for the distribution of food, a total of 1.3 million people were recorded in Edo as opposed to the "normal" population reported for that year of 457'000[72]!

Successive legislation to cope with this serious problem did not seem to evince more than temporary results. Legislation passed by various domains in the early Tokugawa period threatened defaulters and those who sheltered a fugitive with severe punishment[73]. In 1770, the shogunate promised high rewards to every informant giving away details about conspiracies among peasants to abscond en masse from their village[74 a]. In 1790, the shogunate made another attempt to encourage peasants to return to their native villages by offering to reimburse travel expenses including provisions and the starting capital for buying the basic tools for farming[75 b].

In the course of the 18th century, Japan entered a period of economic stagnation, known as "Tokugawa plateau"[76], with little further population increase[c]. It had taken about a centu-

---

[a] See, Kodama, Nōsei shiryō, vol. II, 51-2.

[b] See, ibid., 121-2.

[c] Indirect evidence suggests that the population of Japan had increased from about 18 million at the end of the 16th century to about 25 million at the end of the 17th century[77]. Between 1726 and 1852, the number of commoners in the officially accepted reports changed relatively little, namely from 26.5 million epople to 27.2 million[78]. Looking closer at this period, we see that the number of commoners declined 1 percent between 1750 and 1804, but increased 6 percent between 1804 and 1852[79]. Generally speaking, the trend of the total population of Japan was downward until 1798, relatively unchanging until 1822, and then upward to 1852, with slight recessions in 1834 and 1846[80]. This apparent stability is, however, only true of the total population; with growth depending on local events, analysis conceals the sharp changes in population of small areas from year to year[81]. For example, on the islands of Kyūshū and Shikoku, the population increased throughout the period 1750 to 1852,albeit at a slow and declining rate[82]. Decline in population numbers characterized the regions around Edo, Ōsaka, and Kyōto, as well as those more remote rural areas which were centres for the rice collections that maintained the urban populations, such as Hyūga in Kyūshū, the north-western Honshū provinces of Echizen, Echigo, Kaga, and Noto, and the north-eastern provinces of Oshu and Dewa[83]. For population change by domain, see, Taeuber, Population, 24, Map 3. (See also, 90, 90n.)

ry to repair the ravages of the civil wars of the 15th and 16th centuries - perhaps less heavy than generally believed - and to build up the castle towns and residences of the feudal lords in Edo. This period of frantic activity, which had spread prosperity more widely than at any earlier time in Japanese history[84], had glossed over deeper-lying problems which only now emerged clearly to the surface. In the course of the 18th century, a number of administrators realized that the times called for comprehensive reform in order to cure not only symptoms but attack the cause underlying all current problems. In practice, however, reforms which were carried out in consequence did not go as far as that; in the final analysis, reforms were not aimed at improving the economy but at lifting the feudal authorities out of their immediate financial difficulties. Before we go on to look at the two main reform periods, let us first see what was meant by "reform" (kaikaku) during the Tokugawa period.

Generally speaking, reform was not regarded as a process of accommodating state institutions and policies to changed circumstances, but rather of curbing newly developing forms in the economic and social life of the nation to allow pristine forms of the feudal state to re-emerge. In concrete terms, reform meant a restoration of the Golden Age of Tokugawa Ieyasu. In most instances, reformers were guided by the retrogressive visions of fundamentalist Confucian advisers who sought to apply abstract ideas from the Chinese classics to contemporary economic problems[a]. Their contempt for all forms of commerce, crystallized in their dogma of the "Uselessness of the Merchant" (shōnin muyōron), found its practical expression in the reluctance of feudal authorities to benefit by commercial opportunities. That the reform measures implemented by the authorities were, on the whole, not marked by quite such an uncompromising

---

[a] (See, 32-33.)

spirit was, to some extent, due to the limitations imposed by the dependence on merchants as commercial agents of government interests. However, it was also due to the influence of Confucian Empiricists whose pragmatic approach to economic problems must have induced second thoughts among reformers as to the expediency of radically foregoing the possibility of using the merchants and the market mechanisms for their own ends. Writers like Dazai Shundai (1680-1747) and Kaibo Seiryō (1755-1817), for instance, openly advocated that "trade and usury could be productive and that the ruling interests could profit from the commercial segment of their economy"[85]. The existence of radically diverging views in this respect frequently resulted in a lack in decisiveness of the reform measures relating to commerce. In all reforms, however, determined efforts were poured into the agrarian sector, in accordance with traditional economic thought; in this context, measures to preserve the agrarian basis of the economy and to increase revenue from agriculture such as, for example, the enlargement of the cultivated area by land reclamation, improvements in the method of tax assessment, and efforts to detect land not yet included in the tax register, played a role of major importance.

The following examples of reform in the 18th century will illustrate the above points. The first of these reforms was the Kyōhō reform, named after the Kyōhō era (1716-36), by which the eigth Shogun Yoshimune sought to put an end to the insecure financial situation of the shogunate and to restrain commerce. The individual measures taken during this reform were strongly influenced by the ideal of the Golden Past, and were to set more or less the pattern of future reform attempts. To economize on bakufu expenses, Yoshimune suspended all construction projects and prohibited new contracts for a time[86]. After two consecutive years of bad harvests in 1720 and 1721, the exhausted condition of bakufu finances had to be revealed to government officials. Upon this, the lords were requested to pay an annual levy, called agemai, in return for a certain

relaxation of the sankin kōtai. In 1721, orders were given to officials to reduce normal expenditure of their offices. In 1722, lords and hatamoto[a] were called upon to reduce their standard of living. To increase revenue, large land reclamation projects were initiated under Yoshimune in 1722, 1723, and 1727 with capital supplied by individual merchants and cities. These far-sighted projects were to bring considerable relief to bakufu finances by the late 1730's, when improvement in tax revenue could almost entirely be ascribed to land reclamation[87].

To increase tax revenue on old land, a piecemeal revision of land surveys was carried out and the tax rate was officially raised from 40 to 50 percent relative to assessed yield, with the possibility of adjusting the tax rate to local conditions. The introduction of the jōmen system of taxation to replace the earlier kemi system had been ordered by the bakufu as early as 1718; it was, however, only after this order had been repeated in 1721 that the jōmen system may be assumed to have been introduced widely on shogunal land. In this new system, the tax rate was fixed on the basis of the average crop yield of the past years and remained unchanged for a period of between three to twenty years, irrespective of rises in productivity realized by individual peasants in the meantime. The jōmen system was introduced during the Kyōhō reform to stabilize tax revenue; looked at from the viewpoint of the peasantry, this new system became an important precondition for the improvement in the standard of living of a large part of the peasantry in the course of the following century and a half[b].

The fact that the return to the days of Ieyasu had been the underlying ideal of the Kyōhō reform emerges clearly from the sumptuary legislation issued for the first time in 1724. It was to regulate in the most detailed manner private expenditure,

---

[a] Hatamoto were immediate vassals of the Tokugawa house whose domains were assessed at less than 10'000 koku annual rice production and were administered directly by the bakufu.

[b] (See, 139 ff.)

but the fact that this piece of legislation was repeated almost annually for the next twenty years suggests that it could not be enforced as thoroughly as the authorities would have hoped[a].

The line of general economic retrenchment followed by Yoshimune touched above all Edo merchants, mainly in the lumber and building trade. The reduction of the sankin kōtai, which lasted from 1722 to 1731, decreased profits of the merchants, too. To check the growing indebtedness of vassals to money-lenders, an attempt was made at setting a ceiling to interest rates and merchants were refused resort to litigation concerning loans to samurai. The official recognition of guilds as chartered trade associations (kabu nakama) marked a turning point in the economic policy of the shogunate; after its attempts at prohibiting monopolistic associations had failed, guilds were now for the first time to be utilized by the bakufu for its own purposes. Whereas the hopes of the authorities to regulate prices through these associations failed ultimately, trade associations did provide the government with a means of control over merchants. Charter fees and regular contributions opened a new, although comparatively minor, source of revenue. Guild control over employment furthermore helped to discourage peasants from going to cities and castle towns and thus contributed to making the bakufu class policy more effective[b].

Following the example of Yoshimune, who had been "more nearly successful in his attempts to restore an effective feudal rule than any of his successors,"[88] various domain authorities displayed their own initiative in carrying out more or less comprehensive internal reforms on the pattern set by the Kyōhō reforms. Among these reform attempts, two were fairly successful, namely the Hōreki reforms of the Yonezawa domain under Uesugi Harunori (1751-1822) and of the Higo domain under Hosokawa Shigekata (1720-85). The latter is of special interest to us in connection with

---

[a] For translated excerpts of Kyōhō sumptuary legislation, see, Sansom, A History of Japan, vol. III, 160-1.

[b] The preceding paragraph follows the outline of economic policy during the Kyōhō reform in Sheldon, Merchant Class, 104-15.

the TN and will therefore be discussed in depth in the following chapter.

Let us now turn to the second period of reform in the 18th century, the Kansei reforms from 1787 to 1793. In the two decades preceding this reform, the climate of passiveness towards commerce had changed into one of positive encouragement under Tanuma Okitsugu (1719-1788)[a]. Under his administration, merchants in Edo were revived as the shogunate not only continued to encourage all types of chartered trade associations to increase their revenue but in addition established semi-official monopolies for various goods[b] which offered new opportunities to merchants to profit against payment of fees to the shogunate. In 1787, Tanuma was overthrown by a powerful opposition faction. His period in office had seen with increasing frequency peasant revolts and, in the 1780's, natural calamities on an unprecedented scale - events which to the Confucian moralist were telling indications of decadence and corruption in the government. Again, the new government, headed by Matsudaira Sadanobu (1758-1829), set about restoring conditions of the early years of the Tokugawa period with reform measures patterened after those of the Kyōhō reform. Every single policy was again marked by a spirit of conservative retrenchment. Sadanobu had no objections to the way commerce was organized and controlled by the authorities; he considered the selfishness of merchants the sole cause for rising prices. In consequence, further restrictions were imposed on merchants[c] - in particular, rice brokers (fudasashi) were put under close supervision; in 1789, all debts incurred to them before 1784 were cancelled and a ceiling was imposed on interest on debts incurred after 1784[89]. Agriculture, on the other hand, was encouraged and steps were taken to prevent extremes in hardship among the peasantry in times of famine.

---

[a] For an objective appraisal of this much-maligned statesman and his times, see, Hall, Tanuma.

[b] See, Sheldon, Merchant Class, 115-6.

[c] See, ibid., 121.

The retrogressive character of this reform was symbolized in the new sumptuary legislation to regulate the lives of the town-dwellers as well as in the Kansei Edict against Heterodox Teachings of 1790[a], which outlawed all doctrines diverging from the official Neo-Confucian orthodoxy as taught in the Hayashi school. Dissident thinkers were not often called to account by the shogunate; by voicing the government's unequivocal support of Neo-Confucian philosophy, this edict did, however, greatly strengthen the position of the Hayashi school versus other schools.

Despite its extreme language, the Kansei reform was much less effective than the Kyōhō reform by Yoshimune had been. Nevertheless, the reform measures introduced by Sadanobu during his seven years in office (1787 to 1793) produced a treasury excess for several years after he had left his office[90]. As far as our present study is concerned, the above outline of 18th century reforms and their philosophical foundation will enable us to understand the background of domain reform in mid-18th century Higo and, in a later chapter, of the TN itself.

---

[a] (See, 30.)

1.3. The Village in Transition

We now come to an outline of the characteristica of the village in the 18th century. I propose to turn first of all to the social structure of the traditional village and then to outline the impact of the growing market economy on traditional structures, with special reference to those developments in agricultural technology which contributed most significantly to the economic development of Tokugawa Japan.

Looking at the history of the Japanese village from the angle of transition of political authority between the 16th and the 19th centuries, we see that while the village was integrated into increasingly larger political units, its position at the base of the administrative pyramid remained unchanged. In concrete terms this meant that while the peasant in the 16th century was given orders by a local magnate residing in a castle nearby, he could in the late 19th century - after the Meiji Restoration - be called to arms from an office in the capital of Tōkyō. An important stepping stone in this change from personal to impersonal rule was the process of re-organization and centralization of feudalism in the period leading up to the establishment of the Tokugawa bakufu and during the first century of Tokugawa rule, when in those areas where the feudal lord did not already exercise direct control over the peasants, political authority was wrested from local magnates and placed in the hands of officials answerable to the administration of the feudal lord. The leading families of the villages were chosen by the domain authorities to function as local administrators with the task of mediating between the peasants and the domain authorities and generally to carry out the duties of local administration. With the annual tax being levied on the village as a whole rather than on the individual peasant, the village was looked upon as a productive unit. Besides their obligation to pay their share of the annual tax and of the village tax,

peasants were subjected to corvée (buyaku, kōyaku) whenever large construction projects called for large numbers of labourers. Along the important routes of transport, certain villages, known as "assistant villages" (sukegō), were obliged to keep men and horses ready at all times to supplement transport facilities available at the official stations.

Far from being a homogenous body, village society was stratified in such an intricate manner that even modern Japanese scholars find it difficult to imagine just how strongly peasants were aware of their own social standing in even small villages of about 100 households. Even the smallest communities in remote valleys were divided into several strata[a]. One outstanding feature of the Tokugawa village was that the majority of the villagers were practically on an equal footing as takamochi, i.e. "peasants with yield" who had to pay tax, whether they were honbyakushō - a category which in many domains meant the peasant families who were listed in the earliest land surveys of the late 16th and early 17th centuries - or ordinary tax-paying peasants who were not entered separately in the tax register. As a rule, these takamochi held land yielding between five to ten koku. Below them, there were the mizunomi, i.e. "water-drinking" peasants who, with their very small holdings, were "too poor to buy tea". At the bottom of village society, there were landless labourers and tenants, known as mutaka, i.e. peasants "without yield".

Above them, there were a few families - their number varied with the size of the community - who also generally belonged to the category of honbyakushō. Occupying the key positions in the

[a] This point is well illustrated by an event described in the Mimibukuro by Negishi Morinobu. After the eruption of the volcano Mt. Asama in 1783, some peasants, who had set up a first-aid station, refused their help to peasants who had no family status (kakaku), since it was impossible to chose the right greeting formulae, which were finely graded according to high and low. We are told that 93 peasants were treated after they had entered fictitious kinship with those who treated them[91].

political and socio-economic life of the village community, these families shared between them many privileges. In relation to the ordinary peasant, the leading families held more land, they formulated village law[92], and they enjoyed more extensive rights of usufruct on village common land - they had access to common land at favourable times of the year and could take away larger amounts of foliage for use as fertilizer in their fields[93].

We are told that in one community with 2'000 families the political monopoly was held by only thirteen families until 1790 when, for the first time, their supremacy was challenged in earnest[94]. At this point, then, the question arises as to the foundation of their authority. Why had their position of pre-eminence been accepted for such a long time by the ordinary peasants?

In fact, the political authority of the leading families was founded on several factors. Undoubtedly one of the most important among them was the length of residence in the village[95]. The practice of restricting political rights to the older families seems to have been general, except for details[96]. The post of village headman was either hereditary if a single family was dominant in the historical development of a community, or it was rotated among a number of qualified families where several lineages had contributed significantly to the establishment and growth of a village[97]. Election of the village headman, although not unknown, was less common and was the usage only where traditional status patterns had broken down under the influence of commercial farming[98].

By virtue of their long residence in the community, these families had often accumulated "superior landed and commercial wealth"[99] - a factor which could only add to their authority in the community. Of some importance was also the fact that the leading families, as members of the shrine association[a] (miyaza)[100],

[a] Shrine associations were especially prevalent in the Kinai, on Shikoku, and on Kyūshū, though they could be found in nearly every region in some villages[101].

shared among themselves the exclusive right to ministering to the village deity. According to Smith, we may assume that these ritual privileges were "expressions in one area of village life of a generally privileged position in the community, including the exclusive right to hold village office"[102] [a]. On the other hand, the backing of the ancestral spirits of the local cult also tended to lend additional support to the high esteem in which the leading families were held by the ordinary members of the traditional community[b].

The political authority of the leading families in the village was manifested on the occasion of the village assembly (mura yoriai), where, depending on the gravity of the business, either all villagers or only those between fifteen and sixty years of age convened to discuss and to pass decisions on various matters relating to the administration of the community. Business included the election of village officials, the management, sale, and pledging of village property, the apportionment and collection of village taxes, civil construction, village law suits, the enactment of village regulations, and various kinds of agreements with other villages relating to irrigation, joint use of common land, and mediation of law suits[103]. Besides its function

---

[a] The shrine association often elected also the village officials[104].

[b] The Shimoda family of Yabe in Higo may serve to illustrate the importance which the leading families themselves attached to ritual privileges. We are told that to the west of their house, but still within their compound, there was a shrine where, on festival days, all villagers would come to worship the guardian spirit of children and pregnant women, Jizō. The village shrine association was made up exclusively of members of the Shimoda family. In the only Buddhist temple in the village, too, the Shimoda family occupied a seat of eminence while all other villagers were counted among the "new worshippers" (shinsanko). When the main image of the enshrined Amida Buddha was stolen during the Kan'ei period (1624-44), it was the Shimoda family who succeeded in tracing it in Kumamoto. Instead of returning the statue to the temple, however, they kept the statue, so that henceforth the villagers had to come to their house for the annual worship of the image[105].

as organ of self-government, the village assembly served also as organ of state administration, as it was here that proclamations of the authorities were read out to the villagers and the annual tax was apportioned to each household.

As a result of their strong position in the economic life of the village, the opinion of the leading families naturally carried considerable weight in the assembly. Chambliss has suggested that with the direction of the village assemblies coming for the most part from the village officials and the landholding peasants, decisions were based on a consensus of the officials and the influential landholders rather than on a consensus of the entire village[106]. While minor recalcitrance was punished either by excluding the offender from the village assembly or by obliging him to serve refreshments to the assembly or to take care of the members' footgear[107], serious opposition to the community decisions entailed a variety of sanctions which could ruin an individual and his family. One of the harshest sanctions was banishment from the village (mura harai), which was not confined to serious offences but could be imposed on an individual for any wrong-doing persisted in, i.e. not only for criminal offences, but also for the "purposeful flouting of opinion"[108] [a]. A peasant could also be deprived of services and goods available only through the intermediary of the leading families; in villages where water could not be drawn from an irrigation system, for instance, a deep well in the backyard of one of the wealthy families could be of vital importance to the peasants, as it was far too expensive for an ordinary family to dig a well of their own[109]. Where dependence on the wealthy peasants was as pronounced as that, poor or marginal peasants would naturally hesitate to oppose proposals put to the assembly by the wealthy peasants[b]. Had it not been for the existence of

[a] The TN affords an interesting illustration of this point where peasants deliberate on whether to expel Doctor Chihaku from the village for his anti-Buddhist views. (See, TN: 419 ff.)

[b] Compare the description of how unanimous decisions were often reached in Ward Associations in Tōkyō shortly after World War II in, Dore, City Life in Japan, 279 ff.

generally accepted standards of benevolent paternalism, which tended to mitigate potential hardships on all levels of Tokugawa society, the institution of the village assembly could easily have been abused by the leading families to further private interests more than the common good. Of course, village decisions remained always within the limits set by the prerogatives of the domain or shogunal administration which, in the final analysis, far outweighted the consensus of the village[110].

For administrative purposes, the villagers were grouped in what were known as five-family groups (gonin gumi)[a]. In this system of mutual responsibility and surveillance, several families - not necessarily, or even often, five - were held responsible for the actions committed by any of their members. If one of them committed an offence, all families were punished for not looking after the defaulter properly. This system had a far-reaching effect on many phenomena in Japanese history as an obstacle to individual or one-family action; so, for instance, on village flight and peasant demonstrations and rebellions, all of which were by their nature group actions[b].

The traditional vertical relationship between the village leadership and the peasants was underlined by certain symbolical, even ritual acts, such as peasants changing the paper on the sliding doors of the village headman's house at the New Year. Such customs may well have led to abuses at times; today, however, it is difficult to draw a line between what were considered normal duties by the peasants themselves and what exceeded the generally

---

[a] This system of mutual responsibility was by no means new. It had been copied from a Chinese model in the 8th century to solve the problem of making the rural population subservient to the capital. Later, it was introduced again by Hideyoshi in the 16th century, who applied it to samurai and officials to keep a check on street-murderers and pickpockets. To prevent subversive activities by Christians, this system was later extended to include peasants as well[111].

[b] The existence of crypto-Christian villages throughout the Tokugawa period in spite of the severe persecutions and strict control may here also be adduced as evidence of the influence of the gonin gumi system on village society.

accepted level[a]. Cases of arbitrariness may have influenced the obscure philosopher Andō Shōeki (1701-?)[b] in his sweeping condemnation of village headmen:

> "...these headmen, provided as they are with rice and money by their fellow villagers and others in the vicinity, lord it over them like officials or elders, lecture them and rebuke them with abusive language and punish the guilty if any such should be found. Though they are not engaged in direct cultivation they devour the surplus food produced by the villagers... These headmen swagger about reviling and punishing villagers - their own parents as it were, who give them food"[112].

It would be wrong, however, to assume that the ordinary villager was open to abuse by the leading families at all times. There can be no doubt that arbitrariness was severely restricted by the fact that the leading families vitally depended on the consensus of the whole village for the support of their power. In fact, village headmen found it impossible to isolate themselves from village opinion throughout the Tokugawa period; although this tie tended to be weakened together with village solidarity as a whole under the influence of competitive farming, many peasant uprisings were, in fact, led "not by outcasts and ne'er-do-wells, but by headmen"[113].

Traditional political leadership marked by a stable identification of political, social, and economic power did not survive the impact of the market economy. The growth of urban markets - by the early 19th century there were few villages anywhere more than 30 kilometres from a town of fair size[114] - provided a major incentive to raise agricultural output and

---

[a] One such borderline case occurred in the mountains of Higo in 1727 when the village headman ordered the peasants to build a stately house for his own family. Mutual aid in the building of houses was the rule in village society and so there is nothing special to this order. Reports of peasant reaction suggest, however, that the headman's order had exceeded the normal limits - some peasants who had refused to comply were cut down, whereupon the rest of the villagers - 43 families in all - fled to Amakusa[115].

[b] (See, 290n.)

opened new prospects to the enterprising to improve their economic position irrespective of their political standing in the village community. As agriculture was increasingly commercialized in wide areas, traditional cooperative labour declined in importance and a gradual shift to individual, competitive farming took place. This process which released individualist energies raised those families who skilfully availed themselves of the new opportunities to a position of economic strength. It is important to note that the awe earlier felt by those excluded from the shrine association, the hirakata, towards the leading families of the village, the zakata, was not deep enough to prevent them from challenging the supremacy of the traditional leaders once their economic position was sufficiently strong. It is true that political rights of the hirakata were not gained simultaneously with their increasing economic power, but eventually they won a say in village affairs, even if only after a protracted struggle[a] - Smith mentions one dispute which began in 1713 and was still in progress in 1862[116]. This struggle for political power did not become widespread until well into the 19th century, and even then conflicts were most numerous in areas where economic change was most marked[117].

What is important to the present study is the fact that the growing market offered to many peasants an opportunity to improve their standard of living and to rise above the station which had been assigned to them by the Confucian administrators. The degree to which commercial farming was developed in a region affords a valuable indication of the degree to which such chances existed, although, as will be shown later, improvements in agricultural technology coupled with the jōmen system of taxation generally also enabled peasants in little commercialized regions

[a] Smith has traced in detail the struggle between the zakata and the hirakata on the issue of participation in village government. See, Smith, Agrarian Origins, 180-200.

to improve their quality of life to some extent. By the beginning of the 19th century, the earlier pattern of subsistence farming with rice and the lesser grains as staple, supplemented by fruit and vegetables for family consumption and a fibre crop for clothing, could only be found in "notably backward places - wild and remote valleys, isolated promontories, areas cut off by poor soil from the main stream of economic development"[118]. By that time, peasants in the commercialized regions grew what soil, climate, and price favoured and purchased products which they needed for their own consumption on the market.

As to the degree to which the agriculture of a region had undergone the shift from subsistence to commercial farming, there is evidence of marked differences between individual regions of Japan. Although there is no region where farming could be called predominantly commercial even as late as the early Meiji period[119], we can distinguish those regions with a relatively high percentage of commercial crops and those with a relatively low percentage of cash crops. The regions with the largest overall percentage of commercial crops were the Tōsan and Kinai regions, both hinterlands of the largest conurbations and trade centres in Tokugawa Japan, while the regions with a relatively low percentage of commercial crops could be found in Kyūshū, Shikoku, the area along the Japan sea coast, and the Tōhoku area[a]. It is important to bear in mind, however, that the degree of commercialization in one region was far from homogenous, with considerable differences existing between individual counties in one province and even between neighbouring villages[120]. Differences in the degree of economic development were not so much due to factors of terrain and climate favouring certain crops more than others - although this, too, was a contributing

[a] Figures given by Smith are 25.8% for the Tōsan region, 26.8% for the Kinai, and less than 12% for Kyūshū, Shikoku, and the area along the Japan sea. (According to a survey of 1877)[121].

factor - as to the degree to which a region was urbanized. In this respect, the Kinai region was at the spearhead of developments - until 1590, the only real cities in Japan could be found in the Kinai where 400'000 people had been living within a circle with a diameter of about 60 kilometres. It was here that new forms of social organization evolved from traditional patterns under the influence of the market economy. The growth of the market was greatly speeded up by the enormous increase of the urban population during the 17th century, when not only the population of Edo and, to a lesser extent, that of Kyōto and Ōsaka, was growing at an astonishing speed, but also the population of the widely scattered castle towns, posting stations, ports, and temple towns[122]. With the growth of these centres, villages at increasing distance in the hinterland were drawn into the money economy as they were faced with the challenge of producing the required quantities of grain, fish, timber, and fibres.

With the enrichment of the family as their major incentive[123], peasants set out to meet this challenge by a number of important improvements in agricultural technology. Aided by the publication of several agricultural handbooks, knowledge concerning new techniques spread from one region to another. One of the earliest and the one to remain the most influential throughout the Tokugawa period was an anthology called Nōgyō Zenshō by Miyazaki Antei (1623-97), published in 1698. The development of the market economy was increasingly freeing peasants from the necessity of cultivating uneconomic crops, thus putting them in a position to substitute cash crops for subsistence crops. Continuous extension of irrigation systems permitted peasants to substitute rice for unirrigated crops in many areas where this had not been possible previously. Commercial fertilizers, which gradually replaced green fertilizer, not

only helped to raise yields but, depending on climate and soil conditions, permitted also double or even triple cropping. The increase in the number of plant varieties made it possible to find for each location the variety which yielded most. Other methods which contributed to increases in productivity were the planting of rice in evenly spaced rows - this permitted the maximum number of plants without crowding and eased the task of weeding - the levelling of paddy fields to ensure uniform depth of the irrigation water, the sprouting of seeds before planting to lengthen the growing season, the increased use of whale-oil as insecticide, a crude rule-of-thumb crop rotation on dry fields, and techniques of seed selection which permitted a considerable reduction in the amount of seed required[a].

Lack of adequate moisture control and a lack of ample amounts of the so-called plant foods or plant nutrients are the two factors which limit plant growth more than all other factors combined[124]. For this reason, progress made in the fields of irrigation and fertilizing were easily the most important factors contributing to the considerable increase in productivity achieved by many peasants during the Tokugawa period. Problems relating to irrigation will be discussed in the next chapter in connection with land reclamation in Higo[b]. At this point, I would like to take a closer look at the topic of fertilizers, not only because fertilizers generally constitute an important facet in the history of agriculture, but also because a basic outline of fertilizing techniques in the Tokugawa period will enable us to view the statements made in the TN regarding the importance of green fertilizer in proper perspective.

---

[a] For a full treatment of this subject, see, Smith, Agrarian Origins, 87-107.

[b] (See,

Several types of fertilizer were used during the Tokugawa period to sustain the exhausting regime of fields being planted to the same crop year after year (rensaku nōgyō), namely green fertilizer, different types of commercial fertilizers, night-soil, and animal manure. These fertilizers fall basically into two different categories. In the first category, we have night-soil and animal manure, the chief suppliers of nitrogen for the growth of plants, and in the second category, green fertilizer and commercial fertilizers which influence crop yields indirectly by supplying food to vital microorganisms in the soil. For crop cultivation, it was essential to supply the soil with fertilizers of both categories, i.e. fertilizers of one category could not be replaced by fertilizers belonging to the other. However, it was possible to substitute one fertilizer for another within the same category, i.e. night-soil for animal manure or commercial fertilizer for green fertilizer.

While horse manure was used widely as early as the Kamakura period (1185-1333)[125], the use of night-soil for fertilizing was linked with the growth of towns in the 15th and 16th centuries when it assumed increasing importance as main source of nitrogen for the fields in the immediate surroundings of towns and cities. During the Tokugawa era, both horse manure and cattle dung came to be regarded as mere additives to night-soil[126]. According to a Western observer of the mid-19th century, human manure was at that time "the commonest and the most generally in use"[127], and it was not to lose any of its immense importance thereafter until the advent of chemical fertilizers in the early 20th century.

Japanese peasants of the late 18th century mixed their fertilizer very carefully from the different sources available to them - a procedure which the Swedish botanist Carl Peter Thunberg[a] witnessed full of admiration for the skill of the Japanese agriculturist:

---

[a](See, 209, note b.)

> "Nowhere is fertilizer collected with more care and applied with more thrift than here, so that nothing which could be utilized remains unused or is wasted. Cattle is stable-fed throughout the year; dung can therefore be collected in the stables. Everywhere, old people and children collect horse-droppings on the roads; so as not to soil their hands and to avoid stooping they use a sea shell fastened to one end of a stick to scoop the droppings into a basket which hangs at their left side. Nay, even urine, which in Europe is so rarely used for the benefit of field and garden, is here collected with great care in large earthenware vessels - not only in the villages but also along the highways, where such vessels are dug into the ground for everyone's convenience.
>
> The thrift with which they collect everything which may be used as fertilizer is equalled only by the great pains they take in applying the manure. Neither in winter nor in summer do they manure their fields in the way this is done in our part of the world, lest the manure should lie exposed to the sun for a considerable period and, in consequence, lose its strength. They mix various kinds of dung of man and beast and all kitchen refuse with water[a] and urine, and then stir this mixture until it has the consistency of a very thin pulp. Then, they carry it to their fields or their garden in two large pails hanging from each end of a wooden yoke, and pour it on the plants with a scoop. This is done on two different occasions - the first time when the plants are a few inches tall and then again a few weeks later. In this way, the young plants derive most benefit as the full strength of the fertilizer goes straight into the roots. One stops and is plainly amazed when one sees how cheerfully these people go about this disgusting work"[128].

Apart from the practical problem of transporting night-soil over large distances, a short distance between tank and field was also in the interest of effective fertilization by reducing volatilization of the valuable nitrogen. Unless a village was situated on the outskirts of a large town where sufficient supplies of fresh night-soil were always available, it was imperative that each household should collect all night-soil very carefully in order to have sufficient supplies of this potent fertilizer. On his travels through Japan, Thunberg noted with mixed feelings that this was practiced very thoroughly wherever he had gone. For example in the "large, rich, and fruitful province of Ōmi," he wrote that "here, as everywhere else

[a] This was important to delay the fermenting process by which nitrogen is turned into ammonia.

in the villages, the smell of the collected urine and excrements embittered our pleasure and forced us to keep the windows of our palanquin shut almost all the time"[129]. How ingeniously peasants went about the task of procuring sufficient night-soil is further described by Thunberg in the following passage:

> "In the villages, a toilet is attached to each house adjacent to the living quarters facing the road. The toilets are open below where a large earthen vessel is dug into the ground so that it may also be used by others to pass water. On hot days in summer, the stench of the urine and of whatever else is collected in the toilet...is so unbearably penetrating that neither holding one's nose nor any perfume will bring relief. The natives are used to it, but it is most injurous to one's eyes. That so many people, old people in particular, are suffering from red, sore, and running eyes is mainly due to the penetrating smell of those collections"[130].

However, at the end of his journey, Thunberg admitted in conclusion that the stench and the trouble of collecting fertilizer with such great care was "amply rewarded by the harvest of the fields"[131].

Night-soil and animal manure provide plants with the primary nutrients,namely nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium. Fertilizers belonging to the second category - green fertilizer or its commercial substitutes - create soil conditions favourable to microorganisms in the soil which turn organic nitrogen into inorganic nitrogen - the only form of nitrogen which can be utilized by plants. In fact, the fertilizing effect of nitrogen contained in ordinary green fertilizer consisting of cut grass and leaves is so low as to be hegligible; the exclusive use of green fertilizer on land planted to the same crop year after year would inevitably have led to a nitrogen deficiency in the soil and could thus not have sustained even single cropping more than a few years. While influencing plant growth only indirectly, fertilizers belonging to the second category are

nevertheless indispensable to agriculture if crops are to profit fully from other fertilizer applied to the arable.

Organic material as provided by green fertilizer or commercial fertilizer is of considerable importance with regard to soil structure, not only on unirrigated land but also on irrigated land. In wet rice growing, a seedbed is formed by submerging and underwater tillage in the form of puddling. This causes the soil aggregates to disintegrate. After this procedure, the separate soil particles are surrounded by a thin film of water which offers ideal conditions for rice with regard to root development and water availability. Although in wet rice growing the dryland type of soil structure is destroyed during puddling, organic matter fulfils an important role in view of the resettling of the soil particles thereafter to prevent the soil from becoming hard and compact, thus impeding percolation of water and oxygen[132].

In paddies, the greatest problem arising from the lack of organic material was surface crusting which could occur when, after plants had reached a certain height, the irrigation water was drained off. Through insufficient soil aeration, surface crusting could result in premature ripening of the crop and, in consequence, in a greatly reduced crop yield. Lack of organic material furthermore decreases the field capacity of arable - a factor which was of considerable importance to irrigation of dry fields but also to irrigation of paddies during the later stages of plant growth. Another danger to which soil was exposed by organic matter deficiency was leaching, owing to the comparatively low adsorption capacity for nutrition cations of such soil. In conclusion, we may state that while green fertilizer alone could not directly cause an increase in crop yield, it fulfilled an indispensable role in protecting microorganic life in the soil as well as the soil structure of the mould - both of them essential prerequisites for the adsorption of nutrients by the plants.

In pre-commercial agriculture, green fertilizer[a] appears to have been used in large quantities on rice fields. In spring, fresh plants were cut on upland fields and on waste land, while leaves and undergrowth were collected in the forests. When rice fields were prepared for the planting of the rice seedlings, the villagers worked the first harvest of green plants into the soil by treading through the irrigated fields and by driving their draught animals through the fields until water, soil, and plants had assumed the consistency of a thick paste. A second harvest of plants, collected some time later, was no longer suited for direct application to the soil owing to its comparatively high content of lignified plants and was therefore used primarily as bedding material for the draught animals. This bedding material, too, was later applied to the fields, mixed with animal feces and urine - a form of fertilizer which, if properly handled, is still today considered to constitute a fertility resource surpassed only by modern mineral fertilizers[133]. To maintain the friable state of their arable, peasants would also plough the stubbles of the winter grain into the soil immediately before setting their fields with rice[134].

Finding sufficient supplies of green fertilizer and transporting the grass and leaves from the places where they had been cut to the fields could pose considerable problems. To achieve results, large amounts of green fertilizer were required; with between 300 to 500 kan of green fertilizer needed

[a] In Chinese treatises on agriculture, we find the use of green plants as fertilizer advocated as early as 1313 in the Nung sang t'ung chüeh by Wang Chen. In a later work, the Nung chêng chüan shu (1628) by Hsü Kuang-Chi (1562-1633), the "green plants" mentioned in the passage on green fertilizer by Wang Chen are interpreted to stand for the purposeful cultivation of leguminosae such as peas and clover to correct nitrogen deficiencies in the soil, and not for the gathering of wild plants by peasants[135]. In this study, the term "green fertilizer" does, however, always refer to green plants collected by the peasants on upland fields and then transported to their fields.

per tan, the total area of land to provide for the fertilizer requirements of a community had to be considerably larger than its total area of arable[136].

At this point we may ask where peasants procured sufficient amounts of green plants and grass to preserve the organic substance in their arable and to provide forage for their draught animals and transport horses[a], especially if we consider the remark by Sir George Sansom that "Japan, in common with other countries in the area, has hardly any natural grasslands..."[137].

According to Johnson[b], a portion of this grass was grown on the mud retaining walls separating the individual paddies, but the greater part of it was produced on upland areas, which tended to be hamlet-owned[138]. These places were, as a rule, some distance away from the rice fields - available estimates indicate that "the volume of grass utilized by farming households required, in large holdings, several hundred trips annually by a draught animal and a man from the uplands to the fields"[139]. Writing about one of the remotest agricultural communities in the modern Aichi prefecture, Johnson describes how, until commercial fertilizer had decreased the importance of green fertilizer, different upland areas had been marked off by the villagers for different purposes:

> "Immediately above the houses in the mountains were fields of wild grasses which were used as the principal fertilizer for the paddy fields. The stretch of mountain land above this was generally the area from which firewood was taken. Above this was the timber land which served as raw material for most of the construction in the village..."[140].

---

[a] Family records from a remote mountain community near Nagura village in the modern Aichi prefecture indicate that, in the mid-19th century, the total amount of grass cut in one year by a single household for fertilizing their fields amounted to about 8 tons[141].

[b] See, Johnson, "Hamlet Structure," esp. 163-5, and, Johnson, Nagura Mura, which contains interesting material to trace the development of fertilizing technology from the late Tokugawa period until the 1930's.

The upland areas mentioned by Johnson were not grasslands or pastures as we know them in Europe, but in most cases a form of waste land known as hara. Approaching the Nagasaki coast on board a ship in 1902, the German forestry expert K. Hefele[a] was quite amazed at the sight of the extensive hara covering the mountainsides which struck him as an unfamiliar form of plant cover. On his travels through Japan, Hefele came across hara everywhere in the vicinity of villages. Explaining the hara as the result of the denudation of mountainsides in earlier periods, Hefele interpreted the expanse of hara as an indication of the unsparing use made of forest resources in Japan. Moreover, the gradually deteriorating soil quality of the hara as manifested in soil erosion was evidence of the intensive exploitation of the hara by peasants to "provide grass for the cultivation of rice"[142]. These observations led Hefele to conclude that the dualism of agriculture and forestry in Japan had on the whole been disadvantageous to the latter[143].

If the hara was as intensively exploited by peasants as Hefele asserted, it will be interesting to know more about plant life on the hara. Did the hara really produce the kind of plants which could be utilized by peasants either for fertilizing or as forage?

We are fortunate in having the account of J.J. Rein, a German geographer and botanist, who travelled extensively on the main island of Japan as well as on the islands of Shikoku and Kyūshū in 1874/5[b]. The hara reminded Rein of the European glade or the pastures on the Alps and he described it as the last resort of the primeval physiognomy of nature with a profusion of plants which had been pushed back by agriculture from the plains and the bottoms of valleys to areas which could not be cultivated. Rein found hara in various heights between

---

[a] See, Hefele, "Reiseeindrücke".

[b] See, Rein, Japan.

100 and 2'500 metres, with particularly extensive areas of *hara* on the slopes of large volcanos.

Rein has provided us with a meticulous description of plant life on the *hara*[a]. As one of its main characteristics, he names the rather large variety of plants, which includes grasses, herbs, and shrubs as well as some ferns. The main difference between the *hara* and the European meadow was, in his opinion, the fact that the *hara* is only losely overgrown - grass, for instance, does not grow in dense cushions. Unfortunately, Rein has not given any indication as to the frequency with which individual plants occur, but I believe that his account will nevertheless prove valuable to infer generally on the usefulness of the *hara* for the agriculturist.

Rein has listed 69 plants altogether. Among these we find 10 varieties of grass, 40 varieties of herbs, 2 kinds of bushes, 3 kinds of fern, 13 kinds of flowers and 1 variety of *leguminosae*. All of these plants, including the green tips of the bushes provided they are cut off early in spring before they have been lignified, are suitable for use as green fertilizer. As to forage plants, Rein has listed only seven which are really suited for this purpose, among them the excellent leguminous plant *Lespedeza*; however, another 18 varieties could be fed to animals in times of forage shortage only. Finally, five varieties of plants included in Rein's list were suited as bedding material for stabled animals.

What do the observations by Hefele and Rein add to our knowledge? I believe that the accounts by these two scientists establish that as late as the second half of the 19th century substantial areas of land were exploited by peasant communities to supply them with green fertilizer, forage plants, and bedding material for their animals. Such land, known as *hara*, could as a rule be found on mountainsides which could not be cultivated; its vegetation differed from that to be found on

[a] See, Rein, *Japan*, 163-6.

grassland of northern Europe not so much by the type of plant life as by the fact that it was only losely overgrown. Plants growing on the _hara_ have been shown to be useful to peasants, both for protecting the organic matter content of their arable and for feeding their animals. However, quantitative assessment of individual plants growing on _hara_ land would be necessary to know, for instance, the minimum area of _hara_ required by a village to satisfy all its needs. Since many plants could be utilized for different purposes, too small an area of _hara_ could put peasants in the difficult position of having to reduce supplies either to their fields or to their animals. Insufficient supplies may then also have induced peasants to exploit excessively their _hara_, thereby breaking its regenerative power and setting the process of soil erosion in motion.

Although Johnson was led by his study of Nagura village to conclude that "until recently, the importance of grass was neglected in much of the Western-language material on rural Japan,"[144] there is perhaps also the danger of overestimating the importance of grass unless we add some qualifying remarks. In fact, the large amounts of grass utilized in precommercial agriculture decreased with the spread of commercial fertilizer, although the latter rarely supplanted grass, leaves, and ashes gathered from waste and forest land entirely[145]. With the development of inland transport and the spread of local markets in the 17th and 18th centuries, commercial fertilizers came to be available to peasants even in the interior of the country and the deep hinterland of the towns. Residual products of oil and _sake_ production, namely rape seed dregs, _sake_ lees, and cotton dregs, together with dried fish, constituted the bulk of commercial fertilizer. Fish fertilizer (_hoshika_), which was made of any small fish caught in large quantities such as sardines or herring, had been utilized already prior to the Tokugawa period by peasants in villages situated close to the sea; in the 17th century, it assumed

increasing importance in connection with the spread of cash crops, especially cotton. By the Genroku period (1688-1703), even peasants with small holdings in the Kansai area were using dried fish fertilizer for their cash crops and, to a lesser extent, for their rice fields. These commercial fertilizers were to lose none of their importance until the Taishō period (1912-26), when chemical fertilizers were beginning to be available[146].

Peasants were bound to be interested in replacing as much of the green fertilizer as possible, not only to decrease the considerable work load of cutting and carrying grass and leaves[147], but also to make double cropping possible. In spite of this, there were cases as late as the early Meiji period (1868-1912) in which newly cultivated land was turned back into common land after peasants had complained of decreased supplies of green fertilizer[148]. The solution to this seeming contradiction lies in the fact that commercial farming had spread unevenly throughout the country; substituting commercial fertilizer for green fertilizer did not pose any technical problems, but hinged on the purchasing power of a community. Utilization of large amounts of green fertilizer was therefore increasingly confined to communities which had not yet effected the transition from subsistence to commercial farming to a significant degree. The example of the isolated Nagura village may again be cited to illustrate this point; here ,it was only in 1919 that sufficient wealth had been accrued from sericulture to enable peasants to purchase soy bean cakes and herring cakes, thereby eliminating much of the need for mountain grass[149]. The traditional technique of improving the soil quality continued to be used thereafter, together with commercial fertilizer, though in much smaller quantities[150]. How important green fertilizer continued to be for remote communities even in the Taishō period is suggested by the fact that while tenancy agreements at that time generally included some land to provide green fertilizer,

a reduction of up to 10 percent of the annual rent where no such land could be put at the disposal of the tenant was granted as a rule to peasants in mountainous regions only[151]. As far as the economically advanced regions on the alluvial plains and their immediate vicinity are concerned, we may assume that the function of organic materials belonging to the second category of fertilizers[a] was at that time gradually taken over by inorganic fertilizer. The application of inorganic fertilizer, which is today considered to be one of the most effective and cheapest ways of organic matter production, offers the best possibilities for an annual replenishment of the organic matter reserves in the soil by increasing the amount of crop residues[152 b].

Let us now return to the problem of collecting sufficient amounts of green fertilizer as it posed itself to peasants during the late Tokugawa period. As we have seen, self-sufficiency with green fertilizer continued to be of considerable importance to many communities situated in economically backward regions and in the remote mountainous hinterland of economically advanced domains even in the late 18th century. We have seen that

---

[a] (See, 59.)

[b] A government survey of December 1950[153], which covered only villages holding a forest and heath area amounting to 25 percent or more of their total land area, found the percentage of modern farm households still relying on green fertilizer to range between 79.3 % and 87.4 %, depending on the size of forest and heath holdings of a village[154]. Unfortunately, this survey does not reveal the percentage which green fertilizer occupied among the various types of fertilizers utilized by one household. A clue is, however, provided by further information contained in this survey, namely that almost two thirds of the households collected green fertilizer from their own land, while roughly one third would use their own resources and purchase in addition green fertilizer from other peasants[155]. As Oguri pointed out, private ownership of forest and heath in Japan is generally on a small scale, from which follows that the quota of green fertilizer utilized today must be markedly lower than that of earlier periods[156].

substituting commercial fertilizer for green fertilizer was on the whole advantageous to peasants, so that only those who could not afford to buy commercial fertilizer would continue to use large amounts of green fertilizer. While peasants in the regions centring around the large conurbations of Tokugawa Japan welcomed the advent of commercial fertilizers which enabled them to raise their productivity and profit by supplying towns and cities with food and fibres for clothing, many villages in remoter areas, where such opportunities did not exist to the same extent, continued to depend largely on their own resources to provide them with sufficient green fertilizer. It is with special reference to these remoter areas that I would like to trace briefly the development of common land.

Land used to grow miscanthus for thatching, upland fields as source of green fertilizer, and forests which provided peasants above all with building materials such as bamboo, timber, firewood and some edible plants such as mushrooms and arrowroot[a], all tended to be communally exploited. Rights of usufruct, laid down in agreements concluded by the peasants of one or of several villages with a view to ensuring regular supplies of these vital items, were known under the general term of iriai. There were iriai agreements by which rights of usufruct had been extended to all produce on common land, while other agreements limited rights to a single produce only.

---

[a] As Rein has pointed out, Japanese forests contain a colourful mixture of a large variety of trees and bushes, with many climbing plants which remind one of a tropical forest, but almost no grass and even fewer herbs than in European forests. In fact, Rein mentions only one plant which is of practical use both in agriculture as well as for human consumption, namely the arrowroot (Pueraria Thunbergiana). The leaves of this plant, which grows along the fringes of forests, are excellently suited as forage, while its roots were eaten by the peasants. See, Rein, Japan, 166-74.

Since the size of common land available to villages could vary considerably, rights on different produce in one area of common land was often split up among different villages[157]. In pre-commercial agriculture, only the existence of such agreements to provide peasants with all they needed to supplement their cereal crops had made repeated cultivation of the same crop on their irrigated fields possible. This dualism of wet rice cultivation on the fertile lowland plains and forests and upland fields to provide villages with other vital produce had since the earliest times determined the pattern of land use in Japan; it was only during the Tokugawa period that the growing market economy was beginning to decrease the degree of village dependence on common land.

Whereas paddy land had been registered in the late 16th century under the name of the family responsible for cultivation and tax payment, forests and upland fields were not linked in the same way with individual families but continued to be utilized by all villagers in accordance with their mutual agreements[a]. Although _iriai_ agreements are known to have existed already in pre-Tokugawa times, it was only at the beginning of the Tokugawa period that the term _iriai_ appeared in official documents. In 1609, a notice issued by the _bakufu_ officially recognized the importance of common land to peasants by prohibiting land reclamation and any other action which would deprive peasants of their "places for cutting grass"[b]. In spite of this prohibition, _iriai_ rights of peasants appear to have been curtailed in the course of subsequent economic development in many places, partly as a consequence of land reclamation, partly owing to the efforts by the authorities to protect their timber resources[158]. An indication of this is given by the fact that in the course of the 17th century,

[a] On _iriai_, see, _NKSJ_, vol. I, 67-8.

[b] See, Kodama, _Kinsei nōsei shiryōshū_, vol. I, 5.

disputes concerning iriai rights occurred with increasing frequency until, by the Genroku period (1688-1704), they appear to have been known to all regions of Japan.

When we speak of the restriction of iriai rights, we inevitably come across the forestry measures taken by the feudal authorities which were designed to ensure the timber supply of the economy. Building activities in the 17th century connected with the construction of castles and the growth of castle towns as well as with irrigation and land reclamation projects required immense amounts of timber[a]. We must also bear in mind that timber was the principal building material of Tokugawa Japan, not only for the construction of houses and ships but also of many tools and implements in use at that time. Most of the instruments and tools used in the house, at the table, and in agriculture, as well as the tools for the arts and crafts were made of wood[159]. Regarding the importance of timber to the Japanese economy in the late 17th century, the German physician Engelbert Kämpfer made the following observation:

> "Firs and Cypress-trees are the most common Trees in their woods and forests. There are several different sorts of both. Houses and Ships are built of the wood, of which are made also all sorts of Household-goods, as cabinets, trunks, boxes, tubs and the like. The branches, and what falls down, serve for fewel and fire-wood"[160].

Of equal importance was bamboo, which Kämpfer found to be "very common, and of great use here, as every where in the Indies"[161]. He noted that "several sorts of Household-goods, baskets, matches, and other things are made of them, as are also gutters, and spouts, and the walls of houses"[162]. Siebold draws our

---

[a] To construct Nagoya castle (completed in 1632), about 38'000 large trees had to be felled to construct the main donjon alone, while for the whole castle, the estimate runs to about 100'000 koku of timber (1 koku equals 10 cubic shaku). In the case of Edo castle, which was several times as large as Nagoya castle, a total of between 700'000 and 800'000 koku of timber had been required[163].

attention to the fact that timber was also required in large quantities for a number of vital branches of production, such as, for example, firewood for the production of pottery and tiles[164]. As to firewood and charcoal, it is assumed that these two items made up as much as two thirds of the total amount of forestry products on the market[165]. The large need for timber was only increased by the frequent fires in the towns which would, as a rule, ravage whole areas, while typhoons, which caused immense damage to coastal vessels, called for regular supplies of timber to the shipbuilding industry. The considerable volume of timber trade in the 17th century had offered a chance to timber merchants in Edo, Ōsaka, and Nagoya - the three main centres of timber trade - to found fortunes by executing government undertakings or by seizing opportunities for profit. In fact, lumber merchants such as Kinokuniya Banzaemon and Naraya Mozaemon - both speculative dealers in building materials - figured among the leading merchants in the Edo of the mid-17th century[166].

The need to protect forests from excessive exploitation had been realized as early as the Kan'ei period (1624-43), but it was not until the Kanbun period (1661-72), after Kumazawa Banzan had warned that "eight out of ten mountain forests in the country" were exhausted[167], that domain authorities began to take steps to protect forests by appointing officials as forest administrators. Government control was established over certain forests, known as <u>o-yama</u>, <u>o-hayashi</u>, <u>o-tateyama</u>, <u>motoyama</u>, or <u>o-jikiyama</u>. Such measures often implied the restriction of existing <u>iriai</u> rights. In the Owari domain, forestry regulations distinguished between <u>o-tomeyama</u> where peasants were denied access altogether, and <u>akiyama</u> where only certain trees were protected and where peasants were permitted to collect firewood and undergrowth. In some domains, there were standing agreements

between the authorities and the peasants concerning the exercise of rights of usufruct during fixed periods each year, while in other domains permission had to be sought by the peasants every year. In some domains, such permissions stipulated the amount of each produce which peasants were allowed to collect on common land. There were also domains where the authorities restricted the number of families sharing iriai rights. Moreover, peasants had to pay special levies to the authorities for the permission to exercise iriai rights in protected forest areas. Strict government measures to control timber resources as they could be observed towards the end of the 17th century were described by Kämpfer:

> "No Firs nor Cypress-trees may be cut down, without leave from the Magistrate of the place; and lest the feeling of them should in time too much prejudice their growth, they must always plant young ones instead of those they cut down"[168].

Where iriai rights were considerably curtailed, the establishment of a domain forest could jeopardize the self-sufficiency of those village which had not yet effected the shift from subsistence farming to commercial farming. For, instance, afforestation of hara could lead to a shortage of green fertilizer, while denying peasants access to a forest could lead to a shortage of firewood and timber for construction. Even where access to former common land was granted to peasants on a limited scale, fees had to be paid to the authorities for produce which previously had been free of charge. All this could lead in some places to the ruin of poor or marginal peasants, while to most other peasants these developments merely spelt additional costs. The fact that it was often upon the establishment of a domain forest that peasants petitioned the authorities to have their customary iriai rights confirmed suggests that such government action could be of considerable concern to a community.

However, neither the protection of forests nor afforestation would necessarily lead to the loss of communal resources of a village. There can be little doubt that the authorities would, as a rule, consider carefully where to set up a protected forest area in order not to harm the interests of agriculture. Wherever possible, peasants were provided with substitute land or new <u>iriai</u> rights were created. It is, however, conceivable that the authorities were at times forced to decide in favour of forestry where the interests of forestry and agriculture could not be reconciled. Also, peasants were in the course of the 17th century increasingly provided with substitute land which was inconveniently located in the recesses of mountains, so that expenditure of time and energy rose prohibitively high[169]. Whereas in the economically advanced regions decreasing dependence on communal resources as a result of the growing market economy had a beneficial effect on the overall development of agriculture by weakening collective control over farming[170], the sudden restriction of communal resources in communities which were still engaged in subsistence farming may well have caused serious economic problems. The next chapter on the Higo domain will afford further opportunity to look at this problem in some detail.

Notes to Chapter 1.

1. Jansen, Sakamoto, 6.
2. ibid., 19.
3. Hall, "Feudalism," 48.
4. Hall, Government and Local Power, 368.
5. Joüon des Longrais, L'est et L'ouest, 116.
6. Craig, Chōshū, 20.
7. Tsukahira, Feudal Control, 101.
8. Bellah, Religion, 44.
9. Smith, "Land Tax," 294.
10. Kodama, Nōsei Shiryō, vol. I, 36.
11. Kodama, Nōmin seikatsushi, 283 ff.
12. Alcock, Capital, vol. II, 142.
13. Kodama, Nōmin seikatsushi, 62.
14. Siebold, Nippon, vol. VI, part VI, 72.
15. ibid.
16. Honjō, Social and Economic History, 289.
17. Siebold, Nippon, vol. VI, part VI, 72.
18. Sheldon, Merchant Class, 31.
19. ibid., 113 and 115.
20. Hall, Government and Local Power, 349.
21. Joüon des Longrais, L'est et L'ouest, 116.
22. Henderson, "Tokugawa Law," 228.
23. Hall, Government and Local Power, 368.
24. Sansom, Cultural History, 524.
25. Honjō, Social and Economic History, 238.
26. de Bary, Sources, vol. I, 336.
27. quoted in, Hall, "Confucian Teacher," 291.
28. Morisue, Seikatsushi, vol. II, 90.
29. de Bary, Sources, vol. II, 80.
30. Fisher, "Daigaku Wakumon," 329.
31. Thunberg, Reise, vol. II, Part II, 21.
32. Itō, "Seiji kenryoku," 429.
33. Tamamuro, "Hōken seiji," 114.
34. Craig, Chōshū, 126.
35. quoted in Hall, "Confucian Teacher," 274.

36. Craig, "Science," 135-6.
37. Nivison, Confucianism, 15.
38. Craig, Chōshū, 138.
39. Norman, "Andō Shōeki," 255.
40. Fung, Chinese Philosophy, vol. I, 167.
41. ibid.
42. Watson, Han Fei Tzu, 30-4.
43. Watson, Hsün Tzu, 36.
44. ibid.
45. ibid.
46. ibid.
47. ibid., 46.
48. Sheldon, "'Pre-modern' Merchants," 197.
49. ibid.
50. Crawcour, "Observations on Merchants," 21.
51. Smith, Agrarian Origins, 158.
52. ibid., 150.
53. Sheldon, "'Pre-modern' Merchants," 198.
54. Nishikawa, Chōninbukuro, 390.
55. Hall, Tanuma, 110.
56. Borton, "Peasant Uprisings," 23.
57. Hall, Tanuma, 5.
58. Sheldon, "'Pre-modern' Merchants," 197-8.
59. Smith, Agrarian Origins, 158-9.
60. ibid.
61. Inoue, Nihon no rekishi, vol. II, 48-9.
62. Sheldon, Merchant Class,
63. Kodama, Nōmin seikatsushi, 245.
64. Smith, Agrarian Origins, 109.
65. ibid., 112.
66. ibid., note h.
67. ibid., 119.
68. Sheldon, Merchant Class, 112.
69. Taeuber, Population, 27.
70. ibid.

71. Hall, "Castle Town," 183.
72. Taeuber, *Population*, 27.
73. Morita, "Zaimachi," 140 ff.
74. ibid., 137 ff.
75. ibid., 146 ff.
76. Sheldon, "'Pre-modern' Merchants," 199.
77. Taeuber, *Population*, 20.
78. ibid., 21.
79. ibid., 24.
80. ibid.
81. ibid., 23.
82. ibid., 26.
83. ibid.
84. Sheldon, "'Pre-modern' Merchants," 198.
85. Hall, *Tanuma*, 60-1.
86. Sheldon, *Merchant Class*, 104.
87. Sansom, *Japan*, vol. III, 158.
88. Sheldon, *Merchant Class*, 112.
89. ibid., 121.
90. ibid., 123.
91. quoted in Kodama, *Nōmin seikatsushi*, 219.
92. Befu, "Village Autonomy," 311.
93. Smith, *Agrarian Origins*, 194.
94. ibid., 186.
95. Kodama, *Nōmin seikatsushi*, 225. See also, Smith, *Agrarian Origins*, 59.
96. Smith, *Agrarian Origins*, 58.
97. ibid.
98. ibid.
99. Chambliss, *Chiarajima*, 100.
100. Smith, *Agrarian Origins*, 58-9.
101. ibid., 59.
102. ibid.
103. Chambliss, *Chiarajima*, 10-1.
104. Befu, "Village Autonomy," 312.
105. Morita, "Zaimachi," 350-1.

106. Chambliss, Chiarajima, 10.
107. ibid., 11.
108. Smith, Agrarian Origins, 62.
109. Morisue, Seikatsushi, vol. II, 71.
110. Chambliss, Chiarajima, 12.
111. Kodama, Nōmin seikatsushi, 211.
112. Andō Shōeki, Shizen shineidō, IV, Ankoku oyobi seijin nanushi no ron, transl. in, Norman, "Andō Shōeki," 105.
113. Smith, Agrarian Origins, 59-60.
114. ibid., 68.
115. Kodama, Nōmin seikatsushi, 114 ff.
116. Smith, Agrarian Origins, 200.
117. ibid., 183.
118. ibid., 68.
119. ibid., 69-72.
120. ibid., 72.
121. ibid.
122. ibid., 67-8.
123. ibid., 92.
124. "Irrigation," EB, vol. XII, 644.
125. Nagai, Kome no rekishi, 151.
126. Siebold, Nippon, vol. VI, part VI, 64.
127. Veitch, "Notes," 476.
128. Thunberg, Reise, vol. II, part I, 59-60.
129. ibid., vol. II, part I, 83.
130. ibid., vol. II, part I, 172.
131. ibid.
132. de Geus, Fertilizer Guide, 46.
133. "Fertilizers and Manures," EB, vol. IX, 213.
134. Siebold, Nippon, vol. II, part II, 73-4.
135. Nagai, Kome no rekishi, 151.
136. Morisue, Seikatsushi, vol. II, 184.
137. Sansom, Japan, vol. I, 5.
138. Johnson, "Hamlet Structure," 163.
139. ibid., 164.

140. Johnson, Nagura Mura, 40-1.
141. ibid., 102.
142. Hefele, "Reiseeindrücke," 148.
143. ibid.
144. Johnson, "Status Changes," 164.
145. Smith, Agrarian Origins, 92.
146. Nagai, Kome no rekishi, 152.
147. Smith, Agrarian Origins, 93.
148. Oguri, "Iriai," 411.
149. Johnson, Nagura Mura, 127.
150. ibid., 148.
151. Nagai, Kome no rekishi, 151.
152. de Geus, Fertilizer Guide, 20.
153. Dept. of Statistical Surveys of the Ministry of Agriculture, Rinnō riyō jōkyō chōsa, quoted in Oguri, "Iriai," 406-7.
154. Oguri, "Iriai," 406, note 3.
155. ibid., 407, note 4.
156. ibid., 414.
157. Johnson, "Status Changes," 164.
158. "Iriai," NKSJ, 68.
159. Siebold, Nippon, vol. VI, part VI, 62-3.
160. Kämpfer, Japan, vol. I, 117.
161. ibid., 117.
162. ibid.
163. Tokoro, "Ringyō," 199.
164. Siebold, Nippon, vol. VI, part VI, 62-3.
165. Tokoro, "Ringyō," 199.
166. Sansom, Japan, vol. III, 114.
167. quoted in, Tokoro, "Ringyō," 198.
168. Kämpfer, Japan, vol. I, 117.
169. Tokoro, "Ringyō," 202.
170. Smith, Agrarian Origins, 97.

2. Higo in the 18th Century

The borders of the Higo domain in the Tokugawa period correspond roughly to those of the Kumamoto prefecture of today. Occupying the central part of the western half of the island of Kyūshū, Higo bordered on the Ariake bay to the west, and was flanked by the domains of Chikugo to the north, Bungo to the northeast, Hyūga to the east, and Satsuma to the south. Its capital, the castle town of Kumamoto, was built on the Shirakawa river on the junction of the main north-south traffic route with the east-west route across the Kyūshū mountain range to the Bungo and Hyūga domains. The main harbours from where the tax-rice and local products were shipped for sale to the markets in Ōsaka were Oshima on the estuary of the Shirakawa river, not far to the west of the capital, and Kawashiri on the estuary of the Kasegawa river. The Higo authorities had, furthermore, access by a narrow corridor to one harbour on the east coast of Kyūshū, Tsuruzaki, which was an enclave in the domain of Hyūga. This harbour was used by the lord of Higo and his retinue to embark on their state barge for Edo.

The economy of the Higo domain may be divided into two basic types. One is that of the mountainous regions in the north-east, with the Aso volcanic range, and the southern part of Higo except for the Hitoyoshi basin. These regions were sparsely settled as a rule and often almost inaccessible. The second type is that of the densely populated alluvial fan in the central part and the northwestern region of Higo with its intensive rice culture.

The mountains cover a much larger part of the domain than the alluvial fan does - land which was of little value to the authorities until they began to develop its huge timber potential. The topography of the mountains with their countless valleys was not favourable to centralized control; even after

the revision of land surveys during the Hōreki reform, many peasants there found it easy to supplement a living on the yield of hidden fields (onden) in some side-valley unknown to the tax inspectors. Although rice could be produced on terraced fields[a] in mountain valleys where the volcanic earth was not either too porous to prevent effective irrigation[b] or too rich in minerals, the two factors of a comparatively cool climate and cold spring water combined to produce lesser amounts of rice than a field of the same size on the plain and moreover of a quality which could not be marketed. Peasants therefore concentrated on other cereals such as naked barley, different types of millet and buckwheat. In some places, peasants grew non-glutinous, long-grained Indian rice (okabo, uruchi) on unirrigated fields for their own consumption. This did not only need little fertilizer and withstood droughts well, but also ripened early, thus helping the poorer peasants to tide over times of hardship until they could harvest other crops[1]. During the 18th century, the growing influence of the market economy could be felt even in mountain valleys as local market centres came into existence along the main routes across the mountains. At the same time, other communities well away from the main routes did not come into contact with nationwide cultural and technological development, and so continued to apply earlier agricultural techniques and preserved forms of social organization which had already undergone change in the more advanced regions of Japan. On the whole, however, mountain communities could not be economically self-sufficient. Close trade links with a market town on the periphery of the

---

[a] These fields were known in Higo as "shelf-fields" (tanata).

[b] Volcanic earth, called imogo in Kumamoto and shirasu in Satsuma, produced extremely poor rice, fetching the lowest prices on the Ōsaka market.

plain were an essential precondition to guaranteeing their subsistence. There, the village could sell its local products such as charcoal, firewood, mushrooms, and wooden wares. It is reported of one remote village, that peasants could not even grow sufficient foxtail millet to keep from starving, so that their livelihood depended on their trade with bear liver and the hides of boar and deer[2]. The exchange of goods between the communities gave rise to horse-transport trade, which afforded to peasants in mountain valleys the possibility of earning a few coins during the slack season[3].

The fertile rice lands of the alluvial fan on the other hand, were the mainstay of domain finances. Before the 16th century, settlements had been situated mainly along the foot-hills of the Kyūshū mountain range on the periphery of the alluvial plain, but with the tremendous progress made in irrigation and in dam construction technology it had, by the late 16th century, become possible to use all of the alluvial land for rice cultivation. The next step in the effort to increase rice production was to reclaim land from the sea; cultivation of reclaimed land did, however, pose problems which contemporary technology often could not solve satisfactorily. Rice grown on newly reclaimed land was, moreover, of a relatively poor quality which brought small returns on the market of Ōsaka. In contrast, rice grown on "old" land was of a consistently high quality, invariably topping the list of price notations for the rice of the different domains in Ōsaka. During the Tokugawa period, Higo was one of the main suppliers of rice to the Ōsaka market and its rice had a great influence on price developments. Bills drafted on Higo rice were considered to be more trustworthy than others[4]. The best quality of Higo rice was grown on a small area north of the capital in the Kikuchi and Yamaga region (<u>jōhoku</u>- or Takase rice), while rice from the Yatsushiro basin, another major granary to the south of the

capital, was already of a lower quality. The finances of the domain thus depended precariously on the rice production of a relatively small area, which was collected at the time of tax payment and shipped to Ōsaka. Rice of a lesser quality from other regions was mainly intended for internal consumption. Even after the Tokugawa period, the fertile littoral contributed significantly to determining the role of the modern Kumamoto prefecture as an agricultural zone in the economic structure of 20th century Kyūshū[a].

Besides the villages and hamlets where the large majority of the population was living, several communities on the plain had developed to a larger size owing to their trade with the mountainous hinterland. In these communities, known as _zaimachi_, rural merchants occupied a position of influence already in the early 17th century[b]. While it was government policy to

---

[a] Kyūshū can today be roughly divided into three different economic zones. In the north, centring around the main cities of Fukuoka and Nagasaki, we have one of the most highly industrialized parts of Japan which specializes in heavy industry. In 1971, population density reported for this region was second only to the urban areas around Ōsaka, Nagoya, and the Kantō area[5]. Tropical southern Kyūshū, on the other hand, is one of Japan's most isolated, poorest, and most tradition-bound regions. With unproductive soil on ash plateaus and volcanic peaks predominating, the economy of the south rests on primitive farming, fishing, and forestry. Between these two extremes on the scale of economic development, there are the plains in central western Kyūshū. These alluvial plains, which are noted for their large rice surpluses and general agricultural output, today fulfil an important function as food suppliers to the northern cities. The main service centre for this agricultural zone is the town of Kumamoto[6].

[b] The early penetration of some local centres in the remote regions of Higo by commerce and money can be illustrated by the example of the town of Hamamachi in the Yabe district of the Higo mountains. Although the district was populated predominantly by small peasants, there are records of five _sake_ breweries as early as the Genroku period (1688-1704). The books of one of these families, the Shimoda family, show that as early as the beginning of the 18th century when the firm's activities had spread to dealing in rice, millet, seeds, beans, small wares, cords, salt, and vinegar besides bamboo skins, tea, and cloth, they also acted as money-lenders to peasants against pawn[7]. See, Morita, "Zaimachi".

compel merchants to reside in the castle town in order to prevent the intrusion of capital into the countryside, the first lord of Higo, Hosokawa Tadatoshi, had granted town status to the largest of these communities. Initially, there were five of these towns in the Higo domain, namely the castle town of Kumamoto, Yatsushiro, Takase, Takahashi, and Kawashiri. The other zaimachi continued to be treated as villages in the domain administration. During the Hōreki period (1751-64), another three towns were added to the list of recognized towns, namely Uto, Zashiki, and Tsuruzaki, which belonged to the administrative category of junmachi. The significance of official recognition of the town status lay in the fact that a town was thereby removed from the jurisdiction of the Commissioner of County Affairs (gunbugyō) - the county official (gundai) of the period after the Hōreki reform - and were assigned a town magistrate each to deal with local matters. Moreover, privileges regarding trade and commerce granted to these towns did not differ from those granted to merchants in the castle town. In 1670, for instance, the retailing of sake was prohibited by official decree in all villages and rural towns, except for the recognized towns. This gokamachi ("Five towns") regulation contributed effectively to curbing the development of other centres of commerce and trade in provincial Higo.

As to general conditions in Higo prior to the writing of the TN, we are fortunate in having an account of a contemporary who travelled through Higo on foot in the 6th and 7th month of 1783. This was Furukawa Koshōken (1726-1807), a medical practitioner and apothecary from Bitchū, the western part of the modern prefecture of Okayama. On his journey, which took him through all domains of Kyūshū, he put down his observations in his Saiyū Zakki (Random Notes from a Journey to the West)[a]. His writings are invaluable for the present study as they provide us with the commentary of a comparatively unbiased ob-

[a] NSSSS, vol. 2, 366-95.

server, who had undertaken his journey with no other motive than to satisfy his tremendous curiosity about other lands. His account remained uncensored as the Bitchū authorities saw no reason to suppress remarks critical of conditions in other domains, all the more since Furukawa made no secret of his loyalty to the Tokugawa house. His notes afford interesting insights into contemporary life in Higo as they are not restricted to observations of a general nature but contain the author's own critical and straightforward impressions on the state of society and the economy[a].

From the graphic account of his trip, which took him not only through the comparatively well-to-do regions on the alluvial plain but also to the less advanced regions in the mountains of Higo, there emerges clearly the picture of an economically backward domain[b]. Furukawa himself had no doubt about the cause of this decay; in his opinion, not the land itself but maladministration was the cause of poverty. Upon

[a] In the third month of 1783, Furukawa ferried over the straits of Shimonoseki from where he went first to Hyūga on the eastern coast, then on to Satsuma on the southern tip of the island. There he turned north again, entering Higo in the 6th month. Sometime during the 7th month, he left for Nagasaki and returned to Shimonoseki in the ninth month.

[b] As I have observed myself, even the modern traveller is struck by the considerable deterioration in the quality of housing as well as the outward appearance of villages as he enters Kumamoto prefecture on the train coming from Fukuoka. During my stay in Kumamoto in 1972, a prominent Tōkyō businessman was reported by the local newspaper to have characterized the economic situation of the Kumamoto prefecture as that of an "underdeveloped country". As my friends in Kumamoto are assuring me, the situation is today rapidly changing, mainly owing to improving traffic connections with the industrial and commercial centres of Japan. So, for instance, Kumamoto airport was modernized and enlarged in 1972, a modern motorway to link north and south Kyūshū reached Kumamoto in 1974, while the bullet train has only recently, in early 1975, begun operating between Fukuoka and Tōkyō, cutting travelling time between these two cities by half.

crossing the border from Satsuma into Higo, he wrote that with the growth of cereals, plants and trees being no different from that in his native domain, Higo was "not a poor country at all"[8]. He made special mention of the fact that there were some places where cotton was harvested, and was plainly amazed at the plentiful bamboo everywhere. At the end of his journey through Higo, however, he had to conclude that Higo compared unfavourably with its neighbour to the south, Satsuma:

> "As soon as I had crossed the border into Higo, the peasant dwellings looked wretched and there were many ruined houses everywhere, although at that time I was not yet sure as to the reason for this - whether it was due to the exorbitant tax rate or to sloth on part of the peasants"[9].

As he travelled from Kawashiri to Suizenji, Furukawa wrote that "although there are many houses, I cannot see one which is stately. Nowhere are there storehouses with their white-washed mudwalls which are so prominent in the Kamigata area[a]"[10]. This remark is particularly revealing when we know that on this stage of his journey, Furukawa had crossed Takuma county, the main rice producing area of Higo with the highest increase in assessed yield as recorded by the _jihikiawase_ land survey of the second half of the 18th century[b]. Even here, where one would expect signs of at least modest prosperity, Furukawa does not mention anything that he would have associated in any way with a prosperous peasantry. It is only by contrasting his descriptions of peasant life on the alluvial plain with those he gave of conditions in the mountains of Higo[c] that we realize that the fact that peasants in Takuma county were living in houses was, in fact, a sign of relative prosperity. Asked

---

[a] During the Tokugawa period, the term Kamigata stood for the region west of Mikawa (Aichi prefecture) and included Central Japan (_Chūgoku_) and the island of Shikoku.

[b] (See, 148 ff.)

[c] (See, 222-4.)

for an explanation of poverty in the region, a peasant told Furukawa that with tax rates being as exorbitant as they were, it was impossible to amass riches. To Furukawa, however, it was beyond doubt that the reason for peasant distress lay in government mismanagement. When told about widespread starvation in the Aso region in the wake of successive years of bad harvest, he commented:

> "Seeing all those empty houses deserted by their former occupants, I had to conclude that I had indeed been told the truth. The ruler of this land[a] enjoys the reputation of a sage in other domains and, from what I heard, his minister of finance, Hori Heitazaemon, is a loyal servant; so I could not help wondering how they could ever have allowed the situation to deteriorate so far that it led to the deaths of so many people. As I pursued the matter further, thinking that I might have been taken in by false rumours, I found out that there can be no disputing the fact that there were indeed peasants who had abandoned their homes to go together with their families to Kumamoto, hoping to live there as beggars, but collapsed on the way and were left to die by the road. As far as I could see, that was not a case of benevolent rule. I may be accused of slandering the high-born if I, who am of humble origin myself, set down such things on paper, but I shall nevertheless venture to do so to a limited extent because if I did not give all the facts as I heard them, I would be guilty of flattery"[11].

Not even the castle town of Kumamoto could improve the generally unfavourable impression received by Furukawa who, on his earlier trips, had visited the flourishing cultural and economic centres of Kyōto and Ōsaka. Although he found Kumamoto with its 20'000 houses grouped in the same manner as in Edo around the castle, with separate districts for warriors and the different professions, to be rather larger than either Hiroshima or Okayama, he found that "for all the splendid houses I could perceive here and there, it was an ugly town to look at because in between there were all the thatched houses of the poor"[12]. Prosperity, it seems, was not as widespread in Kumamoto as in other castle towns, although, as was

---

[a] Hosokawa Shigekata (1720-85) (See, 97, 97n.)

noted by Furukawa, more merchants could be seen in the street-life of the town than in Hiroshima and Okayama. Speaking of the character of the inhabitants of Kumamoto, he wrote that they compared unfavourably both in character and dialect with people of other towns - a personal opinion which may well have been coloured by his generally unfavourable impression of Higo. Summing up his observations in the capital, he wrote:

> "There are not as many comings and goings of people in the streets (as in the Kamigata area[a], H.M.R.) which makes one feel desolate.... Somehow, the atmosphere is that of an out-of-the-way place"[13].

Throughout his journey through Higo, Furukawa had been under close surveillance by the authorities. In Sagara on the southern border of Higo, village officials had never failed to send a guard along with him as far as the next village. There, he was allowed to stay only in the houses of village officials, albeit free of charge. This prompted Furukawa to comment wrily, that while he was grateful for the hospitality of the authorities, he realized that this was only done in order to prevent travellers like himself from getting too close a look at local conditions[14]. According to him, Higo and Satsuma were the only domains at that time where hostels were allowed by the authorities to carry on their business between the official stages on a road in order to facilitate control over travellers. In these hostels, mendicant priests and even monkey leaders, beggars, and outcasts could stay overnight as long as they paid the fee charged[15]. Nevertheless, government control over travellers does not seem to have unduly restricted Furukawa's freedom of movement. In the next chapter on peasant life in Higo, we shall return to this most informative account.

---

[a] (See, 87n.)

2.1. The Reforms of the Hōreki Period, 1751-1764.

To understand the content of the TN, we must turn to the history of Higo in the 18th century. It was during the reforms of the Hōreki period[a] (1751-64) that conditions were created which gave rise to the concern among peasants as expressed in the TN. In this sense, the Hōreki reforms determine to a large extent the content of the TN. First, however, we must turn to conditions in Higo during the first half of the 18th century. Upon this, the individual measures taken during the Hōreki reform will be discussed, followed by an outline of the events of 1802/03 which prompted our author to write the TN.

The financial situation of the Higo domain in the first half of the 18th century was strained. Tax revenue from agriculture, the single most important source of revenue of the Higo domain, never quite caught up with spiralling debts, although the total rice production showed a tendency to rise[b] and labour, even though not as plentiful in rural Higo as the authorities would have wished, was at least not decreasing as was the case in many other domains[c].

---

[a] For a general introduction to the Hōreki reform in Higo, see, Ōe, "Kumamoto-han ni okeru hansei kaikaku." By the same author, also "Kaikaku seiji (Hōreki) no nōmin seisaku," which focuses on the effect of the Hōreki reform on the peasantry.

[b] (See, 148 ff.)

[c] Higo belonged to those domains whose population increased throughout the Tokugawa period, though only slowly at times, even during the second half of the period, when in many other domains the population was stagnating or even decreasing. According to Taeuber, Higo belonged to those domains with an increase in commoner population ranging between 0 and 9 percent in the period 1750-1804, and to those with an increase of between 10 and 19 percent in the period 1804-1852[16]. Census figures recording the commoner population of Higo - generally above the age of sixteen - culled by Ōe from different official sources, confirm this general statement[17]. These figures suggest that the commoner population of Higo,

The total annual revenue of the Higo domain prior to the Hōreki reform was put at around 350'000 koku at the most by one official source[18]. Ordinary expenditure, on the other hand, was put at about 430'000 koku for the year 1752 by another official document[19]. In the absence of major supplementary sources of revenue, tax revenue from agriculture had to cover almost all expenses of the administration, stipends of the samurai, the upkeep of the castle, and the tremendous costs arising in connection with the duty of alternate attendance at the court of the Shogun. In fact, the expenses of the Higo domain invariably exceeded the annual tax revenue by far, so that the authorities were forced to take up loans to cover the deficit. By 1712, the domain had borrowed, in Edo alone, about 380'000 ryō[20], the equivalent of about 270'000 koku of prime quality Takase rice, but the period between 1730 and 1745 brought even heavier debts as considerable extraordinary expenditure was added to the ordinary annual financial burden of the authorities.

The following examples taken from this period give a fair impression of the size of these extraordinary costs[a]. The

i.e. on principle the population of rural Higo, had more than doubled in the period 1634-1734 (from 203'678 to 394'985 in 1682 and then to 531'248 in 1734), but had then entered a period of stagnation, with the following five decades recording an increase of only about 1'000 people (1792: 532'174). Then, the increase was again more pronounced, with population figures rising from 532'174 in 1792 to 553'351 in 1810. Although Higo was thus in a relatively favourable situation if compared to many other domains, large projects of land reclamation, irrigation projects or flood control to increase the agricultural production would have required still more manpower; as Taeuber has pointed out, whenever the population problem worried the authorities during the Tokugawa period, it was "a problem of inadequate, rather than surplus, population"[21].

[a] This exposé of the financial difficulties of the Hosokawa follows the account given in, Ozaki, Kumamoto no rekishi, 183 ff.

wedding celebrations of the fifth lord of Higo, Muneyoshi, in 1741, required about 60'000 koku of rice, orders of the shogunate to participate in a construction project on the Tone river in 1742 cost the Higo domain about 180'000 koku of rice, the reconstruction of the Higo mansion in Edo after it had been destroyed by fire cost 90'000 koku, while overhauling the luxurious state barge used by domain officials for their journeys to Edo cost about 6'000 koku[22].

Unexpected payments on such a substantial scale could upset budget calculations, thus rendering long-term financial planning impossible. With an annual deficit of between 70'000 to 80'000 koku and mounting interest on loans, the total state debt was gradually assuming huge proportions. As in these circumstances it was obvious that repayment of loans was largely illusory, the Hosokawa family found it increasingly difficult to cover their capital demand on the market. Merchants were well-informed of the financial situation of their prospective clients, and so it was natural that they should have shown great reluctance to advance further loans. As early as 1728, the merchant Mitsui Takafusa warned his successors in his Chōnin Kōken Mokuroku (Observations on Merchants):

> "It is generally the same story with those who lend to daimyō, but the Hosokawa family long has had a reputation as an offender and frequently has repudiated debts to merchants. At this time, Tsuji, Tamaya and Iehara all crashed through being unable to collect large sums lent to this mansion. All had these agreements to be paid in instalments year by year, but they were broken time after time. This sort of thing is not necessarily confined to the Hosokawa family. It must be considered the normal thing with daimyō who arrange to pay in annual instalments"[23].

The constant financial worries of the Higo domain were indeed proverbial among the merchants of Edo. Punning on the word kanake which means both metallic taste and money, they joked that a sure means of preventing metallic taste in a new iron pot or kettle was to write the name Hosokawa on it[24].

On several occasions, the lord of Higo could not even leave on time for Edo on his turn of duty as the preparations for the procession had had to be discontinued owing to the acute lack of funds; in 1732, for instance, the state barge could leave for Edo only after sufficient donations had been received from peasants as well as from the population of Kumamoto, Kawashiri, and the *zaimachi*[a] [25].

The reduction of the stipends of vassals to relieve financial pressure was freely practiced by the feudal authorities during the Tokugawa period because financial obligations of vassals towards their lord were neither clearly defined nor limited[26]. Besides bringing temporary relief to finances, this measure could, however, also add to the latent discontent among the lower echelons of samurai, who were forced to find ways to supplement their stipends. This may be one reason why Higo had put off the decision to cut stipends for considerably longer than other domains in Kyūshū, such as Yanagawa, Kokura, Kurume, and Hirado. Another reason was to guarantee an economic basis which was independent of the general economic situation of the domain to military commanders who were charged with guarding duties in the port of Nagasaki and on the *tenryō* of the Amakusa peninsula as well as with keeping troops ready for the eventuality of a rebellion of the Shimazu family of Satsuma against the shogunate.

However, in 1680 the Higo authorities could no longer avoid assuming direct control over the fiefs of its retainers. Henceforth, peasants tilling such land had to pay their annual tax to the authorities, while the holder of the fief received his share of the harvest from the authorities (*kuramai chigyō*). This important change, which had paved the way for deductions

[a] (See, 84-5.)

from stipends depending on the financial situation of the government, was only briefly revoked in 1683 and remained in force thereafter until the end of the Tokugawa period. In 1768, the holder of a 100 koku fief was paid only 13 koku - about one third of his earlier income[27] - while the amounts paid out in later years, quoted by Morita, ranged between 17 koku in 1795 and 32 koku in 1803 (all per 100 koku)[28]. In the first half of the 18th century, under the Commissioner of Finance Kunitake Dansuke, stipends were at times not even paid out in rice, but in substitutes such as millet and beans. Although these deductions were known as "loans" (o-kariage), they were in reality never repaid[a].

Another measure dictated by economic realities was the over-issue of paper money (ginsatsu) to which the Higo authorities resorted in 1746. This was not the first time that paper money was issued in Higo - the first issue had circulated between 1704 and 1709 and the second issue between 1733 and 1736[29] - but it seems that the third issue was even less covered by silver reserves than the first and second issues had been[b]. Even the Commissioner of Finance, Kunitake, confessed

[a] Writing about Chōshū, Craig has suggested that this reduction in stipends "probably constituted the most important single factor restraining the rise of the han debt"[30]. In Higo, given the absence of major supplementary sources of revenue, this could well hold true, too.

[b] Japanese scholars writing on this issue of hansatsu in Higo maintain that the third issue was totally uncovered by silver; Ōe, for instance, speaks of ginjunbi nashi no ginsatsu hakkō[31]. Now, it is a fact that the over-issue of paper money was quite frequent during the Tokugawa period[32] but it is nevertheless doubtful whether we can speak of an "uncovered" issue of paper money at all. The main reason for this is that the technical process of the issue of paper money entailed the total withdrawal of specie within the domain (with the exception of the very smallest denominations for small change). Specie withdrawn from circulation would therefore in any case constitute a reserve, provided it was not used to cover debts incurred outside the domain. For this reason, it might well be more accurate to speak of an "over-issue" in this case of hansatsu in Higo.

to his doubts as to the outcome of this third issue in a memorandum in which he remarked that if even the previous two issues had ended in chaos, how much likelier this was to happen in this case. He added, however, that there was no other way of aiding the ailing economy; although difficulties were almost certain to arise when this issue was set in circulation, the best one could do was to allow things to take their natural course[33].

The main difficulty with paper money was that it could initiate a dangerous inflationary trend if issued in excess of the total amount of money required by the volume of trade and the level of prices[34 a]. This is, in fact, what happened in Higo already after the second issue of 1733 which had been intended to help pay back a loan of 20'000 ryō received from the shogunate as aid for the famine of 1732. It had caused prices of commodities to rise and had triggered off some of the rare riots in Higo; so, for instance, in Kumamoto in 1736 when townspeople stormed the storehouses of rich merchants

---

[a] During the Tokugawa period, the issue of paper money appears to have served mainly as a means of tiding over financial straits[35]. While paper money could not really solve financial problems as such since it merely shifted the domain debt from one form to another, it could at least stave off a financial impasse for some time. The principal advantage of paper money to the authorities was the fact that the withdrawal of specie from circulation and its replacement with paper money, which could as a rule circulate only within the domain, provided them with the necessary means to cover debts or meet expenditure outside the domain where specie was the only legal tender. Where regional produce was purchased by the authorities with paper money to be sold outside the domain for specie, paper money could make a valuable contribution to domain finances over a longer period. Wherever reserves were inadequate, the feudal authorities relied on the revenue of the following years to protect the issued amount of paper money and to change back to specie when the currency set by the shogunate had expired. At this point, however, paper money was often commuted to a new issue on application to the shogunate, or was even declared worthless. See, "Satsu," NKSJ, 634-44.

and in Hamamachi in the same year, where merchants had refused to sell commodities against payment of paper money. Upon these incidents, paper money was taken out of circulation, even though only three years of the 25-year currency granted by the shogunate had elapsed. Much the same happened with the third issue of 1746. Ordered at a time when tax revenue was so low that no rice could be forwarded to Ōsaka for sale, it had to be called off in the same year.[36] The consequences of this over-issue are described in a petition of a peasant in 1746:

> "Everybody was disquieted at the rising prices of cereals and all other commodities and when word spread around that all paper money was going to be taken out of circulation, a big row developed. Merchants hid away their sake and cereals and sold none of it, so that many people are now on the brink of starvation. The merchants' refusal to sell their goods has become the cause of great affliction which is reaching unprecedented proportions."[37]

The events described in this document are symptomatic of the kind of economic difficulties which arose as a consequence of the over-issue of paper money. They indicate furthermore that, at least on the occasions cited, paper money in Higo had not been freely convertible or, if convertible, then only at a considerable loss.

A further measure resorted to at this time of economic crisis was a strengthening of control in rural administration. In the Reform of County Administration of 1746, the officials were enjoined by the authorities to find out village headmen who pursued their self-interest and peasants hiding fields from the tax inspector. Harsher punishments were to be meted out to those who could not pay their tax; defaulters were to be apprehended together with their families and committed to village prisons, to be released only after the outstanding debt had been paid by their relatives or members of their five-family group[a].

---

[a] (See, 245-6.)

In the 8th month of 1747, the lord of Higo, Muneyoshi, was murdered in the Shogun's castle in Edo. The murder was officially recorded as a tragic case of mistaken identity and the murderer described as a madman[38]. Muneyoshi's death removed also his Minister of Finance, Kunitake Dansuke, from the political scene, who was decried by his enemies as "a poisonous mushroom sapping the strength of the country" (kunitake no dokutake)[39].

Muneyoshi's place was taken by Hosokawa Shigekata (1720-85), an inexperienced young man of 28 years who had spent all of his life within the precincts of daimyō quarters in Kumamoto and Edo where he had been taught the traditional military arts and Confucian philosophy. Throughout his life, he was attracted much more by scientific observation of the native flora and fauna rather than by political problems, so that we may assume that the reforms usually ascribed to him were rather the work of Hori Heitazaemon, who acted as his chief adviser[a].

The task facing the new administration, as they themselves saw it, was to restore the authority of the Hosokawa house and to protect the agrarian basis of the domain econmmy. The individual measures taken under this viewpoint contain a strong element of centralization; known collectively as Hōreki reform, they cover administration, law, education, as well as various sectors of the economy.

2.1.1. Administrative Reforms

Administrative reforms were carried out above all on the level of local administration. The only change in the set-up of domain administration which was of any consequence was the

[a] See the biographical notes on Shigekata and Hori in, Morita, "Hosokawa Shigekata to Hori Heitazaemon." There exists also a hagiography of Shigekata. See, Unō Tōfū, Gindai iji.

creation in 1752 of the office of High Commissioner (Ōbugyō) to exercise control over the hitherto highest authoritative body in domain government, the six commissioners (bugyō). This new office had been created especially for Hori Heitazaemon, who was thereby invested with powers which, to all intents and purposes, made him regent to Shigekata.

The main problems which existed in local administration were inefficiency and corruption among local officials. The village leaders, rightly or wrongly suspected of being intent on their own profit rather than on safeguarding the interests of the state, still found loopholes to enrich themselves at the cost of the domain administration. For this reason, it was important to tie the heads of local administration closer to the domain authorities. A beginning in this direction had been made already in 1746 when village headmen, to assure their loyalty, were confirmed in their office by the domain authorities in the Reform of County Administration. During the Hōreki period, however, many village headmen were relieved of their post and replaced by others - a fact which suggests that the renewal of the ties of allegiance had not been sufficiently effective[40].

In the course of the far-reaching administrative reforms of the Hōreki period, the domain authorities tightened their grip on the rural communities by rearranging local administration along strongly centralistic lines[a]. Higo was now divided into 14 counties (gun) and between 50 to 60 districts (tenaga), the latter grouped in units of five which were mutually responsible for tax payment. The district as administrative unit may be called a special characteristic of the Hosokawa

---

[a] Basic material on the post-Hōreki institutional structure of the Higo domain is contained in Kakizuka, Kanshiki Seidokō (1811). See also, Uchimura, Higo-han no nōson seido, and Morishita, "Kinsei no chihō seido."

administration. Administrative units of other domains with roughly similar functions as the Higo district, such as the suji of the Ōgaki domain, the tōshi of the Morioka domain, and the kumi of many other domains and tenryō, usually comprised between eight and ten villages. A district in Higo, however, was composed of an average of 39 villages with an average estimated yield of over 15'000 koku and could thus be compared only to the tomura of the Kaga domain with an average of 45 villages[41].

Heading the hierarchy of local administration in Higo was the Commissioner of County Affairs, who resided in the castle town. His directives concerning government of a county were handed on to the county official (gundai), who travelled back and forth between his residence in the castle town and his office in the county of assignment[a]. Depending on the size of the county, there were either one or two of these county officials. Directly subordinated to the county official there were the three district officials (tenaga sanyaku), namely the district headman (sōshōya), the official in charge of the woodland (yamashihaiyaku), and the superintendent (tezukeyokome). The post of district headman was the lowest in local administration appointed from the castle town, yet with village headmen being directly answerable to the district headman, this pivotal office vested its holder with more factual influence in local administration than his low rank in the hierarchy would suggest. Responsible only to the absentee county official, the district headman acted to all intents and purposes as mediator between the domain administration and the village.

Perhaps the most characteristic feature of village administration in Higo was the fact that the office of peasant deputy

[a] Only in the early 19th century did the gundai take up permanent residence in his county.

(hyakushōdai), a supervisor of the village executive delegated by the village assembly, was unknown. Here, the place of the peasant deputy in village administration was taken by the censor (metsuke) who, although chosen from the honbyakushō[a], was answerable to the superintendent (tenaga tezuke yokome), not to the village assembly. On the last day of each month, these censors had to report to their superiors, among other things, the names of those who had shown devotion to agriculture, together with cases of filial piety, as well as those who were neglecting their duties or had acted contrary to domain laws, besides reporting specifically on miscreant officials or mentioning those who excelled in office. Since the principal purpose of local administration was to ensure the smooth transaction of tax assessment and the collection of the annual tax, the censors, like all other officials in local administration, had the duty of making sure that within their range of duties everything to do with taxation was carried out in accordance with the provisions issued by the domain government[42]. Thus, on such important occasions as the annual tax assessment, ordinary peasants had no possibility of making themselves heard in the dealings between village officials and the officials sent from the castle town when, so the TN claims, most village officials shrunk from advocating the interests of the community too openly as they were afraid of incurring the wrath of the domain authorities[b].

The post of district headman, whose duties included supervising all sorts of surveys within his district, dealing with law suits and increasing agricultural production, had, until the Hōreki reform, been held hereditarily by members of the landed powerful families and descendants of retainers of earlier rulers of Higo who had been confirmed in their leading positions by the Hosokawa upon their assumption of office in 1632. Inte-

[a] (See, 49.)

[b] (See, TN: 348.)

grated into the ranks of the domain retainers with fiefs between 20 and 150 koku, these families continued to wield power on the local level[a]. By leaving the earlier structures of peasant administration undisturbed, continued tax collection was guaranteed while the Hosokawa were at the same time ensured of the loyal support of the old families. During the Hōreki period, however, the post of district headman came to be filled increasingly with officials who were appointed by the Kumamoto administration - a measure which was in accordance with the official policy of centralization. By this step, which turned this important office into one among many others in the pyramid of the domain bureaucracy, the close ties of district headmen with their land and the local population were severed. District headmen now received rather lower fiefs from the domain authorities - the district headman of the Yabe district, for instance, was granted nominally[b] the sum of 30 koku. Moreover, they could now be transferred from one district to another depending on their deportment in office and on their success in administration and tax collection.

This change from personal to impersonal and bureaucratic rule may well be the underlying cause of the various criticisms concerning district headmen in the TN. Moved around quite frequently according to merit, these new district headmen may well have been unable to take as much personal interest in the peculiar problems of their district as the earlier headmen of local origin[c]. Being government officials, the new district headmen had, no doubt, greater difficulties to defend the interests of the communities in their district against claims

---

[a] See the list of family origins of 43 district headmen who were in office during the Kan'ei period (1624-44) in, Morita, "Gōshisei," 62.

[b] (See, 93-4.)

[c] (See, TN: 348-9.)

of the domain authorities. The characterization of district headmen in the TN is, however, undoubtedly distorted by the author's conviction that these officials were to be blamed for all things amiss in rural administration. The following passage is a representative sample of the kind of misleading generalization often found in the TN:

> "Surely, among the district headmen there may be some who are able to tell right from wrong. Why is it that they seem to do nothing spontaneously? They are always intent on carrying out their duties so as not to imperil their official position, and just to go on enjoying their good life."[43]

According to the TN, district headmen around 1800 had forsaken personal rule on the local level by making "the levy and collection of exorbitant taxes"[44] the only purpose of their office. In the author's opinion, the district headmen should travel through the villages of their district whenever they could spare some time "during spring and summer to judge the sowing of the seeds and the weeding of the rice fields"[45] to arrive at a more realistic assessment of the amount of tax which could reasonably be expected from a particular region. Claiming that district headmen had grown accustomed to luxuries unusual in rural areas, such as "wearing beautiful clothes" and indulging in the "various entertainments"[46], our author alleges that they were little motivated to take up the case of their communities, except to pay lip service to Confucian ethics which liked to depict them as fathers of the peasants[a]. The TN also attacks what was known as debt transfer (*karigae*)[b] which appears to have been practiced by some district headmen; district headmen who had easy access to the capital of the wealthy would grant loans to peasants who found themselves un-

[a] (See, TN: 349-50.)
[b] (See, TN: 362-3.)

able to pay their tax debts. With the highest authority in the district acting as money-lender, repayment of the loan was certain; any outstanding sums were simply deducted from the debtor's tax payment.

Criticism of district headmen in the TN may well have been based on persons and events known to the author personally. We must, however, take into consideration that government sensitivity to signs of insubordination and detrimental conduct in office must on the whole have been heightened by the very importance of the post of district headman to local administration and tax collection - a fact which may well have introduced a bias into the passages on district headmen in the TN. It is true that there had been cases of district headmen who were reprimanded by the domain authorities for calling peasants to their house to make an announcement and making them squat on the mud floor facing them in the same fashion as a lord would receive his vassals in his castle[47]. Yet on the other hand, there were also those district headmen to whom the welfare of their communities was a matter of genuine concern. An outstanding example of a district headman who does not fit into the stereotype established by the TN was Kanokogi Ryōhei whose efforts to solve the problems engendered by land reclamation resulted in marked improvements in the condition of many villages in the Nōzu district[a]. While the harsh criticism in the TN may have been justified in some cases, we must nevertheless beware of jumping to conclusions on the basis of the TN alone.

The office of village headman, too, underwent changes following the Hōreki reform. Whereas village headmen had before held their post by heredity, it was now the district headmen

---

[a] (See, 174 ff.)

who nominated a member of a local family as candidate for the post of village headman[48]. Family status presumably continued to play an important role even now. Although we do not know to what extent the district headman's choice of candidate represented an autonomous decision arrived at independently of village consensus, there can be little doubt that this system of official recommendation enabled the domain authorities to take at least some degree of influence on the choice of suitable candidates on the basis of criteria such as ability and devotion to agriculture. There were, for instance, cases of village headmen being transferred to other villages on official orders[49]. The district headman would recommend the man of his choice to the county official who, as a rule, would confirm the nomination. When the official approval had been given by the county official, the new village headman was summoned to the district office, where a detailed list of duties was read out aloud to him. Upon this, he had to take the oath of office[50]. Usually, appointment to the office of village headman was for life. As remuneration for their service, village headmen were granted the annual sum of 1 <u>koku</u> 5 <u>to</u> per 100 <u>koku</u> of the village <u>kokudaka</u> which they were permitted to draw directly from the village tax payment[51]. In years of bad harvests, this sum was paid out to them by the domain administration. In addition to their normal emolument, village headmen were further granted an allowance for writing material and, even more important, a considerable gradational tax reduction according to the village <u>kokudaka</u>. In a large village of between 1'000 and 1'200 <u>koku</u>, the village headman was permitted to deduct from his own taxable yield the amount of 60 <u>koku</u>, in smaller villages of about 500 to 600 <u>koku</u> only 30 <u>koku</u>[52].

The oath of office which village headmen now had to take before assuming their post, tied them to the domain authorities

closer than before. The numerous provisions contained in the oath of office relating to tax payment and the administration of land and villagers were to all intents and purposes effecting a gradual shift in the character of the post of village headman from that of an advocate of village concerns towards that of a domain official. It is only in the light of this evidence that we may understand the criticism of village headmen contained in the TN. Marked by the same deference towards the officials from the castle town as the district headmen, village headmen are depicted in the TN as spineless - "When the tax inspectors and the examiners say something unreasonable and give them a scolding, they run around trembling and uttering nothing but 'yes, yes', ready to consent to anything"[53] - and uneducated - "It seems that there are many who can neither write nor do sums and who must therefore be deaf to all persuasion..."[54]. While on the one hand they were "eager to please the authorities in whatever they do"[55] by collecting as much tax as possible, they were dishonest towards their fellow villagers on certain occasions, such as, for instance, when sharing out the tax benefits after reassessments[a]. They are not only criticized for their lack of courage in advocating the interests of the whole community at the time of tax assessment, but for their alleged indifference, even callousness, towards the concerns of the ordinary peasants. So, for instance, the representations made by the peasant Naosuke, who accuses a village headman of taking advantage of his official position to enrich himself, meet with no response[b]. Here, as in the case of the district headmen, further studies would be required to ascertain whether there is, in fact, sufficient factual foundation for the allegations in the TN.

---

[a] (See, TN: 378-9.)

[b] (See, TN: 361-2.)

Below the level of village officials, the village assembly, too, was to a large extent integrated into the framework of local administration. An official note concerning local administration of 1813, which relegated to villagers the right of imposing sanctions on late-comers to the village assemblies, suggests that village assemblies were, at least in the early 19th century, a common feature of rural life in Higo[56]. The scant material available today concerning the topics discussed during these meetings makes it, however, rather difficult to draw conclusions as to the exact function of village assemblies[a]. Extant records of assemblies in one village of Higo[b] suggest that self-government was allowed but little scope; items raised related predominantly to obligations of the community which were connected with its function as administrative unit of rural administration.

As the later course of events was to show, the tightly organized administrative system of the Hōreki reform may be credited with having bolstered the position of the domain administration at a time when traditional structures were increasingly exposed to the influence of the new economic forces. That the Higo authorities were comparatively successful in preventing peasant uprisings[c] is to no small extent the result of an efficiently organized administration which, as we have seen, reached down to the level of the village. It will, however, be difficult to assess the economic benefits immediately attributable to the administrative reforms. Further

---

[a] For one village, fairly accurate records report a total of 32 assemblies for the period 1851 to 1854. This figure includes, however, eight meetings of village headmen at the district office which cannot therefore be counted among village assemblies in the proper sense. The remaining 24 meetings were again made up of two different kinds of assemblies, namely 16 meetings of the heads of the five-family groups, the junkai - a kind of liaison meeting at irregular intervals - and the actual village assembly of all peasants, the sō yoriai, which took place regularly each year on the 11th day of the 1st month and at irregular intervals during the year[57].

[b] See, Matsumoto, "Murayoriai," 117-21.

[c] (See, Appendix I.)

studies would, for instance, have to weigh the increase in tax revenue resulting from tightened supervision against the cost of the greater number of subordinate officials who were paid directly by the domain authorities.

2.1.2. Legal Reforms

The Hōreki reform brought important changes in law to enforce the overall concept of the Shigekata administration. To cut down on private spending, strict sumptuary laws governing clothing were promulgated in 1755 - a measure which affected above all the well-to-do. Of greater consequence to the poor and marginal peasants was the introduction in the same year of a new code of criminal law, the Keihō Sōsho[a] which had been compiled by Hori, together with some other eminent persons of Higo. Before then, virtually the only forms of punishment known to the authorities had been the death penalty and various forms of punishment. Now, the introduction of whipping, incarceration, tattooing, and reprimand brought a welcome mitigation of punishment for many lesser offences - a mitigation which betrays the influence by Yoshimune's Kujikata Osadamegaki of 1742 which is considered to be "the high point of written, native law in Japan"[58]. Considerable relief was also brought to the peasantry by the abolition of the cruellest form of torture, the water-dungeon[b]. However, lesser forms of torture continued to be applied to extort confessions, though we do not know how widely this was practiced. In the case of non-payment of tax, for instance, it was still deemed useful to get peasants to divulge any hidden field or the whereabouts of part of their crop. In the early 19th century, such methods were apparently still common enough to give the author of the

[a] A discussion of pre-Hōreki punishment and the new penal code may be found in Yaezu, Keihō Sōsho.

[b] (See, 246.)

TN cause to lament:

> "In this merciful day and age, when the authorities even spare the lives of criminals guilty of lesser offences, how sorry one feels for those peasants who are still tied up by order of the district headman when they cannot pay their tax, and then die at their own hand as they are unable to endure the pain"[59] [a].

This development is also mirrored in the marked increase in the number of prisons as a consequence of the new penal law code. Already under Hosokawa Muneyoshi, the prison system had been expanded from the usual one per county to one in each district[b]. On the orders of his minister of finance, Kunitake, arrest rooms known as aragaki (rough fences) or shichibeya (hostage cells) had been erected on the site of each district office[60] where peasants were to be imprisoned. On the orders of Hori Heitazaemon, who claimed that this no longer sufficed, the number of prisons was now increased to several in each district[61].

True to one of the basic principles taught by Legalist philosophy, harsh punishments were balanced by the promise of favours to the virtuous[c]. One contemporary author deplored the fact that in Shigekata's time the basic Confucian virtues had fallen into oblivion, with honesty having become "the Chinese word for foolishness" while the virtues of loyalty and filial piety "ranked with stupidity"[62]. Early efforts by the authorities to revive these ancient values during the Hōreki reform seem to have been confined to the ruling class and were intended mainly to silence the considerable opposition against Hori's single-handed domination of government[63], but were later extended to the common people, too. At the suggestion

---

[a] (See, TN: 339-40.)

[b] The number of districts in each county decreased in the course of time; in the early 19th century, it ranged between one and seven districts per county, depending on the size of the latter[64].

[c] (See, 33.)

of Shigekata, filial men throughout the domain were recommended and their stories collected to set examples for all the people in Higo[a]. In 1782, the result of these efforts was published under the title of Higo Kōshiden (The Lives of Filial Sons of Higo)[b] - a collection of stereotype stories with a somewhat artificial ring. In the TN, too, this line is followed by suggesting that any number of upright men can be created by rewarding filial men who exert themselves in their family business[c]. Whether this policy met with any degree of success in increasing filial piety is difficult to guess. The effect of money rewards in general can be gauged more accurately. During the Tenpō period (1830-44), for instance, the promise of an official commendation accompanied by a few barrels of sake sufficed to get village headmen to compete with each other as to who was first to complete all the formalities of tax payment[65].

2.1.3. Education

The domain school Jishūkan was conceived by Shigekata to play an integral part in the Hōreki reform. By teaching the sons of all members of the ruling class, including wealthy merchants and money samurai[66], the Way of the Ruler and Subject according to Confucian ethics, the reformers hoped to initiate a rejuvenating process of the feudal order. Already once before in the history of Higo, Confucian writings had been used by

---

[a] A similar practice is reported from Bizen, among other domains, where under the rule of Ikeda Mitsumasa in the 17th century, 1'684 persons of all classes were commended for such virtues as filial piety, loyalty, and truthfulness, besides the more obvious ability at literary and military arts, and good performances of official duties[67].

[b] See, Nakamura, Higo Kōshiden.

[c] (See, TN: 353-4.)

rulers to bolster their rule, namely in the late 15th century, when the head of the ruling Kikuchi family, Shigetomo, had imported Confucian writings directly from Korea[68]. Now, as then, the reformers were pinning their hopes on the efficacity of these writings to remind men of their duties and their station in life.

The motives of the founders are clear from Shigekata's instructions to the first rector of the domain school, Akiyama Sadamasa (pen-name: Gyokusan). In a conversation, Shigekata is said to have remarked to Akiyama that he regarded him as the carpenter of the state. Detailing his expectations, he defined the goals of the new school as consisting above all in reinforcing traditional moral values and an awareness of the division between high and low in society in the youth of Higo. Here, Shigekata also hinted at the particularistic concept underlying education at the domain school:

> "Do not build a single bridge for the finest among my youths (to cross the river to the other shore of filial piety and loyalty, H.M.R.). Those from the upper reaches of the stream should cross there, and those from the lower reaches should cross where they are"[69].

The authorities did not grudge any costs for this project. A good indication of the great importance placed on education by the authorities was the fact that in spite of the strained government finances, the school was allowed unlimited expenditure.

The Jishūkan was opened in 1755 and was soon followed by similar institutions in other parts of Higo - the Denshūkan in Yatsushiro in 1757, the Shūkyōkan in Sagara in 1786, and the Onwakan in Uto[70]. In the regulations of the Jishūkan[a], it was laid down that the main stress of education should lie on the ancient texts, without discarding the new commentaries of the Sung period, however[71]. Most importance was attached to the

[a] These regulations may be found in HBS, vol. 1, 356-8.

study of the Classic of Filial Piety and the Analects, and only then the Five Classics[a] [72]. This official regulation determined to a large extent the traditional outlook of the domain school in most fields of study, with the exception of the medical school, the Saishunkan, which was founded in 1757. Owing to its maxim of going back to original sources rather than concentrating on secondary sources, the influence of the Ancient School on the Higo domain school stimulated at least in this field the adoption of empirical methods of investigation. In practical terms, this entailed the abandonment of Sung period medical literature in favour of observation of disease on man himself. With its departments for internal medicine, surgery, ophthalmology, gynaecology, acupuncture, massage, and for the teaching of native medicinal herbs, this school provided some 300 students with a training in scientific thinking. To be sure, since Chinese medicine was inextricably interwoven with the lore of Confucianism and popular religion, pre-scientific notions exerted an influence even here.

A point of special interest to our study of the TN is the fact that, by the last decade of the 18th century, the Jishūkan was under the influence of kokugaku thought. It is therefore possible that the passages in the TN in which its author expressed his concern for the native cult of Shintō and the worship of mountains and rivers[b] were significantly influenced by the nascent revival of traditional indigenous beliefs among the leading thinkers in the domain.

As early as 1786, a student from Higo, Hotaru Nagaaki, had travelled to Matsuzaka to study with Motoori Norinaga. From his second journey to Matsuzaka in 1791, Hotaru brought back a number of Motoori's writings which he had copied during his studies. These writings became now a considerable

[a] i.e. the Classic of Songs, the Classic of Documents, the Classic of Changes, the Spring and Autumn Annals, and the Record of Rituals.

[b] (See, TN: 406.)

influence on the scholars of the domain school. One of the students there, Nagase Masaki (1765-1835), was so deeply impressed by the thoughts of Motoori that he set his mind on undertaking the journey to Matsuzaka himself.

In the same year, there arrived in Higo a famous man of learning and ardent supporter of the Imperial court, Takayama Hikokuro (1747-93)[a], who travelled through Japan to propagate his political ideal of restoring the Emperor to a central position in the polity of Japan. Foremost among those with whom Takayama discussed national affairs in Kumamoto was the rector of the Jishūkan, Takamoto Shimei, who appears to have taken considerable interest in Japanese literature. In all, Takayama stayed in Higo for about eight months. Probably as a result of his meetings with Takayama, Takamoto supported Nagase's plans to study with Motoori and enabled him to leave for Matsuzaka in the same year.

After his period of study with Motoori, Nagase eventually continued his journey eastward to Edo where he won the friendship of Murata Harumi (1746-1811) and Katō Chikage (1735-1808), who were both engaged in kokugaku studies. For some time, he also joined Hanawa Hōkiichi whom he aided with the compilation of his Gunsho ruijū, a huge collection of miscellaneous writings brought together from all over Japan. Upon his return to Kumamoto, Nagase joined the teaching staff of the Jishūkan where he was to remain until his death in 1855.

Among his students at the Jishūkan, two were to become especially outstanding in the course of their careers. One was Nakajima Hirotari (1792-1864) who was to become a kokugaku scholar and poet of nationwide fame; he did, however, not become an immediate influence on the intellectual climate in Higo as he did not return to Kumamoto until 1861, three years before his death. The other was Hayashi Ōen (1798-1870), who

[a] Together with Gamō Kunpei (1768-1813) and Hayashi Shihei (1738-93), Takayama Hikokuro was referred to as one of the "three odd men of the Kansei period" (Kansei sankijin).

founded a kokugaku school in Kumamoto, the Gendōkan, where over 1'400 students are said to have received their education. It is from this school that later loyalists of Higo origin received a stimulus which was to be decisive for their future lives; so, for instance, Miyabe Teizō (1820-64) who was active during the last years of the Tokugawa period as supporter of the sonnō-jōi movement, and Kawakami Gensai (1834-71) who, in 1864, took part in the assassination of Sakuma Shōzan in Kyōto.

The influence of kokugaku ideas on individuals in the history of Higo is thus clearly discernible. At the same time, however, kokugaku philosophy in Higo appears to have been too weak to influence the shaping of official policy concerning the major issue of national politics during the closing years of the Tokugawa period, namely whether to remain loyal to the shogunate or to shift their allegiance to the Emperor. Although the regulations concerning the curriculum of the Jishūkan apparently allowed scholars and students to engage in kokugaku studies, this philosophy did not gain sufficient strength to play a major role in Higo politics.

This was no doubt to a large extent due to the fact that Shigekata had set out to build an educational institution to revive the traditional social and political order of the early Tokugawa period. Under his sponsorship, the traditionalist idea had gained tremendous momentum; in the political sphere, Shigekata's ideal was embodied in the school faction (gakkō-tō), composed of men who had all received their training at the domain school, which was to dominate the Higo administration long after his death. The strong position of the school faction in government silenced all opposition from other quarters, emanating from such radically different corners as Yokoi Shōnan (1809-69) who, with his adherents, advocated domain reform, and Miyabe Teizō who, on the other side of the political spectrum, envisaged a national polity centring on the person of the Emperor. It is therefore not surprising that Higo should have

remained inactive at a time when the leading men of other domains had long realized that the weaknesses inherent in the Tokugawa polity could only be resolved by striking new paths and were accordingly preparing for their role under a new arrangement. As Craig has correctly pointed out, "the domination of the Kumamoto government by a single faction of high-ranking retainers, who were deeply committed to their privileges and to the _status quo_"[73], was primarily responsible for the inaction of the Higo authorities both during the Tenpō period (1830-44), when they did not join the efforts of other domains to reform, and then during the Meiji restoration, in which Higo played almost no role in politics. The revival of feudal values under the aegis of Shigekata may thus be said to have fairly successfully contributed to protracting the life span of the domain's political institutions.

2.2. The Economic Reform Measures

Economic measures taken during the Hōreki period in Higo must on the whole be seen against the background of anti-commercial thought prevailing in traditional circles dominating the government in Higo at a time when the market economy was increasingly welding the whole territory of Japan into a homogenous economic unit. The economic policies of the Higo domain were, like those of the _bakufu_ and most domains, concentrated mainly on solving pressing financial problems rather than on finding long-term solutions. While some domain authorities were facing the challenge of commerce by establishing themselves on the national market with some particular local product, the Higo authorities made only hesitating steps in this direction. Throughout the Tokugawa period, Higo concentrated almost exclusively on the export of surplus rice to Ōsaka.

This was in accordance with the classic economic dogma of the Tokugawa period which declared the attainment of self-sufficiency in the economic field the foremost aim of domain government. Whereas complete independence from nation-wide economic intercourse could not be achieved as the lords were inevitably drawn into the money economy by the requirement of alternate attendance at the court of the Shogun[74], Higo was singularly favoured by its isolated geographical location to keep the inroads of commerce at a minimum. Indeed, the Higo authorities managed to adhere to this dogma so faithfully that by the Tenpō era (1830-44), the only import from other domains were horses[75]. In those domains which were situated on a main trade route or which were close to the great commercial centres, the tidal wave of the money economy tended to be stronger and more difficult to control in all its ramifications. There, government efforts were apt to be either doomed to failure or to be stopped half-way as a consequence of the momentum created by the forces of the market. Higo, on the other hand, was remote from the Kinai area and well away from a major trade route; protected by its isolated geographical location, the Higo authorities had from the outset stood a better chance of successfully following the Confucian economic orthodoxy. The primacy of rice cultivation in Higo may thus be traced not only to the high fertility of the Higo littoral, but also to the fact that the pull of the developing market economy was not felt in Higo to the same extent that this was the case in domains situated on main trade routes closer to the Kinai and Kantō areas or to other centres of trade and industry of regional importance.

Whereas other domains with soil conditions which did not permit the cultivation of irrigated crops had already at an early stage in the economic development been forced to concentrate on growing cash crops, Higo directed its efforts

less towards developing supplementary sources of revenue. Although it is difficult to assess to what extent the low degree of commercialization of agriculture in Higo was the result of lacking incentive owing to the absence of sufficiently large market-areas in the neighbouring regions or whether it can be traced to the conscious government efforts to restrict the cultivation of commercial crops to the level required to cover domestic needs. There can be little doubt that the large-scale cultivation of cash crops was basically undesirable to the traditionalist Higo authorities, as this would inevitably have increased commercial activities in the rural areas. To control the minimum of cultivation of commercial crops necessary to ensure the self-sufficiency of the domain, the Higo authorities established in the second half of the 18th century several monopolies on domain produce by appointing merchant functionaries as exclusive wholesale dealers. This was on the whole not done with the intention of exploiting the commercial potential of such goods, but rather to subject the production of cash crops to government control.

Government efforts to check the growth of the money economy in the rural areas of Higo are also mirrored in 18th century legislation which attempted to regulate commercial activities in the countryside. In 1690, retail trade in _sake_ was prohibited in the villages of Higo; this activity could now be carried out only in one of the recognized towns. Whereas merchants in these recognized towns were treated in a privileged manner, the activities of merchants in other rural towns were rigorously restricted. In 1703, merchants from other domains were prohibited from entering the Higo domain. In 1716, regulations governing trade in the _zaimachi_[a] were tightened. In 1744, direct sale of fish from fisherman to consumer was forbidden; henceforth, trade had to be carried out through the intermediary of one of fifteen appointed wholesale dealers in the castle town. In

[a] (See, 84-5.)

1749, itinerant traders were prohibited from peddling their wares in rural Higo. In 1754, Toyama medicine salesmen[a], as well as other merchants from other domains, were prohibited from entering the Higo domain. In 1789, the import of various goods, among them medicine and sake, was prohibited. In 1792, peasants were ordered to sell all of their paper mulberry to the wholesale agents appointed by the authorities while provincial merchants were warned not to purchase paper mulberry secretly. Again, it is open to question to what extent such legislation could be enforced at all; generally speaking, however, we may say that the effectivity of any government measure to control commerce in the rural areas of Higo was comparatively high as a consequence of the gokamachi regulation[b] and the unusually dense network of censors[c].

Just as the rigidity imposed upon the commercial life in Higo was effectively curbing the development of commerce and industry, the Higo authorities were imposing narrow limits upon the development of commercial agriculture by keeping the shipment of surplus goods to Ōsaka confined almost exclusively to rice. The determined manner with which the Higo authorities set about restoring the domain economy on the basis of rice cultivation while at the same time restraining the development of commercial structures indicates clearly to what extent the Hōreki reform measures were determined by traditional economic thought. In Higo, the centring of official efforts on rice cultivation meant that economic problems occupying the minds of administrators revolved mainly around questions such as how to protect existing rice land from leaching and erosion, how to reclaim new rice land from the sea and from waste land, and quite generally how to render the system of taxation more effective. Before turning to these problems, let us first look

---

[a] On Toyama salesmen, see, Sheldon, Merchant Class, 145.

[b] (See, 85.)

[c] (See, 99-100.)

at the few items among agricultural produce which were monopolized by the domain authorities, namely silk, paper mulberry, wax, salt, and timber.

The official encouragement of sericulture was part of the economic measures of the Hōreki reform. In 1756, a student from Kumamoto was dispatched to Kyōto to learn the secrets of silkworm rearing. Upon his return, an instruction book explaining the art of raising silkworms and cultivating mulberry trees was distributed to all districts of Higo and a wholesale dealer (ton'ya) was appointed in Kumamoto for cocoons and silk thread. As a result of these efforts, sericulture spread to many parts of Higo; by the Meiwa period (1764-72), the mountains of Higo around the town of Hamamachi had developed into a centre where about 30 young girls were employed by the government to reel silk during spring and summer. It is not quite clear to what extent merchants had been permitted to cooperate in this project beyond selling the small surplus within the domain; according to Morita, the silk manufacture in Hamamachi was run by one government official only[76]. In fact, the activities in this centre of sericulture appear to have owed so much to the dedication of this official that silk production came gradually to a halt after his death in 1776 when no successor was appointed to his office[77]. The government monopoly on silk had thus served mainly to ensure a steady supply of silk to the domain authorities; silk was not exported to Ōsaka but was used to cover domestic demand. The same held true of paper mulberry, on which a government monopoly was established in 1792[78].

The main effort of the Higo authorities to derive profit from a government monopoly was directed towards wax production. The first wax-tree seeds had been purchased from Satsuma in 1724 and had been planted in the Akita county. The seedlings had then been distributed to all counties where they were planted wherever possible, as, for instance, on dikes along the

seashore and on mountain heaths. In 1749 - three years after the abortive third issue of paper money - the authorities established the wax office (hazekata yakusho) in the compound of Kumamoto castle to supervise the cultivation and sale of wax. In 1752, this institution was rendered independent; known as hazekata onma, it was provided with a fund of 800 kan in order to function not only as control organ of wax production but also to fulfil the function of a bank. With the total production amounting at that time to over 5'000'000 kin[79], wax constituted the most important commercial crop cultivated in Higo. Officials dispatched by the wax office purchased the raw material - the berries of the wax tree - from the peasants and organized the harvest from domain forests of wax trees (hazeyama) with hired labour. Initially, wax production from the fruit of the wax tree had been entrusted to appointed merchants, but in 1763, a government wax factory was opened in Takahashi where henceforth all of the Higo wax was to be produced. The bulk of the wax production was then exported to Ōsaka[80].

The centralized system of purchase of the wax-berries gave rise to dissatisfaction among peasants. In their petition of 1769, the district headmen of Higo claimed that peasants were not getting a fair price when selling their produce to the government officials dispatched to every village from the government wax factory. Concluding their petition, the district headmen proposed to the authorities that they themselves should be entrusted with the task of supervising the collection of wax-berries[81]. Although this petition did not bring about the desired changes, a new regulation in 1772 relegated to each district headman the right to appoint a merchant of his choice whereas before wholesale merchants to cooperate with the authorities had been appointed by the domain administration.

Government efforts to increase the production of salt[a], on the other hand, were mainly undertaken to achieve self-sufficiency. It is doubtful whether the Higo authorities could have developed salt into an export article as Higo was put at a disadvantage by the comparatively high rate of precipitation in the coastal region[82]. Moreover, salt production technology in Higo appears to have lagged far behind techniques applied by the main producers along the coast of the Inland sea[83]. In fact, during the 18th century, the annual tax levied on the salt production and paid in kind by the producers was increasingly inadequate to cover even the requirements of the domain authorities, thus forcing them to import salt from the Inland sea region where nine tenths of the total salt production of Japan originated. Sometimes, the authorities also had to purchase salt from producers in Higo at the current market price. It was only after 1800 that the authorities began to encourage actively the production of salt. In 1804, men were sent to other domains to study efficient methods of salt production and on several fields on newly reclaimed land production was taken up. Salt from these fields was reserved for government use (<u>go-yōen</u>) while salt of other producers in Higo continued to be handled by the salt merchants. The export of salt, however, remained prohibited.

---

[a] For an outline of salt production in Higo, see, Morita, "Engyō".

2.2.1. Afforestation

During the Hōreki reform, the timber resources of Higo were systematically developed, not for export but to satisfy demand within the domain[a]. That timber was not exported in large quantities to increase domain revenue was mainly due to the comparatively undistinguished quality of Higo timber in the late 18th century, to the difficulties of transporting timber from where it was cut to the sea, and to the cost of transport to the main lumber markets[b]. The Obi domain (51'000 koku) on the east coast of Kyūshū, for instance, which had been forced by its low per tan productivity of rice land to promote forestry as a means of guaranteeing its subsistence, had succeeded in growing coniferous trees with a comparatively high resin content ideally suited for shipbuilding; that these forests could be exploited at all for commercial purposes, however, was due to the fact that they were situated relatively close to the coast and that the trunks could be floated on rivers from the forests to the seaport of Aburatsu[84]. In Higo, there was the comparatively wide alluvial plain between the main forests and the coast, with rivers which were on the whole too shallow to permit the floating of trunks, with the exception of the Kuma river in the Hitoyoshi region. Export of forest products in the 17th century had accordingly been confined mainly to bamboo for smoke-stacks; only from Hitoyoshi, timber for masts and planks had been exported to Ōsaka until the late 17th century. Moreover, with boats from Higo bound for Ōsaka having to circumnavigate the island of Kyūshū to enter the Inland sea trade route, costs of transport were bound to raise the market price of Higo timber measurably. Whereas the transport factor did not matter greatly with the high quality Higo rice, this was different in the case of timber as soon as other domains, which were situated closer to Ōsaka, were able

---

[a] On afforestation in Higo, see, Morita, "Higo no ringyō". Also, by the same author, "Higo-han rinsei no seikaku ni tsuite".

[b] (See, 73.)

to offer timber of a better quality at a lower price.

In addition to the growing difficulties of selling Higo timber, the Higo authorities had taken steps to restrict the export of timber in the late 17th century at a time when the awareness of the importance of protecting the timber resources was growing everywhere in Japan[a]. In 1691, the export of timber was made subject to government permission, but it was not until after the Hōreki reform, in 1770, that the export of timber was altogether prohibited. In 1797, this prohibition was repeated and it was not until after 1853 that it was removed.

The beginnings of forestry as part of the deliberate attempts of the Higo authorities to strengthen the economic basis of their domain were somewhat later than in other domains. Although some afforestation projects appear to have been carried out already under the rule of Katō Kiyomasa, it is only for Higo under Hosokawa rule that activities in this field are sufficiently documented to allow us to trace developments in forestry. When the Hosokawa assumed power in Higo in 1632, the forests of Higo were still for the most part in a primeval state; the beautiful sugi (cedar) and hinoki (cypress) forests, for which Higo is known today, are entirely the result of the great efforts made by the authorities during the 18th and 19th centuries. Other domains had already at the beginning of the Tokugawa period begun to look upon forestry as an integral part of their economy and could therefore pride themselves on their fine forests already much earlier than the Higo domain. Outstanding among these forests were above all those of the Bizen tenryō, the Kiso forests of the Owari domain, the forests on the upper reaches of the Yoshino river in the Tosa domain, those on the upper reaches of the Yoneshiro river in the Akita domain, and the forests of the Morioka domain. In

[a] (See, 73.)

Kyūshū, there were fine forests in Satsuma, Ōsumi, Hyūga, and Bungo[85]. In Higo, on the other hand, there is no conclusive evidence to suggest that the authorities had paid special attention to forestry before 1700, except for a memorandum of 1662 which calls upon village officials to report to the authorities any unused land which could either be turned into paddy or be used for afforestation. In the 17th century, bamboo could be freely harvested in the remoter forests by the peasants, and as late as the Kanbun era (1661-73), peasants had been allowed to cut bamboo in the vicinity of their village without special permission.

The first documented case of large-scale afforestation dates back to 1730, when a large number of _sugi_ were transplanted from the Wakayama domain to the Kamimashiki county, but it was only in the mid-18th century that forestry began to be organized along strict lines, with close supervision of the areas afforested and compulsory registration of all woods, groves, and bamboo thickets. In 1793, a total of around 1'200'000 _sugi_ and _hinoki_ were planted on the Ōya plateau in the Kamimashiki county on the southwestern slope of Mt. Aso under the supervision of Kihara Saiji who combined the offices of Official in charge of the woodland and district headman of Yabe. At around the same time, Mt. Koshiro in the Tamana county on the alluvial plain was afforested with _matsu_ (pine); no figures are available of the number of trees planted. Between 1815 and 1847, around 2'400'000 _sugi_ and _hinoki_ were planted on Mt. Yoshimuta in the Kamimashiki county. In the Kikuchi county, a total of 9'327'000 _matsu_, _sugi_, and _hinoki_ were planted between 1820 and 1865; the smallest number of trees planted in one year was 24'000 in 1837 and the largest number was 393'870 in 1857. In the Tamana county, 1'000'000 trees were registered as newly planted between 1824 and 1829[86]. Unfortunately, available documents on afforestation in Higo do not give information on the total land area covered by

old and new forests; existing statistics are solely concerned with the percentage of withered trees as well as with the total number of trees transplanted in a certain year. It is, however, a fact that the efforts of the Higo authorities in the field of forestry had been so substantial that by the second half of the 19th century, Higo timber was no longer considered in any way inferior to timber of other domains[a].

In the course of the administrative organization of forestry in Higo during the Hōreki reform, three different categories of domain forests (o-tateyama) were established. Firstly, there were the o-tomeyama in which the felling of trees by peasants was altogether prohibited, mainly to protect woodland and heath from excessive exploitation by peasants and in some cases also to reserve land for the lord's hunt. Secondly, there were the oku o-yama in the recesses of the mountainous areas for the cultivation of building timber for the major construction works, such as, for instance, repairs on the castle. This was also where firewood was cut and where charcoal baking took place. For agriculture, oku o-yama often played an important role as catchment area feeding the springs which supplied water to the irrigation systems. Thirdly, there were the sato o-yama situated close to the villages, often on steep hillsides or on land which could not be put to any other use. These forests were generally open for usufruct to the ordinary peasants against payment of the special tax levied by the authorities.

Land could also be afforested on request by a peasant. This was known as hyakushō uedateyama and was usually not more than a small bamboo thicket or a grove near the house. Then there were those forests which had been planted on the request

---

[a] During the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-05, sugi from Higo received great praise as building material for ships and was publicly acknowledged to be of the same quality as the famous sugi from Yoshino[87].

of a samurai. Whereas samurai could freely dispose of timber grown on this land (go-shamen tateyama), peasants were required to follow the strict regulations concerning trees even on their small plots of "private" land. When a peasant applied for the permission to grow bamboo near his house, he had to pay a charge for the felling of each tree still standing there[a] and thereafter an annual tax amounting to between 6 and 7 to of rice per tan for a top grade bamboo thicket or between 3 and 4 to for a lower grade thicket[88].

The task of supervising the domain forests was entrusted to rural samurai who filled the posts of official in charge of the woodland (o-yama shihaiyaku). To enforce forestry regulations, forests were patrolled by guards (yamayokome) and village forest keepers (yamanokuchi). Strict control measures, which ranged from the registration of all trees in small groves around peasant houses to the individual numbering of all trees measuring over 6 shaku in circumference, were combined with the threat of heavy punishment for defaulters[b]. In fact, punishments meted out in Higo for stealing wood were among the severest of all domains for this kind of offence. In the early 19th century, offenders had the character "criminal" (yatsu) tattooed on their body in addition to being whipped between 30 to 100 times. Besides, they had to pay for planting new trees - depending on the gravity of the offence, the number of trees ranged between 2 and 2'000[89]. The heavy work involved in forestry was carried out either by the peasants of the nearby villages who were called up for corvée or by day labourers[c]. In order to guarantee a plentiful

---

[a] In 1860, the charge for felling 25 sugi is reported to have amounted to 20 monme 8 bu - a level which it had apparently reached already during the Hōreki reform[90].

[b] (See, TN: 409.)

[c] We are told that in 1762, a day labourer received a little less than 6 bu 7 ri per day; during the Tenpō/Kōka period (1830-48), the sum of 2 monme 5 bu per day is reported for the same work[91].

supply of timber for future years, the number of newly planted trees had to be considerably higher than the number of trees felled in one year, as on the average about half of the transplanted trees withered after some time and had to be replaced[a]. Further studies might establish the average annual timber requirements of the Higo domain - in 1737, the authorities used about 28'000 trees for various construction projects[92]- but for the present study, the figures of newly planted trees quoted above will have to suffice to give an indication of the scale of forestry operations in Higo .

The author of the TN dwelled at length on the subject of afforestation. Pointing out the consequences of such government initiative, he alleged that the domain forests were not only causing hardship to the ordinary peasants by denying them free access to former common land, but that they moreover constituted a hazard to the environment. Before we turn to a discussion of his allegations, here are the individual points in the order in which they are raised in the TN:

1) Afforestation with pine trees of land where previously only miscanthus has grown is the cause for a decrease in the amount of drainage in the rivers and is consequently blamed for the scarcity of irrigation water[b].
2) Afforestation with pine trees causes a decrease in annual precipitation - another cause of the scarcity of irrigation water[c].
3) The afforestation and protection of former common land decreases the supplies of grass and firewood for agriculture[d].

---

[a] Of the 79'976 trees planted in 1820 in the Kikuchi county, for instance, a total of 25'720 trees - about 32 percent - withered, while in 1849, villages in the Kamimashiki county reported that nearly fifty percent of their transplanted pine trees and cedars had withered[93].

[b] (See, TN: 407.)

[c] (See, TN: 407.)

[d] (See, TN: 409.)

4) Horses and oxen refuse forage which was cut in the vicinity of pine forests; if they nevertheless eat it, their manure has a low fertilizing value[a].
5) The decreasing yield of some rice fields is traced to pine tree sap in the irrigation water[b].

To solve these problems, the author proposes that mountains should be afforested with cedar or cypress instead of pine trees, as these trees were less likely to exert a harmful influence on the ground-water. He then exhorts the authorities to limit the number of domain forests and generally to study local conditions better before deciding on how a certain area was to be put to use. With regard to those domain forests which were in the immediate vicinity of a village, the author proposes that the district headman should see to it that the peasants in this village were granted the right to make limited use of their former communal resources.

Are these allegations really justified, or did the author have some other reason to launch his bitter attack against afforestation projects by the authorities? Since we lack additional source material to verify the statements in the _TN_, I propose to approach the problem from the subject matter and then to proceed to an interpretation of the passages relating to nature within the context of the whole tale.

First some general remarks on the limits of a discussion of these allegations. All of the claims made in the _TN_ relating to the influence of afforestation on the environment postulate causal links in nature which are still today the subject of research projects in the fields of hydrology and forestry. Furthermore, the allegations of the author of the _TN_ were without exception based on observations collected during

[a] (See, _TN_: 410.)
[b] (See, _TN_: 410.)

a limited number of years without the benefit of modern instruments, much less the necessary basic knowledge of the relevant fields of natural science. Although diaries of peasants often contain meticulous entries on rainfall so that rough records of weather conditions could be preserved for generations, peasants had no means of measuring, for instance, the exact amount of precipitation. The same applies to measuring the total drainage of rivers which is alleged to have decreased each year. Any such claim can only be made with any certainty on the basis of exact measurements ranging over several decades; irregularities in weather phenomena continuing for a few years, for instance, easily lead the observer to believe that they indicate a new general trend in climatic development[a]. The problem of lacking background knowledge of the peasants in such matters - an ideal breeding ground for speculation - is briefly brought up in the TN when a peasant says that "we talk only about things which we can see with our own eyes"[94]. We may therefore say already at this point that the statements in the TN regarding the influence of afforestation on the climate must be taken with the utmost reserve.

Regarding the first two points, a study made by a Japanese hydrologist, Hirata Tokutaro, in the late 1920's has produced some interesting results which I would like to cite here. The

[a] The relevance of this fact to modern hydrology has been discussed recently by V. Klemeš in an article ("The Hurst Phenomenon: A Puzzle?," in Water Resources Research, publ. by American Geophysical Union, vol. 10, number 4, (August, 1974): 676.) in which he points out that "there is probably not a single historic time series of which mathematics can tell with certainty whether it is stationary or not, for there is no way of telling from the record alone to what extent the apparent 'changes' are due to sampling errors and to what extent they represent changes in the underlying laws. Even if we knew the complete set of these underlying laws (which we do not), we would not be able to identify the parent law of a specific series with certainty, for there is always a finite probability, however small, that a particular stochastic and even deterministic-looking series could have been created by pure chance or any other probabilistic law."

findings in his report on the relation between the forest and water in Japan[a] indicate general trends only tentatively; the claims in the TN are certainly put in perspective by the fact that Hirata could only present preliminary results in spite of an extensive research program involving 39 stations all over Japan where observations had been collected during almost two decades.

The following observations reported by Hirata appear to shed some light on the allegation made in the TN that afforestation with pine trees was to be blamed for the decreasing level of river water. Investigating the influence of the type of vegetation on the water flow, Hirata found that while proof of a direct influence could not be established - topographical factors carried apparently more weight in this respect - there was a clear link between the vegetation type and the discharge of rivers immediately after a rainfall. If precipitation ranged below 30 millimetres, floods were clearly more intensive and lasted longer in foliacious forests than in coniferous forests. Only if precipitation exceeded this level did the influence of the forest type decrease rapidly[95]. These findings indicate that while pine forests cannot be blamed for a decrease in the total annual drainage of rivers, they could visibly decrease flood peaks, provided the wooded area was sufficiently extensive. An observation of this kind could easily have led peasants to the false conclusion that pine tree afforestations were the cause for a general decrease of the water supply from springs and rivers.

The author of the TN mentions in this context that pine trees were planted in areas where previously miscanthus had

---

[a] Hirata Tokutaro, Contribution to the problem of the relation between the forest and water in Japan. Forestry Experimental Station. Meguro, 1929. This report has been conveniently summarized and commented by Victor Hulin in "Contribution au problème de la relation entre la forêt et l'eau du Japon," in *Revue des eaux et forêts*, 7. sér., 68 (Paris, 1930): 444-52.

grown. This is a rather revealing piece of information which hints at a likely motive of the author to attack such afforestations, namely the concern that such projects, where they entailed the restriction or even the cancellation of former *iriai* rights, were jeopardizing the self-sufficiency of the villages with miscanthus - the material used for thatching houses. The fact that miscanthus was replaced by pine trees suggests furthermore that the checking of erosion may well have been one of the aims of government afforestation projects. That erosion was speeded up by the denudation of mountainsides and that accordingly afforestation projects could contribute to decrease erosion was suggested by Kumazawa Banzan as early as the late 17th century, when he wrote that once "forests grow thick, so that earth is no longer washed down the canyons toward the sea after each rain, the stream beds will become deeper and the fear of floods will be removed"[96]. Miscanthus, a plant with relatively short roots, withered easily in times of drought, thus exposing the soil to the forces of erosion. Pine trees, on the other hand, were generally better equipped to protect the top soil as they held it firmly together with their extensive network of roots. This quality of the pine tree and its importance in Japanese forests was underlined by the German forestry expert Hefele when he called the pine tree the "last fighter in the battle against erosion"[97]. This remark needs some qualification, of course; large areas of pine tree monoculture could also have an adverse effect on the structure of the top soil and thus speed up erosion rather than check it.

Since pine trees could tap ground-water in times of drought when miscanthus would have withered, we cannot altogether dismiss the possibility that in such periods, extensive afforestation of a headwater region with pine trees may have noticeably decreased the base flow of a river. This base flow,

which consisted mainly of the ground-water of a certain catchment area, was of greater importance to agriculture than the flood peaks. In order to understand this, we must look briefly at the characteristics of rainfall in Kyūshū.

As is the case with Japanese climate in general, the weather in Kyūshū, too, is characterized by two rainy seasons each year, the first lasting four weeks from mid-June and the second beginning in August and lasting until the end of October. Rainfall in Higo is abundant; the average annual precipitation ranges above the national average, with considerable differences existing between individual regions within the domain. Ishida[98] mentions for February a total of 500-1'000 millimetres for the littoral and 1'000-2'000 millimetres for the mountains of Higo. In August, the figures for the littoral remain unchanged, but those of the mountainous regions increase markedly, namely to 1'000-2'000 millimetres for the upland regions and to 2'000-3'000 millimetres in the mountains. Moreover, it is important to note the fact that up to 15 percent of the annual rainfall may fall in a single storm lasting two or three days. This highly uneven distribution of rainfall throughout the year with two periods of high water followed each by a period of low water confronted the cultivator of rice fields with special irrigation problems. The main difficulty arising from this peculiar precipitation pattern was that the low water period in May and beginning of June coincided with the growth period of the young rice plants - a stage at which careful irrigation is of the utmost importance. At this critical stage in rice cultivation, a marked decrease in the discharge of a river could have indeed entailed grave consequences. While this may explain the concern expressed in the TN for the decreasing discharge of rivers, there is no evidence to suggest that afforestation projects can in any way be blamed for this phenomenon, especially when considering the fact that water feeding the irrigation systems in the

river valleys and on the alluvial plain did not as a rule originate in a single catchment area. Only in the case of villages depending on a single catchment area for their water supply is it conceivable that afforestation caused a certain decrease in the water supply. The question as to what extent forests were the immediate cause of the observed decrease is, however, extremely complex and is bound to lead to different findings in each case; it can therefore be answered only for individual cases after having given due consideration to all concomitant circumstances.

The second allegation that pine forests were decreasing the total amount of rainfall had been made already by Kumazawa Banzan some hundred years before the TN was written, when he suggested that cedar and nettle trees should be planted on mountains instead of pine trees since their energy would cause "such frequent summer showers that even without digging reservoirs there will be no droughts"[99]. This allegation is certainly unfounded for the reason that rainfall is not a metereological phenomenon produced on a local scale; the greatest part of moisture in the air which is eventually released in the form of precipitation is evaporated from the sea. This point may therefore clearly be relegated to prescientific speculation of the author of the TN.

There may be some truth in the third point made by the author which is expressed in the following passage:

> "This year, (the authorities) had pines and other trees planted on a plot of open land where until last year we could cut grass without hindrance. Now that it has become a domain forest lined with stakes on all four sides displaying notices which strictly prohibit man or beast from entering the ground, we are on no account allowed in. Those who ignore these notices and cause damage to the woods are treated as criminals"[100].

As we have seen above[a], it was only the o-tomeyama which

[a] (See, 124.)

peasants were not allowed to enter. Outright prohibition of access to forests may be presumed to have generally been taken as a precautionary measure to protect the new seedlings or to allow the forest soil to recover after a period of intensive exploitation by the peasants. Generally speaking, existing iriai rights were confirmed by the Higo authorities to the largest extent possible wherever afforestation projects turned out to clash with the interests of a nearby community. Government forestry regulations affected all peasants irrespective of high and low, but poor and marginal peasants were likely to be hardest hit by the new tax for the permission to collect material in the forests. These peasants who had until then been able to collect forest produce to satisfy their own needs and, depending on communal agreements, some surplus to sell on the local markets, now had to find ways to pay the special tax or, in the case of o-tomeyama, to purchase firewood and commercial fertilizer on the local market. It is therefore not inconceivable that afforestation of the kind described in the TN could lead to the non-use of green fertilizer among the poor and marginal peasants. Hardest hit by such afforestation projects were undoubtedly the poorer peasants in the villages on the alluvial plain who, unlike peasants in the mountains, could not fall back on some little plot of waste land which had escaped the attention of the tax officials. On the fertile plain, every inch of land was accounted for in the tax register. The author of the TN expressed this fact in the following words:

> "The way things are at present, peasants living in villages in the deep countryside like ours do not fare too badly, but peasants living near the larger villages in the plain lose the places where they used to cut grass as well as miscanthus and brushwood to be used as fuel"[101].

The fact that the money economy was intruding into yet another

branch of the rural economy which was a vital buttress of village self-sufficiency as idealized by orthodox economic thought. Charges levied by the authorities on firewood after the Hōreki period, for instance, amounted to 2 mon silver per bundle collected in domain forests[102] - a charge which was apparently high enough to force many peasants to avail themselves illegally of what they needed from the forests. Indications that the stealing of wood by peasants was quite common[a] suggest that the charges levied were too high for many peasants, although allowance must undoubtedly be made for those who simply tried to evade payment. In the Tamana county, for instance, the stealing of wood had become so widespread during the last two decades of the 18th century that the mountain patrol had to be armed with daggers on their round of inspection[103].

As to the wider consequences of the establishment of domain forests, it would undoubtedly be misleading to trace the decaying soil qualitys to the single cause of afforestation. This argument was forwarded not only by the author of the TN[b], but also by the village headman of Hisahara village in the Kamoto district on the alluvial plain in a memorandum of 1862, in which he blamed the restriction of iriai rights by the forest administration for the decay of his village[104]. Here, so he claimed, crop yields began to decrease as peasants found themselves unable to collect sufficient amounts of green fertilizer from iriai land; in consequence, a number of peasants lost their land by foreclosure of a loan and were forced to join the growing number of day labourers. Before the period 1818-30, during which their iriai rights were gradually restricted, they had collected green plants and undergrowth as fodder for their animals as well as firewood, brushwood, and pine needles for sale in the nearby town. With the proceeds

[a] (See, TN: 410.)

[b] (See, TN: 410-11.)

from the sale of firewood, so the headman continued, they had been able to buy commercial fertilizer, but after the village had been deprived of this source of additional income its fortunes began to decline and the number of resident families decreased from 82 to 67 within fifty years. Although there can be little doubt that the restriction of iriai rights entailed negative consequences at least for a section of the peasantry, the simplifying explanation given by the author of the TN as well as the village headman of Hisahara village can hardly be said to do justice to the complexity of this problem. In fact, we know that Higo government policy accorded agriculture preference over forestry wherever this was feasible. This is confirmed by cases in which all restrictions on iriai rights were lifted after peasants had complained that they now had difficulties to collect sufficient green fertilizer and plants to feed their animals[105].

The fourth assertion, according to which draught animals did not eat forage collected in the vicinity of pine forests and that, even if they did, their manure had a relatively low fertilizing value, seems again to be unfounded. It is conceivable that if relatively large amounts of pine needles were collected involuntarily by peasants when taking away grass from the fringes of pine forests, draught animals refused to eat it. As far as the fertilizing effect of dung from animals fed with such low-quality forage in times of scarcity is concerned, however, it is far from clear how the author could have established that such dung had indeed a lower fertilizing power, especially since cattle dung was on the whole regarded as a mere additive to night-soil[a].

Whereas the author does not stress the fourth point too strongly, he attaches considerable importance to his fifth assertion, namely that there was a causal link between the

---

[a] (See, 59.)

decrease in the yield of rice fields and afforestation with pine trees as a result of their sap being washed away by rain into the ground-water and the rivers and ultimately, through the irrigation systems, into the fields. This point was also made by Kumazawa Banzan when he wrote that "rain and dew wash down a poison from pines so that underbrush and grass will not grow beneath them, and such water is bad for crops"[106].

Again, this assertion cannot be upheld on closer investigation and we must ask ourselves what the reasons for this argument were. Here, we might profitably look first of all at the consequences of afforestation with pine trees on the environment since it is such observations which prompted peasants to infer processes in nature. Perhaps the most important point to be remembered is that there is almost no undergrowth in pine tree forests. The dense cover of branches effectively cuts off sunshine from the soil beneath the trees, while the dropping needles gradually cover the soil completely with a permeable layer which cannot retain water. Since pine needles take a relatively long time to turn into humus, they form a dry and acid layer which is inhospitable to plant life. This deterioration also affects the soil structure - and this applies to all monocultures of resinous trees - as owing to the absence of a steady supply of dead organic matter the structure of the mould can no longer be maintained, thus exposing the soil vulnerably to the forces of erosion. However, although the soil quality deteriorates slowly in a pine forest, a similar deterioration cannot be observed outside such forests.

It is conceivable that it was the sight of aridity inside pine forests which fostered the false notion that pine trees were poisoning the soil, all the more since it was common knowledge at that time that the roots of these trees have a relatively high resin content - a fact which predestined them

for use as torches. From this followed almost by implication that pine tree sap may well have been responsible for the decreasing yield of nearby paddies.

Whereas it would be false to assume a deleterious effect of ground-water from pine forests on the arable, there is the possibility that such water may not have had quite the same fertilizing effect as water flowing through foliacious forests, since it had a considerably lower organic matter content. If this can be said to have had a measurable effect on the crop yield as is claimed by the author ot the TN - and we have no way of ascertaining at this point whether this was indeed so - this would then have been due to the absence of an ingredient in water rather than to the presence of some toxic matter.

Considered as a whole, these allegations against afforestation with pine trees appear to lack substance, although the possibility that afforestation may at least in isolated cases have been partly to blame for the grievances listed in the TN cannot be excluded altogether. However, as I have outlined above, major afforestation projects on record in Higo were far from being confined to pine trees; in fact, with the exception of the afforestation of Mt. Koshiro in the last decade of the 18th century, trees used for large-scale afforestation projects belonged predominantly to the cedar and cypress varieties. We must therefore assume that afforestations with pine trees attacked by the author of the TN were smaller undertakings on a local level which were intended primarily to gain timber or, depending on the topography, to afford better protection against erosion. Wherever afforestation projects brought long-term profit to the nearby communities by making additional timber supplies for construction available to the villages, by assigning a useful purpose to waste land, and by creating new opportunities for wage labour, it may well be that peasants derived on the whole more profit than the author of the TN was ready to admit. On the other hand, where forestry

regulations restricted <u>iriai</u> rights to a considerable extent, afforestation could entail hardship for the poorer sections of the peasantry – those who were most dependent on the free supplies of essential raw materials from forests and grassland.

To understand the whole passage on rivers and forests in the <u>TN</u>, I believe that we have to go back to what has been said already about traditional political philosophy in the first chapter[a]. There we have seen that the concept of an interdependent relationship between phenomena in society and in nature has a long tradition in the philosophy of China and Japan. In nature, the eye of the trained Confucian moralist detects symptoms which indicate disharmony in society and which can be interpreted as portents. In the writings of Kumazawa Banzan, this idea was applied to conditions in Japan when he wrote that:

> "...mountains and rivers are the foundation of a country. In recent years, mountain forests have been neglected so that rivers are becoming shallow. These are causing great loss to the state. Ever since olden times, such things have been an omen of general disorder"[107].

The solution then proposed by Kumazawa pertains to forestry; by implication, it is, however, also political, since it aims at re-establishing good order not only in nature but at the same time in society, too. A similar note is struck in the <u>TN</u> when the author states that "mountains and rivers must retain their original form"[108]. This suggests that the attack launched against government afforestation was in reality a projection of the author's political views on nature.

This is not to say that authors like Kumazawa or the author of the <u>TN</u> used forestry merely for purposes of imagery to express their political argument in an indirect and veiled form, for topographical and metereological conditions in Japan have always confronted Japanese administrators with tremendous

---

[a] (See, 32, 32n.)

problems. For our purpose of culling information on peasant life in Higo from the _TN_, it is, however, important to bear in mind that the passages on nature in the _TN_ are to a considerable extent distorted by the political philosophy superimposed on actual problems of forestry and water management. Only if we bear this in mind are we able to look at the grievances listed with the necessary detachment for an objective assessment of the situation. Although grievances of the kind listed in the _TN_ appear to have existed on a local level, we cannot at present say how widespread they were in Higo around 1800. Further studies to find out more about the impact of local afforestations on nearby villages might well yield valuable results.

2.2.2. The Land Tax

Let us now turn to the measures taken by the authorities to promote the cultivation of rice. As we have already seen, the economic measures during the Hōreki reform were aimed at achieving self-sufficiency of Higo above all by consolidating the agrarian basis of the domain economy. With rice being the main export article of Higo, efforts by the authorities to increase the amount of specie gained from the sale of surplus produce was directed almost entirely to the various problems connected with the cultivation of rice and its collection by the tax officials. In this connection, the question of how tax was to be assessed assumed considerable importance. In order to understand the background of the discussion on tax assessment in the _TN_, I would like to trace first of all the main development in the tax assessment procedure in Tokugawa Japan.

During the Tokugawa period, there were basically two

different methods of tax assessment, namely the kemi method and the jōmen method. The kemi method represents the earlier stage of taxation policy in Tokugawa Japan; it aimed at securing as high a share of the crop as possible for the authorities each year by means of annual inspections of the rice fields shortly before the harvest. While this method guaranteed an exact determination of the amount of tax which peasants could pay without jeopardizing their livelihood, it had important drawbacks which, though mattering little in traditional agriculture, were brought out in relief by the considerable progress made in the field of agricultural technology during the late 17th and the 18th century. Peasants were kept from their work during the busy harvest season while the assessment was in progress and the officials from the castle town had to be entertained at the expense of the villages. Contemporary Confucian writers deplored the widespread custom of offering bribes to the officials on such occasions in the hope of securing special consideration for the village in the matter of taxes which they suspected of decreasing domain revenue[109]. One of the most decisive factors forcing the authorities to seek new ways of assessing the tax was the development of new strains of rice to suit particular soil conditions, and of which several could be met in one village[a]. As different strains ripened at different times, the agricultural seasons of sowing and harvesting got less clearly defined, thus rendering annual assessments impracticable. Another factor pressing for a reform of tax assessment was the growing importance of second crops, mostly winter cereals, which had to be planted immediately after the rice harvest.

[a] Between the early 17th and the mid-19th century, the number of rice varieties increased from 177 to 2'363. Although this figure may be considered to exaggerate the increase, it nevertheless indicates the degree of effort put into developing strains of rice suited to local soil conditions during the Tokugawa period. See, Smith, Agrarian Origins, 94-5.

The market economy, too, pressed for an immediate collection of the rice as soon as it was ripe; with rice prices changing daily, a delay in the collection of rice owing to a complicated tax assessment procedure could cause considerable financial losses. Unless rice was of an almost unrivalled quality, it was therefore in the interest of a domain to attempt to have their excess rice delivered to the market in Ōsaka as long as stocks were low to profit from high prices.

It is for these reasons that the _jōmen_ method, by which the amount of tax was fixed for a number of years ahead, gradually replaced the _kemi_ method in most areas of Japan. Early attempts at introducing this new method date back to the mid-17th century; one authority names the Tōdō domain in the Iga/Ise region in 1653 and the Matsuyama domain in the Iyo region in 1667[110]. It seems, however, that it was only during the first half of the 18th century that the _jōmen_ method spread to other regions. The principal reasons speaking in favour of its introduction were summed up in a memorial presented to the _bakufu_ during the Kyōhō period[111]. This document stressed the aspect that peasants who knew beforehand how much tax they would have to pay would strive to raise their crop yield so as to benefit from as high a surplus[a] as possible. By giving implicit recognition to the profit motive of peasants to raise agricultural output, the _jōmen_ method marks to some extent the renunciation of traditional concepts underlying taxation policy of the early Tokugawa period. The _jōmen_ method may thus be said to represent an advanced stage in tax assessment of the Tokugawa period. Another important argument in the same document was that the costly annual assessment could be dropped, thus cutting not only the direct costs caused by the numerous administrators but also the indirect losses ascribed to corruption among tax officials. The

[a] By "surplus" is meant what was left to the peasant after taxes.

author of the above petition moreover made mention of the fact that the jōmen method would render long-range budgetary calculations easier, as the annual revenue would then be known several years ahead.

When discussing matters of taxation in Tokugawa Japan, we must bear in mind that tax rates were always related to the assessed yield of a village, the kokudaka, whether fixed annually or for several years at a time. This datum had been established during the 17th century and was based on an examination of the soil quality of the different rice fields and the amount of crop which they were expected to yield, while the yield of other fields was converted to rice equivalents. Subsequent tax assessments merely extrapolated the expected harvest yield of all fields of a village and then established the percentage which had to be paid less or, in years of abundant harvests, in excess of the usual annual tax[a]. Material presented by Smith[b] suggests that land had commonly ceased, from about 1700 on, to be periodically surveyed[112]; from this follows that wherever productivity of the land could be raised, the tax burden of peasants saw a relative decline in the course of time[113].

It is with respect to this peculiarity of taxation during the Tokugawa period that the relative merits of the kemi and the jōmen methods are most evident, for with the kemi method it was possible to correct the original assessment of the soil quality and the expected yield and to adjust the amount of tax to be paid each year to actual conditions. In this way, the annual tax could faithfully follow fluctuations in agricultural production even without periodically revising the village kokudaka. With the jōmen method, on the

---

[a] This is the method followed in Higo until the time the TN was written. (See, TN: 341-2.)

[b] See, Smith, "Land Tax".

other hand, the amount of tax to be paid each year was fixed for a number of years ahead on the basis of the tax returns of the past decades, with allowances being made for the distance over which the tax rice had to be transported to the official storehouse by the peasants. Provided there were only minor fluctuations of crop yields within such a period, peasants stood a good chance to accrue some surplus if they managed to increase productivity by their industriousness and the judicious application of resources. Contrary to what might be expected, the authorities apparently did not raise the tax rate after a stipulated period of five, ten or fifteen years to reap the fruits of increased productivity. As the example of the bakufu shows, the temptation to do so certainly existed when the new method was first tried out, but it appears that it could not be put into practice. Evidence of this may be found in a decree of the 4th month of 1728 where it is stated that those villages paying an "adequate" tax rate, i.e. 50 percent of the assessed yield in accordance with the official policy of gokōgomin (half to the authorities and half to the peasant) would be permitted to have their tax rate fixed for five, ten, or even fifteen years, whereas those villages which had not yet reached this level of taxation would be granted shorter periods only[114]. In the same decree it is further laid down that until that time the tax rate had always been raised upon termination of one tax period but that this practice would henceforth be restricted to those villages which had not yet reached the level of 50 percent.

Judging from this, it seems that conditions did not permit the raising of the tax rate at will - a fact which at least the bakufu realized only after initial attempts to raise the tax rate had ended in failure. The reasons why the tax rate was not periodically adjusted were no doubt manifold.

For one, re-assessing productivity required too massive an administrative effort; for another, the fear of resistance by peasants who stood to lose what their dedication to agriculture had wrought from the soil may well have played a role, too[115]. We must furthermore take into account that much of the rise in productivity was an immediate result of the intensive application of commercial fertilizer; if the present level of production was to be maintained - let alone increased - peasants had to be left with sufficient resources to purchase this vital commodity. An upper limit to the tax rate was furthermore set by the fact that periodically raising the tax rate or the assessed yield would have put too heavy a burden on those peasants who, for some reason, had not contrived to increase the yield of their fields. To this might be added that only a sizable surplus in normal years enabled the peasants to comply with one of the pivotal stipulations of the _jōmen_ method, namely to supplement a deficiency in their tax payment in another year. In fact, the considerable fluctuations in harvest yields made it impossible after some time to employ the _jōmen_ method without subtracting substantially from its essence by re-introducing a possibility to have the fixed amount of tax lowered in years of exceptionally bad harvests. Such re-assessments, generally known as _hamen kemi_, meant in fact nothing less than a temporary return to the _kemi_ method.

The policies of the shogunate relating to the _jōmen_ method may serve as illustration of the difficulties with which feudal authorities were faced when introducing the _jōmen_ method. In 1718, the _bakufu_ ordered villages on their land to make preparations for the change-over to the new method. At first, the _jōmen_ method was confined to villages which had had relatively little fluctuation in their crop yield in the past; in 1722, this initial precaution was dropped and the _jōmen_ method was introduced quite widely on

tenryō. In the same year, the shogunate declared that re-assessment would still be possible after bad harvests, even with the jōmen method. At first, re-assessment was granted only if all peasants of a village applied for it unanimously, but this regulation was changed in 1727 when peasants could apply for a re-assessment provided losses sustained were exceeding fifty percent of the assessed yield in a single village. In 1728, the scale of losses entitling to re-assessment was lowered to forty percent and in 1730, the possibility of re-assessment was extended to upland fields, too. In 1734, the ratio of losses to assessed yield which entitled to re-assessment was finally lowered to thirty percent and was to remain at this level until the end of the Tokugawa period[116]. The decision to lower the rate of losses entitling to re-assessment from the initial fifty to thirty percent suggests that the rigidity of the idea underlying the jōmen method as it had been implemented at first had turned out to be quite unrealistic in practice. The introduction of the re-assessment within the framework of the jōmen method meant, in fact, that the authorities now had to shoulder part of the risk of bad harvests - a risk which had been shifted initially to the peasants in return for the chance offered to them to accrue wealth. The concession granted by the shogunal authorities thus made it possible for many peasants to profit from increased production in normal years without being compelled to tap such wealth as they were able to accrue to supplement the larger deficiencies in their tax payment. There can be little doubt that this regulation, which combined the advantages of the kemi method in years of bad harvests with the advantages of the jōmen method in years of relatively good harvests, was one of the most important pre-conditions to the considerable improvement in the quality of life of a vast number of

peasant families in the Tokugawa period.

This brings us to another aspect of the jōmen method, namely its effect on the different segments of the peasantry. The same principle which predestined the jōmen method for the economically advanced regions where a sufficiently high increase in the productivity of agriculture permitted the shifting of all but the most drastic losses to the peasantry also favoured primarily those peasants who managed to raise the productivity of their arable. Wealthy peasants with relatively large holdings of good-quality rice land and upland dry fields had less difficulty to supplement an eventual tax deficiency on one field with surplus produce from another field which had yielded amply. Poor and marginal peasants, on the other hand, had less land and were therefore on the whole not in a position to spread the risks of crop failure over as many different crops on paddies and dry fields. For this reason, this method of assessment was not welcomed without reservations by the poor and marginal peasants, of whom there were a great many, who were not provided with sufficient funds to increase productivity to the extent where they, too, could have derived full benefit from the advantages of the jōmen method. Moreover, the rigidity introduced into the payment of taxes posed a constant threat to solvency for this segment of the peasantry[117]. The jōmen method thus benefitted above all those among the peasants who were most industrious and eager to raise productivity; by rewarding judicious application of resources, this method of tax assessment may be said to have been a major incentive to progressive farming. At the same time, there can be no denying the fact that a few decades after its introduction, the benefits of the jōmen method began to spread increasingly to wider circles of the peasantry.

Bearing in mind what has been said above, let us now turn to Higo again. Here, the jōmen method was put into effect on a limited scale in 1754. This decision had to be revoked

shortly afterwards because of a series of bad harvests and it was not until 1803 that the jōmen method was at last introduced in Higo. By not making other attempts at introducing the jōmen method in the following five decades, tax assessment in Higo remained fixed in the first stage of tax assessment considerably longer than in other domains, with all that this entailed for agriculture and the peasantry.

Here, the question arises as to why this course should have been followed by the Higo authorities. While a temporary return to the kemi method would have been nothing extraordinary, the decision of the Higo authorities not to make another attempt for so long suggests that there must have been other cogent reasons for not doing so. Tentatively speaking, we may say that the fact that the kemi method harboured less danger of placing too great a burden on small peasants may well have loomed large in the mind of the authorities - a factor which assumed special importance in the comparatively little-developed agrarian economy of Higo which had not yet realized the sort of general increase in productivity that could be witnessed in the agriculture of other regions of Japan. Then, the Higo authorities may also have been aware of the fact that any surplus accrued by peasants as a result of the jōmen method was not only an incentive to improving productivity of agriculture, but at the same time a potential threat to the traditional social order as growing wealth among the peasants almost inevitably spurred the commercialization of agriculture - a factor which would undoubtedly be given due consideration by authorities following traditionalist lines with such consistency.

As to the tax base which was not revised regularly, Higo does not constitute an exception to the tendency observed by Smith in widely scattered areas of Japan[a]. In fact, tax

[a] (See, 142, 142n.)

assessment in Higo was based on the jinarashi, a land survey dating back to the Kan'ei period (1624-44) which had been ordered by the Hosokawa upon their transfer to Higo. The revision of these tax registers was now taken up by the Shigekata administration as one of the measures of the Hōreki reform. The new survey, known as jihikiawase, was begun in 1757 and was not completed until 1769. The aim pursued with this new survey was to discover reclaimed land not yet entered in the tax register, to strike off fields which were no longer cultivated, and to confirm whether fields still had the same size as the one entered in the earlier tax registers. The new survey moreover kept track of crop substitution, above all substitution of irrigated crop for unirrigated crops[118]. During these twelve years of painstaking work, altogether 700 chō of arable were added to the tax registers[a].

This considerable addition to the total area of arable in Higo is probably the single most important factor to account for the increase in assessed yield (gendaka) reported by Morishita for the period between 1736 and around 1810[b].

---

[a] That not all hidden fields were found out is shown by the fact that the period of 1885 to 1890 saw an increase in annual taxed rice field area of 11.8 percent and 10.7 percent between 1890 and 1920. According to Nakamura, this increase can only be attributed to the registration of previously unregistered land or the proper classification of previously misclassified land[119].

[b] Unfortunately, the figures for 1634 and 1650 given in his chart do not permit to compute the rise in assessed yield for the whole of Hosokawa rule in Higo, since these figures belong to the category of gōdaka, i.e. official estimates to be submitted to the bakufu for purposes of record and therefore often rather lower than the actual assessed yield, especially in the case of tozama lords. The figures reported for these two years indicate only a negligible change, namely a decrease from 541'170 koku in 1634 to 540'132 koku in 1650. Complete sets of gendaka figures of all counties are listed only for the years 1736 and around 1810, thus recording the change in assessed yield during a period into which fell the new land survey as well as the change-over to the jōmen method. The gendaka of 1736 is given as 736'210 koku, while that of around 1810 is 781'167 koku[120].

Of the total increase in assessed yield of 44'957 koku, only 15'445 koku were added to the tax registers by the jihikiawase land survey while 29'512 koku were the result of land reclamation after the jihikiawase. The former figure may well include increases in productivity as a result of improved agricultural technology besides enlargement of old fields, but without further investigation it is impossible to assess the extent to which each of these two factors contributed to the total increase of production on old fields. The overall increase in assessed yield of old fields in Higo amounted thus to only 2.1 percent - significantly less than the 4 percent increase in assessed yield as a result of land reclamation.

It is revealing to see how this relatively small increase in assessed yield on old fields was distributed among the individual counties of Higo[a]. Of the fifteen counties listed, ten counties show an increase in assessed yield while the remaining five show a decrease. The rise of assessed yield was most marked in those counties which had a long tradition as rice producing areas; in Takuma county (the modern Hōtaku-gun), which was the main rice producing area of Higo, assessed yield rose by 7.9 percent, in Kikuchi county, which was also famous for the high quality of its rice, assessed yield increased by 5.5 percent while the corresponding figure for the Tamana county was 5 percent and 2.7 percent for the Gōshi county (today integrated in the Kikuchi-gun). This increase in assessed yield of the main rice producing areas of Higo indicates the degree to which the tax base could be raised in these relatively well-to-do areas on the littoral without unduly endangering poor and marginal peasants.

---

[a] The following discussion is based on the chart of assessed yield in, Morishita, "Kinsei no chihōseido," 20.

Figures of rises of assessed yield are further put into perspective as we take into account the separately listed shindendaka figures which indicate the increase of assessed yield as a result of land reclamation. In fact, of the five counties with an absolute decrease in assessed yield, it was only in two counties, namely in Akita and Uto, where land reclamation had not assumed sufficiently large proportions to balance the decrease in assessed yield on old fields. In those counties which had succeeded in raising the production on old land, land reclamation added sizably to the total assessed yield; looking at the major rice-producing areas, we can see that in almost every case the addition of new arable had contributed to the total rise in assessed yield almost to the same degree that had the rise of production on old land[a].

It is highly unlikely that the relatively small increase in assessed yield represents the total increase in crop yield realized in seven decades. We know from the Kinai area, for instance, that it was well within the possibilities of Japanese peasants as early as the 17th century to raise crop yields of land planted to rice by approximatively 75 percent within roughly a century[121]. It is true that the private records of the Commissioner of Finance Shimada Katsuji put the total assessed yield of Higo for 1812 at over 910'000 koku[122] - a figure which would bring us closer to what one would expect to find in a domain known for its superior rice production. However, we do not know what this claim was based on, and so it is impossible at present to explain the difference of over 100'000 koku between the official assessment and the figure mentioned by Shimada.

[a] The increase in assessed yield as a result of land reclamation (figures in brackets indicate the rise of assessed yield on old fields) amounted to 4.5 percent in Takuma (7.9 percent), 4.6 percent in Tamana (5 percent), 5.3 percent in Kikuchi (5.5 percent), and 3.9 percent in Gōshi (2.7 percent).

Shimada may well have been prone to exaggerate the beneficial effects brought about by the jōmen method which was introduced during his period in office; we would therefore be well-advised to subject his estimate to further scrutiny before accepting it at face value.

How can the relatively low increase in assessed yield in Higo be accounted for? Could it be that the jihikiawase land survey had taken only partial cognizance of rises in productivity, as might have been the case if prime attention was paid by the administrators to discover increases in the area of arable rather than on re-assessing productivity? Or was productivity indeed slower to rise in Higo than in the economically advanced regions of Japan? The problem of the extent to which Higo increased its agricultural production constitutes an enormously complex problem and will need further investigation before firm conclusions can be drawn. Here, I can only attempt to point out certain aspects of the problem which may have combined to influence the official estimate. Above all, we must attempt to find a solution to the apparent contradiction between the relatively small increase in assessed yield as a result of the jihikiawase land survey in Higo on the one hand and the comparatively large rise in productivity owing to improved agricultural technology reported from the economically advanced regions of Japan.

Several factors tend to support the hypothesis that the productivity rise of Higo agriculture was indeed less marked in the 18th century than in the central areas of Japan, although this does not, of course, preclude the possibility that in Higo, too, individual peasants had succeeded already at that time in raising the crop yield of their arable to about the same extent that this had been realized in the economically advanced areas. We have seen that the jōmen method acted as an incentive to progressive farming by guaranteeing to the peasant the whole of any increment in crop during a given

period exceeding the amount of tax fixed in the form of a percentage relative to the assessed yield, not the actual yield. From this follows by implication that there would be little or no incentive at all where the jōmen method was not yet introduced. In Higo, this was not done until 1803 and it is quite conceivable that this late introduction of the jōmen method contributed to keeping the increase in agricultural productivity in 18th century Higo relatively low. How important the jōmen method was believed to be by the author of the TN in offering the industrious peasant an incentive to increase production is suggested by the following passage in the TN:

> "With things being as they are now, there is no point fertilizing our rice fields. We have used fertilizer which we bought by borrowing money or by pawning seed, clothes, and tools, but as long as we have to pay tax proportionate to the yield, fertilizing means a loss to us. If the tax were fixed in the way I have proposed (the jōmen method, H.M.R.), there would be peasants who would not sleep at night when the seeds are striking roots and during the weeding, who would pawn their belongings to buy fertilizer and use it on their fields, who would cut the weeds and carry soil on their backs, thus producing bumper crops every year!"[123]

That this view was not uncommon in Higo is shown by a comment on the jōmen method made by the district headman Kanbkogi Ryōhei some years after the jōmen method had been introduced:

> "As long as the kemi method had been practiced, those who had not applied fertilizer, be it for sloth or because they were too poor, had profited from too many reductions granted for bad harvests which, in the final analysis, were the result of their lacking devotion to the duties of agriculture."[124]

After the introduction of the jōmen method, on the other hand,

> "...there are now many who possess fields yielding abundant crop, after their energy was awakened by nothing but the awareness that every addition to the crop yield, however insignificant, which they could achieve by applying fertilizer, would increase their surplus."[125]

Another cause of the retarded application of advanced agricultural technology was undoubtedly the comparatively isolated position of the Higo domain which hindered the exchange of ideas and knowledge about improved agricultural techniques[126]. This isolation was partly imposed by geography and partly by governmental decree - Higo was situated off the main trade routes and well away from the enormous pull exerted by the conurbations of the Kinai and Kantō area and was moreover administered by authorities who did little to break through the geographical isolation by way of economic policies favouring a more open approach to contact with other domains. By enforcing the primacy of rice cultivation against all other crops and keeping tight control over the commercial channels for the sale of surplus produce, whether rice or cash crops, the Higo authorities imposed a definite restraint on the market economy within the domain and thereby also on the development of agriculture.

That agricultural production was indeed slower to rise in Higo than in other areas of Japan is furthermore suggested by the fairly moderate rates of taxation relative to assessed yield between 1634 and 1838, although fields were assessed annually for the greater part of this period. According to Shibuya, the official tax rates struck an average of 41 percent per annum during this period[127]. Except for 1633 and 1634, the tax rate never exceeded 50 percent and dropped at times even considerably below the average, as, for instance, in 1732, when it amounted to a mere 10 percent after an exceptionally bad harvest. Now, supposing there had been a considerable rise in production on old fields above the level of 2.1 percent recorded in the official assessments, would not the average tax percentage have had to be rather higher than the 41 percent mentioned in the official records since the actual crop yield of each field,

gauged accurately each year, was expressed in relation to the stagnant official _kokudaka_? In other words, would not the adherence to the _kemi_ method have resulted in a steady increase of the tax rate parallel with the widening gap between the actual yield and the assessed yield[a]? Judging from the figures available to me, this was not the case in Higo; with regard to agricultural production, the moderate average tax rate can only mean that either agricultural production was rising in Higo at a markedly lower pace than in other regions or else that the _kemi_ method did not record rises in production as faithfully as might be assumed from the procedure itself.

We have little reason to doubt that the annual assessments were on the whole carried out with less than optimum efficiency by the officials in charge. We may furthermore assume that the _jihikiawase_ land survey, on which great hopes were set by the administrators as one of the principal measures of the Hōreki reform, had been carried out as thoroughly as possible. When trying to find an explanation for the relatively low overall increase in assessed crop yield of old fields, we must take into account that of the fifteen counties listed by Morishita[b] only the five main rice-producing areas of Higo show a substantial increase, with the remaining ten counties showing either a negligible increase only or a decrease. As to the considerable increases in assessed yield reported for the major rice-producing areas we must also take into account that these figures include those villages which had substantially raised their production as well as those which had done so to a lesser extent. Again, within the individual villages there were those peasants who had been more enterprising than others and who had accordingly

[a] Smith has pointed out that often tax rates of up to 70 percent _per annum_ are cited to illustrate the prohibitively high level of annual exactions by the domain authorities during the Tokugawa period, and that this argument did not hold true since the tax rate was in relation to the assessed yield, not the actual yield. In the absence of annual assessments, tax was thus based on a quantity that had less and less relation to actual productivity as time passed. See, Smith, "Land Tax," 290.

[b] (See, 149n.)

increased their production to a greater extent than others. Thus, even with a comparatively low rise of the average assessed yield of old fields, we cannot altogether exclude the possibility that in late 18th century Higo, too, there were peasants who had increased the yield of their fields much to the same extent that this was done in the Kinai area. In the absence of detailed studies on this particular point, it is impossible to make a firm statement as to the number of wealthy peasants in Higo; the number of rank purchases discussed later in this chapter suggests that by about 1800 there were quite a number of wealthy peasants at least in the immediate surroundings of the castle town. The general picture of rural Higo arising from this study seems, however, to limit their number to a figure far below that which would be met in the economically advanced areas of Japan. This in turn imposed a limit on the scale of agricultural experiments, for trying out new techniques in agriculture to raise crop yields required not only an open mind on the part of the peasant but also some financial reserves in case the attempt failed. Experimenting always involves risks, so that peasants were unlikely to strike new paths unless their subsistence and their tax payments were guaranteed by ample reserves.

In the formation of reserves, two factors played an important role which we have not yet considered, namely double cropping and crop substitution. Both of these techniques permitted an invisible rise in productivity since they were not normally registered in the tax records. By growing a second crop after the rice harvest - a technique made possible only by the application of night-soil and commercial fertilizers - peasants were in theory capable of raising their production considerably wherever conditions were favourable to double cropping. Since no tax had to be paid on the second crop, the yield from such fields - usually wheat and vegetables -

was a net gain after the cost for seed and fertilizers had been deducted[128]. Second crops could be used for either one of two purposes; where the summer crop had yielded enough to leave sufficient surplus after taxes to guarantee the subsistence of the peasant and his family, it could be sold on the market. Where this was not the case, the second crop had to be used by the peasant to pay his tax debts and as food supply for his family. Again, the consequent restraint exerted by the authorities in Higo on the development of commercial structures in the countryside may to a large extent have prevented many peasants from profiting substantially from double cropping. Second crops may have paid for some peasants, as, for instance, for those who tilled fields close enough to fairly large communities where ample night-soil was available. Nevertheless, winter grains did not yield as heavily as summer rice, so that only those tilling considerable areas of arable could hope to achieve a substantial rise in production. Of course, multiple cropping was commonly practiced in Higo where fields could be sufficiently drained and where fertilizers were available in sufficient quantities - the _TN_ mentions naked barley and rape[a]. What is impossible to assess without further investigation is the question as to what extent second crops contributed to supporting the livelihood of poor and marginal peasants. On the whole, however, we can be fairly certain that in the absence of a prospect of sale and the incentive of profit, production of second crops in excess of the amount required for the use of the own family or the village was bound to remain on a significantly smaller scale in Higo than in the main population centres of the economically advanced areas of Japan.

Much the same can be said of crop substitution, usually

---

[a] (See, _TN_: 365.)

an exchange of cash crops for subsistence crops on upland fields or an exchange of rice for an unirrigated crop[129], which may well have contributed to a rise in invisible productivity in Higo, too. Again, the official policy of restraining the commercialization of agriculture naturally impeded individual initiative. Moreover, since it had been one of the aims of the jihikiawase land survey to keep track of crop substitution[130], it was only rises of productivity owing to crop substitution realized during the period 1757-69 (before the revision of tax registers) and after which were invisible, while most of the earlier rises were covered by the new land survey and were recorded in the tax registers.

At this point, we must mention a peculiarity of taxation in Higo which was a considerable obstacle to the formation of a firm financial foundation of the peasantry. This was a regulation governing tax payment, known as gowari no sakutoku[a], which was enforced in years of exceptionally bad harvest. According to this rule-of-thumb, the harvest was divided into three equal parts on the occasion of the annual inspection; if two parts did not add up to the amount of tax demanded by the authorities on the basis of the official assessed yield and the tax rate of that year, then the tax officials would claim these two parts as the annual tax rather than lowering the tax rate. Peasants were then left with one third of their harvest only[131]. This regulation, which was apparently hardly known elsewhere in Japan, was enforced in Higo in years of bad harvest until the end of the Tokugawa period, even after the introduction of the jōmen method[132]. The gowari no sakutoku regulation undoubtedly involved potential hardship for the poor and marginal peasants with a low assessed yield and it is not inconceivable that

[a] (See, TN: 341.)

where it entailed a reduction of financial reserves, even wealthy peasants could suffer considerable set-backs. Designed to minimize losses to the authorities in years of harvest failure, this regulation was, however, bound to weaken the economic basis of the peasantry by demanding comparatively heavy tax payments relative to the effective yield. It would be of some interest to look closer at the question of how this regulation, especially in its combination with the kemi method of tax assessment, was influencing capital accumulation among peasants in Higo.

The question as to what extent productivity really rose in Higo during the 18th century remains to be clarified by further research. It is not until we have further information that the points outlined above might be verified. The picture emerging from the information available to us now suggests that while some peasants, especially on the fertile rice land on the alluvial plain, may well have had sufficient knowledge and the means to improve the productivity of their arable much to the same extent that this was done in the Kinai area, their number appears to have been too limited to have had a marked influence on the county kokudaka. Neither was their presence in the late 18th century conspicuous enough to relieve the outward appearance of rural Higo, which struck Furukawa Koshōken as a comparatively poverty-stricken area[a]. All considered, the decision to return to the kemi method in 1756 - only two years after the first attempt had been made to introduce the jōmen method - may be said to have had a considerable impact on the subsequent economic development of the Higo domain. As one among several factors, the late introduction of the jōmen method contributed to the fact that the peasantry in Higo around 1800 was on the whole still relatively poor in comparison with peasants in the economically advanced regions of Japan.

[a] (See, 87.)

2.2.3. Land Reclamation

To enlarge the area under cultivation, land reclamation projects were carried out in Higo throughout the Tokugawa period. Together with land reclamation along the Kojima bay in Bizen, projects realized along the shores of the Ariake bay in Higo rank among the largest in all of Japan during this period. Already under Katō Kiyomasa[a], the ruler who preceded the Hosokawa family, large areas were reclaimed along the shores of the Ariake bay, mainly in the Hōtaku county and on the Yatsushiro plain, and river ameliorations were carried out to ensure a regular supply of irrigation water for the whole alluvial plain. In the mid-18th century, such projects were again taken up with renewed vigour. The authorities, pressed hard to find ways out of their financial difficulties, frequently issued memoranda to the local officials, encouraging them to open up new land even if, as a notice of 1771 puts it, "only a little can be done at a time"[133]. To encourage such projects, tax concessions were granted to those undertaking reclamations - according to the TN, five years were the usual tax-free period for newly reclaimed land[b]. Land reclamation was subject to the strictest government regulations and under no circumstances were ordinary peasants allowed to start riparian projects on their own initiative. Those who did so in contravention of the laws in remote mountain valleys ran the risk of being severely punished[c]. It is for this reason that land reclamation always had to be backed by some higher authority, even when funds for the undertaking originated elsewhere.

Among the land reclamation projects in Higo, we can distinguish four main types. Firstly, there were those projects carried out under the sponsorship of the domain authori-

---

[a] (See, TN: 384n, 384-5.)

[b] (See, TN: 388.)

[c] (See, TN: 390.)

ties. The second type of land reclamation was paid for by the ruler of the domain from his private funds and belonged also to the category of "government projects". All projects which were backed either by members of the Hosokawa house or by one of the three leading families in Higo, the Matsui, Yoneda, or Ariyoshi, belonged to the third category. Although these projects, which were known as go-shamen biraki, had a decidedly official character, they were in fact of a far more private nature than might be assumed at first. We shall look at this third type in more detail below, as it appears to constitute a peculiar feature of Higo. Finally, there were what might be called "village projects", undertaken on the initiative of individual villages or districts, sometimes in conjunction with others, to further the common good[a]. It is important to note that the Higo authorities, unlike those of other domains, did not as a rule permit merchants to use surplus capital to establish land ownership through land reclamation. In other domains, the activities of merchants in land reclamation were fairly intensive - it has been estimated that by 1853 about 30 percent of cultivated land was controlled by these owners of new land[134]. In Higo, on the other hand, we find only isolated instances of merchants who were permitted to establish land ownership in this way. To be sure, donations for financing land reclamation projects were solicited by the authorities and received from merchants and wealthy peasants. Such donations were, however, not reciprocated by granting rights on land but by conferring various degrees of samurai rank. In this respect, Higo presents a different pattern from Bizen, where non-government initiative was welcomed to tackle the immense tasks involved in large-scale attempts to reclaim land from the sea. One of the

[a] On the topic of land reclamation, I have followed largely the account given in Minoda, "Higo-han no kantaku shinden," and in Satō, "Higo-han no kantaku shinden". See also, Kitamura, "Higo-han kantaku shinden no toku'i sei - Tamana-gun Yokoshima shinden," for a discussion of land reclamation in the Tamana county as seen by a specialist on land reclamation in the Bizen province.

consequences of this strict government control over land reclamation was that new land did not accumulate in the possession of individual merchants, but was widely distributed among a large number of peasants in small plots of between one to two _chō_[135].

Among government-sponsored projects, there were those undertaken to provide for the upkeep of specified government institutions - a sound capital investment which yielded regular returns without getting the domain authorities involved in commercial dealings. The yield of some of these new fields was reserved to provide for the upkeep of the domain school (_gakuryō shinchi_) while the yield of others was intended to provide relief for peasants in times of famine (_kyūmin biraki_) or to pay for the purchase of whale oil for use as pesticide (_geiyū biraki_). The most active promoter of land reclamation in the domain administration was the Wax Office, for which investment in land reclamation provided a major outlet for capital besides its money-lending activities.

The third type of land reclamation, known as _go-shamen biraki_, was a vestige of the earlier _kyūchi_ system which had been abolished in the late 17th century[a] since land reclaimed under these terms was exempt from all state tax. Around 1800, permission to reclaim land under these favourable conditions either along the seashore or in the hinterland was granted to the three families of Matsui, Yoneda, and Ariyoshi only. These three families, whose alliance with the Hosokawa house antedated the transfer to Higo, occupied the posts of the elders (_karō_) in the Higo domain government by heredity. In the early Tokugawa period, the opportunity to reclaim land had been open to all samurai who were entitled to hold a fief (_chigyōtori_), including all rural samurai. Lower samurai and peasants could also apply for the permission to open up land, but contrary to new land belonging to higher-ranking samurai, such land was not exempt from the annual tax, except

[a] (See, 93-4.)

for the first few years. In 1732, an official decree restricted the right to reclaim land to the Hosokawa house and the three families named above[136]. By granting these families the right to reclaim land as well as tax exemption for such arable, the Higo authorities followed a policy which was different from that of most other domains; while a similar institution is known to have existed in Chōshū, land reclamation by retainers had been prohibited in most other domains together with the assumption of direct control over fiefs. For this reason, all additions to the arable made in Higo under the terms of the go-shamen biraki were not included in the total assessed yield of Higo; as far as tax revenue was concerned, these areas of reclaimed land did not contribute directly to domain finances, although they may be said to have brought some indirect relief by rendering the privileged families more independent of the payment of stipends by the Kumamoto authorities. The privilege of these three families to hold land not subject to annual tax may thus be considered to have fulfilled a certain protective function for these families and their retainers. However, considering the difficult financial situation of Higo in the 18th century, one may well ask why the domain authorities made such generous grants at all.

The principal reason advanced by Kitamura to explain this phenomenon is the fact that too little commercial capital had accumulated in Higo to play a role in land reclamation where sizable funds were required. In consequence, so Kitamura argues, the only source of capital for such large undertakings to be tapped were the private funds of the karō houses[137]. Minoda, on the other hand, has pointed out that land reclamation was likely to have been limited not so much by the amount of capital available to the merchants as by the restriction of this privilege to the three karō families, especially when considering the fact that until 1732 land reclamation had been open to every holder of a fief[138].

As to the origin of the capital of land reclamation, Minoda has shown that, at least in the case of the Matsui family, there were differences between the early and the late Tokugawa period. Looking at the projects carried out under the supervision of the Matsui house in the period 1665-1855, during which about 1'400 chō were reclaimed in about thirty different locations mainly along the seashore on the Yatsushiro plain, we see that this family could provide sufficient funds for reclamation projects during the 17th century only. During the second period of land reclamation which began in 1770, merchant participation was actively sought by the Matsui house. The financial prowess of the karō houses was, of course, linked with the domain economy much in the same way as the fortunes of the Hosokawa house; the Matsui and the other karō houses had therefore been able to carry out land reclamation projects independently only as long as the domain economy had been relatively stable. As the economy entered the "Tokugawa plateau", the funds of these families for land reclamation were apparently exhausted. After the last project of the initial period in 1699, it was not until 1770 that land reclamation was tackled again by the Matsui, probably under the influence of the reforming spirit of Shigekata. This project marked also the turning point in the financing of land reclamation, for when the project ran into difficulties while work was in progress, the Matsui were forced to take up a loan of 461 kan with the Ōsaka merchant house of Hirano-ya to complete the project. Later projects were not started before financial support had been secured from merchants. When in the late 1840's this was no longer possible, apparently because the domain authorities were exerting pressure on the karō houses not to take up loans outside the domain[139] lest insolvency by these families should lead to financial claims by Ōsaka merchants to the domain authorities, financial support was

increasingly sought from wealthy peasants. In the course of this development, the initiative for land reclamation projects was gradually taken over by the peasants themselves, with the Matsui family acting as initiator of projects in name only; by the mid-19th century, the Matsui house could no longer realize large-scale land reclamation projects without the capital of wealthy peasants, while the peasants would have found it impossible to realize their ambitions without the benefit of the privileges resting with the Matsui family.

In the early Tokugawa period, work on these reclamation projects had been carried out by the peasants from all near-by regions who were called up for corvée. In the late 18th and throughout the 19th century, the labour force consisted of day labourers and of those peasants who were to receive plots of the new arable. Those willing to undertake this strenuous task were subjected to great privations and dangers as they had to stay on the swampy construction sites for the duration of the work. They were housed in small wooden shacks, protected against contagious disease only by paper-charms distributed to each hut by the authorities. Supplying such large numbers of men with sufficient food also posed considerable problems. The sudden influx of people into a region which may already have had difficulties in feeding its native population sufficiently, soon drove prices of basic commodities in nearby villages up, thus increasing also the cost of the whole project. Once the fields were tilled and the initial tax-free period had elapsed, the yield of these fields may for some time have run short of expectations, but made increasing contributions to the revenue of its holder and of the tiller of the soil in the following years, provided the arable could be protected against flooding and the problem of proper drainage could be solved. It must be pointed out that the risks involved for those undertaking such projects were not inconsiderable, not only because contemporary irrigation technology could not in every case find a solution

to problems of irrigation and of proper drainage of reclaimed land along the seashore, but also because the sea repeatedly destroyed dikes and inundated cultivated land bordering on the Ariake bay. Set-backs of this kind were always possible and since most of the land reclaimed from the Ariake bay was below sea level, inundations could take an immense toll of lives and destroy the work of generations. As a consequence of a volcanic eruption on the Shimabara peninsula, a particularly terrifying tidal wave hit Higo in 1792 which destroyed dikes and inundated large parts of newly reclaimed land. One report mentions 2286 dwellings washed away, 4'781 people drowned and 811 injured on the territory of Higo alone[140]. According to the Dutchman Titsingh, the coastal areas of Higo had changed physically beyond recognition[141].

The great problems awaiting the cultivator on reclaimed land did not make the task of finding peasants to settle in the new villages as easy as might be assumed. The author of the TN asserted that a sufficiently large reserve of manpower existed among the lowly in the towns, among whom there were many who were "neither peasants nor craftsmen living a wretched life in a rented tenement"[142] and who would therefore gladly seize an opportunity to return to the plough if only they were offered a chance. No doubt, the author's wish to see peasants return to their true vocation introduced an over-optimistic note into his assessment of the situation; nevertheless, it is a fact that those peasants who could be recruited to till reclaimed land originated mainly from the poor peasants - either mizunomi or mutaka - including a large number of second and third sons. By offering a livelihood to peasants who would otherwise have been doomed to a life in penury, land reclamation fulfilled an important function in relieving hardship among the poorest in the domain and contributed in this way to lessening the gap between rich and poor in the villages. Just how good chances of economic sur-

vival were for peasants who took up the offer of the authorities to move away from their old villages to the new settlements on reclaimed land is a question which we cannot answer with certainty at present - the following discussion of village decay will, however, give some more clues concerning this point. On the whole, one gains the impression that peasants were generally none too eager to work on reclaimed land; many a peasant preferred to engage in some sort of illegal trade, selling sake or peddling small wares upon returning to his native village after serving a term in a town household[143]. Peasants who, attracted by government promises of tax remission or tax advantages, had left their villages to work as tenants on newly reclaimed land, often had to realize that once the initial tax-free period was over, they were back in the same predicament as before. On the contrary, while it would not be mistaken to say that the situation for the peasant on newly reclaimed land was on the whole neither better nor worse than on old land, it was certainly true that new land required far greater efforts to produce a crop owing to the unfavourable physical and mineral structure of soil reclaimed from the sea. In fact, it might well be that the usual five year tax-free period granted by the authorities for such land was not long enough to permit peasants to profit to any great extent from this privilege. Added to the problems of agriculture, there was the taxation policy which seems to have made less allowances for local difficulties than the peasants concerned would have wished for. As the author of the TN alleged, none of the already existing new-field villages around 1800 was particularly prosperous owing to the "excessively stringent fiscal terms on which these villages were handed over to the peasants"[144]. Under these circumstances, it is not astonishing that among the peasants who were reluctant to take up offers to till new land there were not only those who were unwilling to do heavy work. Neither did the peasants seem to change their villages

with the ease one would expect from peasants who were given a chance to improve their economic position. Peasants often declined to abandon their old homes, however decrepit, and preferred to travel between their old homes and their new fields rather than move into the new settlements provided by the authorities. Often, peasants would dispose of new fields by handing them on to some peasant who was not in a position to refuse. Once the authorities had realized that religion played an important part in the peasants' reluctance to leave the fields of their ancestors, plots of land were set aside in each new village for a shrine to be built as well as rice land reserved to provide for the support of the shrine and the needs of the priest. To facilitate the move to the new village even further, the authorities furthermore took to inviting priests specialized in necromancy to coax one or two tutelary deities to move their abode from the old village to the new settlement[145].

While land reclamation brought a gradual enlargement of the arable, the fertility of rice land already under cultivation increasingly came to pose problems in some areas. Problems relating to fertilizing and irrigation accentuated already existing economic difficulties and led to a phenomenon known as "decaying villages" (reirakuson), especially in those regions situated some way from the main population centres on the margin of the alluvial plain, in the river valleys or on mountain plateaus. A petition presented to the authorities in 1746 describes the outward manifestations of this process in the following words:

> "Villages which had previously numbered thirty households are now down to fifteen, then to ten and five. Peasants cannot manage anymore, and so they sell their house. When they have sold their land, fathers and sons, sisters and wives leave to serve in someone else's household, either for a year at a time or for life. Again, they shave their heads to become begging priests or else they take up life as simple beggars. As such families are scattered in all directions amid tears, fewer and fewer are those who remain behind in the villages"[146].

Where such population movements were substantial enough to decrease noticeably the reserve of manpower in a village, they could effectively prevent the application of new, labour-intensive processes to raise productivity. In the isolated agricultural region of the Aso plateau situated within the outer crater of the Aso volcano, for instance, our traveller Furukawa was told by a peasant in the 1780's that if it were not for the fact that the Aso plateau was underpopulated, it could easily yield more than 100'000 koku - a fivefold increase over the actual yield[147].

What were the causes of this decay and how widespread was it in fact? In the TN, the deteriorating soil quality is looked upon as the principal cause of village decay, since decreasing crop yields were increasingly widening the gap between the assessed yield and the actual yield. The author also listed different reasons why the soil quality should have been deteriorating in the different regions of Higo and generally creates the impression that village decay was widespread everywhere in Higo. In order to arrive at an objective appraisal of the problems involved, let us look at a report by Nishimura[a] who investigated village decay in a region which was particularly affected, namely the Nozu district on the Yatsushiro plain.

Most of the arable of the Nozu district on the Yatsushiro plain consists of reclaimed fields dating back to the Keichō period (1596-1615), when the first large dam had been constructed under Katō Kiyomasa. By the mid-18th century, the tax arrears of the 21 villages in the district with an assessed yield of 17'678 koku amounted to 2'807 koku. By 1803, the Nozu district was the region most seriously affected by village decay in the whole of Higo, with total tax debts

[a] Nishimura, "Kinsei ni okeru kantakushinden nōson ni kansuru ikkōsatsu - Higo Nozu tenaga no reiraku ni tsuite."

amounting to 35'607 koku. Why did the Nozu district become such a problem area?

The most important reason for the gradual economic deterioration of the Nozu district was the difficulty of draining land properly with the technical aids at the disposal of the peasants. The consequence of this was that large areas of land were too moist to allow double cropping and eventually turned into swamps. Since efficient drainage of submerged fields is of vital importance for the disposal of toxic reduction products accumulating as a result of biological processes, such land was after some years unfit for cultivation[148]. The author of the TN ascribes this development wholly to the construction of dams along the rivers, which effectively prevented floods from destroying the crops but which caused at the same time a gradual heightening of the water level as all drift was deposited in the river bed[a]. Indeed, the difference of level over which the traditional means of drainage, the water-buckets and tread-wheels, could lift drainage water from fields lying below water-level into a river was limited, so that proper drainage of such fields almost inevitably came to pose insurmountable problems after some time. This development can be reconstructed by the example of the Nozu district and indeed the whole Yatsushiro plain.

About one third of the present-day Yatsushiro plain was created naturally by the drift deposited by the rivers flowing through the plain. The late 16th century witnessed the first attempts to protect the arable from the ravages of floods and from then until the early 19th century, no further land reclamation was undertaken along the coast. Thus, during these two centuries a natural alluvium had gradually enlarged the land area between the arable protected by the dams and dikes and the sea. This alluvium, which consisted of silt, humus, and

[a] (See, TN: 387.)

gravel carried by the rivers from the Kyūshū mountain range straight into the sea, made it increasingly impossible to drain fields at low tide without technical aids, i.e. simply by opening the sluice gates; drainage water had to be lifted by tread-wheels from the basins where stagnant water collected irrespective of high or low tide. Since fields close to the sea could be drained only during short periods each day even with mechanical devices, the effects of excessive soil humidity spread to increasingly larger areas of arable where productivity was consequently decreased. Thus, roughly two hundred years after the land had been cultivated for the first time, peasants no longer dared to walk over such fields, where horses had been used to work the soil before, without special "swamp clogs" made of wide boards of wood[149].

It is important to note here that on such ill-drained fields, the danger of root-rot was always present. Furthermore, it was not possible to raise a second crop on such fields. Of the total of 969 _chō_ of arable in the Nozu district, 866 _chō_ were planted to rice. Of these rice fields, about 80 percent fell into this category of ill-drained land. By the Tenpō period (1830-44), about 345 _chō_ with an assessed yield of 5'870 _koku_ had been recorded in the official category of "bad fields" (_akuden_), with a total of 3'653 _koku_ of land not even being tilled any longer[150]. In the case of the Yatsushiro plain, it appears to be beyond doubt that the increasing difficulties of agriculture were a consequence of the natural process of the enlargement of the alluvium - a process which was to some extent speeded up by the construction of dams. Within about one century after land reclamation, the gradual transformation of rice fields into marsh had set in and by the 1740's the first tax payment difficulties had arisen. It was, however, not until the first decades of the 19th century that the villages affected most by the deteriorating quality of their arable were beginning to decay[151].

Two further points made by Nishimura pertain to fertilizing problems, namely the lack of green fertilizer in the Nozu district and, as a consequence of the construction of dams, the lack of organic and mineral materials in the soil earlier supplied to the arable by inundations. The reorganization of the administrative borders by the Hosokawa upon their transfer to Higo had divided reclaimed land and mountainous land in the Yatsushiro region into separate districts. Nishimura claims that this administrative measure of the early 17th century deprived the villages on the alluvial plain of Yatsushiro of easy access to mountain heaths which had until then provided them with green fertilizer[152].

Of course, reorganization of administrative borders did not lead to the non-use of green fertilizer; we know that firm links between villages on the plain on the one hand and mountain villages on the other continued to guarantee the supply of green fertilizer to villages on the plain. However, we do not know exactly how these links functioned in detail and how great the costs of sharing iriai rights were for the villages on reclaimed land. The attempt made by the peasants in the Nozu district in 1818 to regain their earlier iriai rights suggests that the administrative reorganization did not remain without consequences for the peasantry, especially in this relatively little-developed region on the extreme southern margin of the Higo littoral where only relatively few peasants could think of purchasing commercial fertilizers.

The other point contributing to the decrease in productivity of fields mentioned by Nishimura is the fact that the construction of dikes prevented the regular flooding of arable so that the valuable humus and silt were no longer deposited on the fields every few years during the rainy season[153]. This is a point also raised by the author of the TN, who claimed that the floods recurring every three to five years had

"enriched the soil by depositing <u>ado</u>"[154] - a layer of fertile mud consisting of decomposed grass and miscanthus, top soil and night-soil from the mountain villages. This led the author to conclude that the construction of dikes was one of the reasons directly responsible for the decay of villages situated along rivers[a].

Although it would not be correct to ascribe the observed decrease in productivity of land solely to the construction of dams, there is at least an element of truth in this assertion. It is true that agitated flood waters, in which minerals and organic matter are equally distributed throughout the whole volume of water, supply the fields with a larger amount of plant nutrients than does ordinary irrigation water drawn from the surface of quietly flowing rivers during the period of normal discharge when a large part of the valuable particles have settled on the bottom of the river bed. It is therefore conceivable that the construction of dikes made itself felt in those communities where fertilizing techniques had not yet evolved from the pre-modern stage. The same might apply to the poor and marginal peasants who had the knowledge of such techniques yet could not afford to apply them. In these cases, the lack of mineral and organic plant nutrients might well have resulted in a gradual deterioration of the soil quality as the capacity of the soil to resist erosion decreased gradually - a quality which was of vital importance to irrigated fields to prevent humus from being washed away each time the field was drained[b].

---

[a] (See, <u>TN</u>: 383 ff.)

[b] The fertilizing value of irrigation water and the consequences of plant nutrients in the water being stopped before they reach the arable has been demonstrated in recent years in Egypt on the flood-plain of alluvium between Aswan and Cairo. There, the completion of the Aswan high dam in 1970 resulted in the blockage of millions of tons of fertile silt which had enriched the fields of Egypt until then. While greatly increasing the industrial and agricultural potential of Egypt, this dam created at the same time serious problems for the agriculturists by forcing them to find alternative sources of fertilizer. As a result of the deprivation of the soil of a regular supply of organic matter, scientists report also an increased rate of soil erosion - a phenomenon which they link directly with the dam construction. See, "Aswan," EB, vol. 2, 660-1.

It is clear that organic matter and minerals in river water cannot have had more than a basic fertilizing value which was moreover likely to vary to a great extent in different geographical locations. It is therefore unlikely that the fertilizing effect of river water mattered at all where sufficient night-soil was available for fertilizing purposes[a]. What the author of the TN called ado might have influenced the soil quality in communities engaged in subsistence farming which were too small to be wholly self-sufficient with night-soil and too distant from communities large enough to have surplus night-soil. However, in order to establish in every case to what extent this factor was really involved in the deterioration of the soil quality, a quantitative assessment of the natural fertilizing capacity of river water would have to be made[b].

Now, in the course of the second half of the 18th century, the population in the Nozu district declined at a significantly higher rate than in other rural areas of Higo. By the early 19th century, underpopulation as a result of peasants leaving their land to seek an occupation elsewhere, either as tenant or in small trade, had come to be viewed by the authorities as a serious problem; at that time, all villages of the Nozu district, with the exception of the two communities of Miyahara and Kagami, appear to have suffered from an acute lack of manpower[155]. One resultof the technical difficulties of irrigation which defied contemporary technology was that many

[a] To quote the example of Egypt again, it has been said that the drainage of Cairo is 30 times as valuable as the equivalent of Nile water, "even in floodtime, when the latter bears its fertilizing silt." See, "Irrigation," EB, vol. 12, 641-2.

[b] A comparison with the Nile, where problems appear greatly magnified, can of course only tentatively hint at possible links between irrigation and the soil quality. To what extent this held true of Higo, too, could be ascertained only by further specialized studies.

peasants became increasingly indebted with the sake brewers in Miyahara and Kagami; according to a report by the district headman Kanokogi Ryōhei, debts of peasants in the Nozu district with three sake brewers in Kagami alone were amounting to over 1'257 kan by 1807[156].

What was done by the authorities to check this development? In 1742, money and relief rice equivalent to about 380 koku of rice was handed out for the first time to the villages affected most by the deteriorating soil quality of their arable - a practice which was continued until the introduction of the jōmen method of tax assessment in 1803[157]. In 1752, peasants in the Nozu district were allowed to pay their tax arrears of over 2'807 koku in instalments during the next twenty years. In the same year, all peasants of the district were made responsible for the tax payment of the most problematic 584 koku of rice land; 2'501 koku of paddy land were distributed among peasants in all villages together with special grants for horses and gear, while another 568 koku were distributed among 27 new peasants who were also presented with a new house each as well as agricultural implements and gear for the horses[158]. Some twenty years later, the authorities resorted to distributing abandoned fields among the peasants of a village together with a single sum of 50 monme for each tan. Of course, even these measures could not bring about lasting improvements as long as nothing was done about the underlying problems of a technical nature.

The situation changed dramatically in the early 19th century after the appointment in 1804 - one year after our author had expressed his concern about the problems of village decay - of Kanokogi Ryōhei to the post of district headman of the Nozu district. This official, who had already successfully improved the irrigation system in a nearby district in the Shimomashiki county, tackled the economic problems of the Nozu district by

a combination of various methods which were designed to go to the roots of the problem. Besides reiterating an earlier order that land abandoned by its former owner must be tilled by relatives, the members of the five-family group or other villagers, he ordered all land pawned to sake brewers to be restituted to its former owners. On the technical side of the problem, Kanokogi tackled above all the task of draining rice fields lying below the water level of the rivers by ordering larger water buckets to be installed and by promoting the reclamation of new arable in front of the already existing reclaimed land. Furthermore, he began to collect grain reserves to tide over financial straits on the district level[159] and exhorted the peasants to work hard and not to rely too much on the regular aid received from the authorities.

Immediately after his appointment to the post of district headman, Kanokogi applied for permission to turn alluvion into arable. The Kumamoto authorities acceded to his request and in 1805 this project, which added 100 chō to the total cultivated area, was carried out, financed by a loan of 163 kan from the sake brewers in Kagami. However, this project did not only add new arable but improved also the soil quality of older fields. In order to understand why this should have been so, we need to know more about the peculiarities of irrigation and drainage of reclaimed land.

The first step of land reclamation on the alluvion was to construct a tidal barrier to protect the new land from the sea at high tide. Such tidal barriers did, however, also obstruct gravity-feed discharge of used irrigation water into the sea. In order to remedy this difficulty, reservoirs were dug at the lowest point of new fields where used irrigation water would collect from the fields. At low tide, this water would then be discharged into the sea either by opening sluices in the tidal barrier or by mechanical drainage devices such as tread-wheels.

Of course, these sluices to discharge used irrigation water could only be opened after the tide had receded below the water level of the reservoir. This problem of drainage was to assume increasing importance the further reclamation was pushed out, for with the negligible gradient of the alluvion it could take considerable time before the tide had receded below the water level of the reservoirs situated near the mouth of the main drainage canal or the river. The consequence of this was that the further downstream fields were situated, the less time was available to discharge used irrigation water from the reservoir and to drain the arable thoroughly; as the tide began to rise again, the lower fields were again the first to close their sluices.

The drainage canal system connected the different areas of land reclaimed at different periods and separated by dikes just like the irrigation network. Again, this put the fields downstream at a disadvantage, for their reservoirs, which already occupied a larger surface than those of the upper fields owing to the short hours during which discharge was possible, had to provide additional capacity for the spillway of the reservoirs in the upper fields. Thus, while upper fields could be drained day and night - during low tide through the drainage system directly into the main drainage canal and during high tide through the spillway into the reservoirs of the lower fields - the lower fields were at a grave disadvantage as far as drainage was concerned. It was these fields where the danger of the soil gradually turning into swamp was most acute.

The fact that the lowest fields were always at a disadvantage as far as drainage was concerned pointed to the one possible solution for the problem of deteriorating quality of rice land which troubled the Nozu district so much, namely to push land reclamation further out on the alluvion. This solution, which offered the only chance to prevent arable from turning into useless swamp, was seized upon by Kanokogi. Thus, after the project carried out in 1804, another stage was realized

in 1819, with other projects following in 1821 and finally in 1838[160]. In fact, once the alluvion had been turned into arable for the first time, further reclamation became almost inevitable in order to preserve what had been gained by earlier efforts, with the time between two projects varying depending on the amount of drift deposited at the mouth of a river and also on the extent to which reclaimed land subsided after some time.

The "one hundred chō" reclamation project was the first instance of reclaimed land being planted to rice almost immediately after the arable had been divided into lots the year following the completion of earthwork. This practice, which was henceforth applied in all cases of land reclamation, required an agricultural technique especially adapted to the soil conditions on such land. In order to avoid damage by salt ground-water, the soil could not be tilled as deeply as on old fields. During a period of five to seven years, rice had to be harvested before it had properly ripened to speed up the extermination of shiofuki shellfish. To decrease the salinity of the soil as quickly as possible, roughly twice the normal volume of fresh irrigation water had to be channelled to the newly reclaimed fields. For these reasons, the first harvest in 1806 could not be expected to produce a sufficiently good result to help peasants of the region out of their financial difficulties. Kanokogi therefore declared a 12 months' respite for all debts and applied to the domain authorities for a loan of 100 kan to be distributed among the indebted peasants. This loan was eventually made available to the district authorities at an interest rate of 8 percent per month; according to an official document recording the details of this aid project, Kanokogi distributed 85 kan among villages at an interest rate of 15 percent per month[161]. The difference between the rate of interest at which the loan had been received from the domain authorities and the rate charged to

peasants was used to relieve poverty among peasants. This rate of interest contrasted sharply with the usual rate of 25 percent per month which peasants in the Nozu district had to pay for loans received from wealthy peasants and merchants[162]; the financial policy followed by Kanokogi thus constituted a valuable contribution to improving the financial situation of those peasants who were indebted most. The remaining 15 kan of the loan from the domain authorities were used for construction works; beginning in 1808, drainage in many fields was improved by installing more efficient conduits, at times even employing stonework constructions. In 1807, Kanokogi made arrangements with the sake brewers who had lent considerable sums to the peasants of the Nozu district for the cancellation of all outstanding debts[a] in return for lots on the newly reclaimed land and grants of samurai rank. All these measures paved the way for a general economic recovery of the Nozu district, and by 1831 the soil quality of about 345 chō equal to 5'900 koku of former "bad fields" had sufficiently improved to permit the normal cultivation of rice again.

Evidently, the problem of village decay presented itself in the Nozu district in a most conspicuous manner. Although studies on village decay in other parts of Higo have not yet been made, it is likely that district headmen in coastal regions of Higo were generally confronted with similar problems as a consequence of land reclamation, although economic problems were likely to arise on a smaller scale where a relatively high proportion of the total arable consisted of old land. At least in the case of the Nozu district, the author of the TN was not far from the truth when he blamed the construction of dikes and dams for village decay, although he was mistaken as to the manner in which flood prevention measures on the alluvion influenced the soil quality.

---

[a] (See, 174.)

While land flight appears to have been pronounced in those parts of Higo where, like in the Nozu district, the deterioration of the soil quality could not be stopped by the individual peasants, however energetic and enterprising, but only by the combined efforts of a bold leadership together with the manpower of peasants and the capital of merchants, it is highly doubtful whether village decay as an immediate result of deteriorating soil quality can really be said to have been as widespread a phenomenon as is implied in the TN, especially since official census figures indicate a slow upward movement of the total rural population around 1800[a]. We may therefore assume that the village decay described by our author was a local phenomenon rather than a general one, which served to spread labour from villages with a low productivity to others where new labour-intensive techniques required additional manpower.

While the difficulties of drainage on reclaimed land defied the efforts of the individual, improving the soil quality or at least maintaining it at a certain level by the application of fertilizers was possible in most regions to all but the poor and marginal peasants. Except for the peasants in the remotest of mountain villages[b], peasants in Higo were by that time generally taking an active interest in fertilizers to improve harvest results and were on the whole far removed from the stage where they had left this important task to the whims of nature. If in a village harvest yields were declining gradually as is alleged by the author of the TN, we can only assume that this was in a community which did not have access to the ample supply of night-soil of a nearby town and where many peasants were too poor to purchase commercial fertilizers when their supplies of green fertilizer were exhausted or when

[a] (See, 90-1.)

[b] In Gokashō, a small community in the depth of the Higo mountains, fields were cultivated by burning undergrowth and sowing seeds on the cleared land until the mid-19th century.

their iriai rights had been restricted. In Higo, the areas where this was possible were spread rather widely from the margin of the alluvial plain into the river valleys, on the mountain plateaus and to some extent even on the generally underpopulated south of the alluvial plain. It is conceivable that in some of these communities, fertilizing problems added to general economic or technical difficulties could lead to the ruin of a number of peasants. Here, detailed case studies might enable us to arrive at an objective assessment of the role played by the lack of sufficient fertilizer in village decay. As regards the allegation of our author that village decay in communities situated along rivers was a consequence of the blockage by dams of ado[a], we may state clearly that this could neither be the principal cause, nor even a contributory factor of village decay.

2.2.4. The Sale of Rank

The sale of rank constituted one of the means by which the domain authorities could tap the wealth of merchants. Beginning in the Hōreki period, the domain authorities of Higo had begun to encourage the purchase of rank (sunshi sunkō)[b] by which wealthy town dwellers or villagers could buy certain privileges ranging from small items for little money to high rank for substantial sums. Until the end of the Edo period, the majority of landholders and merchants in the recognized towns were to become samurai by purchase, known usually under the name of kinnō gōshi, but called sunshi go-kenin in Higo[163].

[a] (See, 172-3.)

[b] For a detailed study of the sale of rank in Higo, see, Morita, "Kinsei no gōshi sei, toku ni kinnō gōshi no seikaku - Higo-han seishi to no kanren ni oite." Also, Ikeda, "Higo-han no gōshi seido - Tamana-gun Oda tenaga no ichirei," and, Iwamoto, "Sunshi sunkō - Kamimashiki-gun Yabe tenaga ni tsuite."

The author of the TN deplores this institution for, as he explains, the wealth used for donations to the authorities to receive title and privilege was created by the peasantry, not by those who apply for a samurai rank:

> "If the prices of the various grains remain high for one or two years, those who lend money or rice for taxes rise considerably in status; they even seem to be able to make small payments to the authorities towards receiving a family name and a sword. In fact, if we look at the origin of the capital for these contributions, we see that it comes from peasants with their heavy tax burden"[164].

With their newly acquired privileges, these "money samurai" joined the ranks of the rural samurai, the gōshi, who were known in Higo as zainaka go-kenin[a], i.e. the descendants of those warrior families who had forfeited full samurai status by not moving their residence to the castle town by the beginning of Tokugawa rule.

Financial considerations played undoubtedly some part in the government decision to promote the sale of rank, as is suggested by the great increase of sales in times when domain finances were facing an acute impasse, although total figures of sale of rank indicate that the resulting revenue covered hardly more than a fraction of the domain debt. A document of 1751 lists prices for the various privileges and titles which could be purchased ranging between 200 monme and 22 kanme - full status of rural samurai, for instance, which entailed exemption from tax and transfer from the jurisdiction of the village headman to that of the district headman, cost 1 kan 500 monme[165]. The evidence from the economically backward mountain district of Yabe according to which the least expensive item - the right to own an umbrella - accounted for

[a] The term gōshi was used in Higo only after 1870, unlike in Satsuma, Tosa, and Mito, where the term gōshi had always been used in official documents. In Higo, the terms kōritsutsu or jizamurai were used in the early 17th century while the term zainaka go-kenin or simply go-kenin was used from the mid-Tokugawa period onwards[166].

roughly one third of the total number of ranks sold until 1805[167] suggests that, at least outside the main rice producing counties, revenue from the sale of rank could have contributed relatively little to the improvement of the financial situation of the domain.

The relatively low stipends that generally accompanied full samurai status in Higo[a] constituted a small burden on the domain finances, but selling samurai status on an excessively large scale would nevertheless have impaired tax revenue in the long run by reducing the tax-paying population on the village tax registers. Thus, the authorities may well have been torn between their wish to earn money by the sale of rank on the one hand and their reluctance to spread the privilege of tax exemption too liberally among the wealthy. Besides financial considerations, the authorities may well have had other reasons for inviting non-samurai to join the ranks of the ruling class. The fact that Higo introduced a greater variety of different ranks, each finely distinguished by the accompanying privileges, than any other domain in the Tokugawa period, supports the hypothesis that the government officials were also looking upon the sale of rank as a means by which the ties between the wealthy peasants and the domain authorities could be strengthened.

Guarding duties had always been an important task assigned to rural samurai; one concrete example is afforded by a rural revolt in 1674 in Hotokehara village in the Yabe district which was put down by rural samurai under the leadership of the district headman Ide Hei'uemon[168]. During the early Tokugawa period, the domain authorities had, however, entrusted rural samurai only with minor posts in local administration; in accordance with the official policy of disposing the samurai favourably towards the new government, the Hosokawa had acted on the principle that a fief need not be accompanied by commensurate official duties. This principle was abandoned later in

[a] (See, 183.)

the Tokugawa period when the Hosokawa were firmly established in Higo and after the Hōreki reforms rural samurai began to be increasingly involved in local administration. At the same time, the distinction between hereditary rural samurai and samurai by purchase began to lose some of its former importance. During the Meiwa period (1764-72), rural samurai were appointed as district headmen, village headmen, officials in charge of the woodland, as inspectors to supervise the transport of goods by the wholesalers and as supervisors of dikes.

As to the fiefs received by the rural samurai in Higo, it appears that these were rather lower than those granted to their peers in other domains. In Mito, fiefs of 50 koku were normally granted to hereditary rural samurai while samurai by purchase were given as much as 350 koku, depending on the size of their donation[169]. In Higo, on the other hand, rural samurai would receive between 3 to 5 fuchi[a] [170], with the exception of those who were appointed to an office in local administration. There was, however, a marked difference between the fiefs of "money samurai" living outside the recognized towns and those who lived in the towns. While the former were paid little and were in addition liable to military service, the latter were exempt from military obligations and held substantially higher kuramai fiefs[b]. In Kumamoto, a merchant family was granted 15 fuchi in 1806; in 1823, another merchant

[a] One fuchi consisted of 5 gō of rice a day or its equivalent in money, paid out once a year in a lump sum.

[b] There were basically two different kinds of fiefs during the Tokugawa period, namely the kuramai chigyō (also known as hyōtori) which promised a given number of rice bags from the official storehouse each year, and the chikata chigyō which promised a certain percentage of the harvest of specified land. While these two kinds of fiefs were roughly the same throughout Japan, a third type, known as gisaku, was peculiar to Higo. Specifying also the number of bags of rice to which the holder was entitled, it was not linked directly with land; as far as the prestige of its beneficiary was concerned, however, it ranked immediately below the chikata chigyō[171].

family was granted 23 fuchi and it was not until 1852 and 1855 that two merchant houses were granted 100 koku each. These fiefs to merchants were as a rule given in the form of a kuramai chigyō; only exceptionally were donations for land reclamation projects rewarded by grants of chikata chigyō[172].

The first case of a donation (sunshi) in Higo dates back to 1683, while the first documented sale of rank is reported for 1719[173]. In this respect, Higo appears to have been far ahead of other domains[a]; it was, however, not until the Hōreki period that the sale of rank assumed significant proportions[b]. As is shown by the statistics compiled by Morita for the castle town and the Akita and Takuma counties in the immediate vicinity of Kumamoto, peak periods may clearly be identified in the ensuing development of the system of rank sale[c]. To demonstrate these peaks graphically, they are here contrasted with the figures of the preceding period in brackets. During the Tenmei period (1781-89), there were a total of 168 sales to 71 persons (An'ei period, 1772-81: 26 sales to 18 persons). During the Bunka period (1804-18), the largest number of sales ever was recorded with 335 sales to 81 persons (Kansei/Kyōwa period, 1789-1804: 106 sales to 45 persons). During the Tenpō period (1830-44), sales stood at 115 to altogether 63 persons (Bunsei, 1818-30: 46 sales to 30 persons). The last peak was reached in the Keiō period (1865-68), immediately before the Meiji Restoration, when within three years a total of 323 sales to

---

[a] In Tosa, the first case is reported for 1763, in Mito for 1792[174].

[b] See, Morita, "Gōshisei," 93, Chart XI.

[c] Unfortunately, Morita cannot give us the figures for other counties; with the set of figures available to us now, we can therefore reach conclusions only regarding the castle town and two of the most productive rice producing counties. We may assume that the figures of sales decrease along with decreasing productivity, with those counties with a relatively low rice production being considerably less well represented in a list of total rank sale in Higo. See, Morita, "Gōshisei," 90-1, Charts VIII and IX.

259 persons were recorded (Genji period, 1864-5: 36 sales to 11 persons)[175].

Figures of the sale of rank in the castle town are also given by Morita[a]. Here, 5 sales were effected during the Kyōwa period (1801-04) and 30 sales during the Bunka period (1804-18). During the Bunsei period (1818-30), the sale of another 30 ranks is reported and during the Tenpō period (1830-44) a peak was reached with a total of 42 sales. From this point, sales dropped gradually to 6 during the Bunkyū period (1861-64). The remarkable sales reported by Morita for the surrounding counties of the castle town during the Keiō period are not matched by similar sales in Kumamoto where during the same period only 24 sales are listed.

As we have seen, the total number of sales was greatest during the Keiō period, with the Bunka period ranking second with only marginally less sales. Although these two periods were practically on a par with each other as regards the number of sales, there is nevertheless a vital difference between the two if we take into consideration the number of persons to whom rank was conferred. During the Bunka period, a relatively restricted number of persons - presumably members of the leading families in the villages[b] - had purchased rank, including many who purchased several ranks in successive years. During the Keiō period, on the other hand, a comparatively large number of peasants purchased mostly lower ranks, including presumably fewer who purchased several grades. The difference between these two periods reflects the slow spread of the distribution of wealth among peasants in Higo; judging by these figures, it was not until the close of the Tokugawa period that wider circles of peasants had accumulated sufficient wealth to purchase rank and privilege. At the same time, this would mean that around 1800 - the period which is of interest to us as background of the TN - wealth was not yet sufficiently

---

[a] See, Morita, "Gōshisei," 92, Chart X.

[b] Provincial merchants in the recognized towns are likely to be included in this category, although the charts by Morita do not differentiate between peasants and provincial merchants.

distributed among the peasantry to enable wider circles of peasants to acquire even the least expensive ranks available, especially if we consider that the figures for the Bunka period may conceal a highly uneven distribution of the number of ranks purchased among individuals. In other words, these figures do not allow us to infer how many of the 81 persons who purchased 335 ranks within the 14 years of the Bunka period had bought one rank only and how many had purchased several! On the basis of the available material, we cannot yet reach definite conclusions in this matter, but these figures nevertheless tend to support the general impression that wealth was still comparatively little distributed among peasants in Higo around 1800. Using the figures of rank sale as an indicator of capital accumulation among peasants obviously has its limitations - it cannot be overlooked that the peaks of rank sale coincided with times of economic crisis when the authorities were especially aware of the need to raise financial contributions and, as is shown by the dramatic rise in the number of ranks sold in the Yabe district from 1 in 1804 to 118 in 1805 following the period of trial 1802-03[176], it seems that adequate government stimulus could produce considerable response among peasants even in a relatively backward area of Higo where one would hardly have suspected the existence of sufficient funds.

2.3. The Events of 1802-03

Looking back on his activities, the Commissioner of Finance to complete the work begun by Hori Heitazaemon, Shimada Katsuji, stated in 1812 that the reforms of the Hōreki period had not stopped the decay of the state, let alone improved on conditions. In an assessment of the economic state of Higo, he observed:

> "If I were to compare (the ailments of the state) to the worn out parts of a house, I would say that before the Hōreki period the beams were in order but the roof and the walls leaked, whereas these days when the roof and the walls have been restored, the main pillars are distressingly rotten and difficult to repair..."[177].

It is, of course, open to doubt whether the problems confronting Higo by the second decade of the 19th century were really so much more pronounced than they had been in the mid-18th century. Problems of the past naturally tend to appear less serious in retrospection than they did at the time; in essence, however, the problems observed by Shimada did not differ from those which Hori had attempted to solve. Let us now turn to two events which were presumably immediately correllated with the TN, namely the bank crash of 1802 and the petition of all district headmen in 1803.

The bank crash of 1802, which led to serious disturbances in Kumamoto, was linked closely with the abuse of the deposit system (azukari seido)[178] by merchants and government alike. As we have already seen, the wax office had begun already in 1752 to put its capital of 800 kan at the disposal of merchants, who could take up loans against payment of interest[a]. When in 1785 the initial capital had increased eighteenfold to 14'732 kan as a result of judicious investment, the wax office began to function as an official bank under the name of go-gindokoro[179]. In 1789, the go-gindokoro began to accept goods - above all rice, but also cotton, tobacco, rape seeds, salt, and drugs - from merchants through the intermediary of deposit agents appointed by the authorities. This innovation enabled merchants to circumvent difficulties arising from the lack of specie as they could now create their own means of payment by depositing goods at a government storehouse. The bill which they received in exchange for the goods was freely negotiable and enjoyed a good reputation among merchants since

---

[a] (See, 119.)

it was guaranteed by the government. The currency of these bills was generally limited to three months at the most. For its services as trustee, the bank charged a fee amounting to a fraction of the value of the goods as well as 5 percent interest per month on the value of the goods[180]. Once merchants were in the possession of a bill, they could transact business simply by exchanging these officially endorsed documents until the currency expired. The last holder of the document would then present it to the bank to have it exchanged for the goods in the storehouse. Merchants welcomed these bills not only because they did away with silver coins which were cumbersome to handle and required the careful merchant to keep an eye on the weight and the purity of individual coins, but also because they generally speeded up commercial operations which would otherwise have been too time-consuming and too costly. Accordingly, with bills changing hands very quickly, business transacted was often highly speculative. Those merchants who required ready cash but who, thinking that rising prices made a later sale advisable, did not want to sell a bill, moreover had the option of mortgaging a bill for the sum they required for a shorter period. Such mortgage agreements, set down on documents known as oboe, provided an ideal means of tiding over short periods of insufficient liquidity; at the same time, they opened also a possibility of abuse by unlawfully mortgaging bills several times until the total debt exceeded the value of the deposited goods[181].

The domain authorities, too, were issuing similar bills known as azukari, which were circulating within the domain like paper money, against the security of tax rice stored in government storehouses. Unlike paper money which could be issued only if the bakufu was satisfied that there were sufficient silver reserves to cover the issue, the issue of azukari did not require shogunal permission. In 1802, when domain debts had risen to 460'000 koku and reserves were exhausted, the Higo authorities even resorted to issuing azukari against

the "security" of the forthcoming harvest. Moreover, deposits of merchants held in trust in government storehouses were apparently also incorporated into domain finances to relieve financial pressures. In the same year, the authorities began therefore to exchange private bills and azukari for silver at an unfavourable exchange rate instead of handing back the deposits. This caused a sudden crumbling of public trust in the go-gindokoro and a great number of bill holders rushed to the offices of the bank to claim their deposits. For a short time, the authorities handed out half the value of the deposited goods, but when almost all deposits were claimed simultaneously, not even this method could serve any longer as a makeshift. Day after day, the offices of the go-gindokoro within the compound of Kumamoto castle were besieged by hundreds of people from dawn till dusk who attempted to save what could be saved and even tried to force their way into the building[182]. The bank extricated itself rather skilfully from this delicate situation, for when it became clear that the guards could no longer control the mob, the official in charge declared that deposits would eventually be payed back in silver and, to prove that no more government azukari would be issued, had the remaining azukari in the possession of the government burned before the very eyes of the enraged populace. Moreover, it was declared that all officials linked in some way with this affair were to be dismissed[183].

The psychological effect of these riots in the streets of Kumamoto must not be underrated. In comparison with its neighbours, the Higo domain had until 1802 been practically spared outbreaks of popular discontent[a] - the riots connected with the bank crash of 1802 were the first major disturbances since the famine year of 1786. While the merchants depended utterly on the political authorities and had no choice other than

---

[a] (See, Appendix I.)

accepting passively whatever decision was taken by the government officials, the authorities appear to have realized that times called for decisive steps to improve the financial situation of the domain. Hard pressed to fulfil their promise of covering the losses sustained through bankruptcy, the government decided to raise an additional 30'000 koku tax (agemai) besides a 2 percent levy (nibumai) on the assessed crop yield, ostensibly to build up reserves for years of bad harvest. Further measures included the levy of donations from merchants, a cut in samurai stipends, and a reduction in the price of samurai rank to promote sales[184]. Most important, however, was the introduction of the jōmen method of tax assessment[a] in the 2nd month of 1803, with a tax rate which was computed on the basis of the average tax rate of the past thirty years. The authorities no doubt placed great hopes in this new method to stabilize domain revenue; this measure did, however, provoke the determined resistance of the district headmen. In the 3rd month of 1803, they submitted a petition to the authorities[185] in which they warned the government that it would be impossible for them to collect the new taxes if the jōmen method were introduced. Should the government disregard their advice and forge ahead with their plan, many peasants would undoubtedly be forced to abandon their land. The new method would thus jeopardize the collection of the annual tax[186].

This petition by all district headmen of Higo is the second event which is likely to be immediately correlated with the TN. While the bank crash had shaken the authorities out of their complacency, the opposition of district headmen to their plans to increase revenue must have given rise to considerable concern in government circles, for this "revolt" could not be lightly dismissed as the action of the common people. The fact that opposition originated from within the own ranks of government officials whose comparatively low position in the hierarchy

---

[a] (See, 139 ff.)

was more than compensated by their vital importance to the collection of the annual tax, underlined the severity of the situation. In fact, the district headmen had spoken up for the large majority of poor and marginal peasants who were in the danger of being put at some disadvantage by the new method of tax assessment for some years, not only because a fixed tax rate posed a constant threat to solvency[187], but also because it was feared that the change-over to the new method might be abused to increase the tax rate before pegging it at a constant level - an experience which had apparently often been made in other parts of Japan[188]. Besides their concern for the domain finances and the fate of the poor peasants, another motive of district headmen to petition against the jōmen method may well have been the concrete fear that the streamlining of the taxation procedure such as the jōmen method entailed would, in the long term, restrict their competences and thus lower the prestige of their post in local administration. Like in the 1760's, when the combined action by district headmen had been largely unsuccessful in preventing the introduction of a government monopoly on wax, their protest did not have much impact this time either; in a way, the failure of this petition indicates how determined the Higo authorities were to implement the jōmen method. Supporters of government policy may well have seen in the opposition of district headmen a dangerous precedent for subordinate officials to question decisions made in top ranks of the bureaucracy, perhaps even a danger to the successful realization of these government plans which depended on the cooperation of district headmen - an opinion which is expressed in the TN in the form of sharp attacks on district headmen. Although the authorities did not waver in their decision to put the jōmen method into force at long last, we may nevertheless assume that the opinion of the district headmen

had influenced the government in their decision to introduce the new method on the basis of a three year trial period, during which it would have been possible to revert to the old method in case of gross harvest failure. An additional concession was gained from the government in 1804, when the additional taxes were reduced to 20'000 koku and 1½ percent respectively. We do not know the details of this dialogue between supporters and opponents of the plan to introduce the jōmen method of tax assessment. Considering what was at stake, we may, however, assume with fair certainty that the decision to go ahead with it was not reached without much heated debate. It is these polemics which, in my opinion, form the background of the TN; we shall therefore have to refer to this point again at a later stage when we discuss the purpose of the TN.

*

To summarize: To solve its financial problems, the Higo domain carried out one of the few fairly successful domain reforms of the mid-18th century. In the course of administrative reforms to centralize and bureaucratize rural administration, district headmen, who occupied a pivotal post in local administration, came to be appointed by the Kumamoto authorities; at the same time, the domain authorities also asserted their say in the appointment of village headmen. Reforms of the penal code which introduced a wider variety of punishments, mitigated the severity of earlier punishments for many offences, including non-payment of the annual tax by peasants. To set the Higo domain firmly on a traditionalist course, the curriculum of the newly founded domain school emphasized the study of the ancient texts in accordance with the postulate of the Ancient School (kogaku); in the late 18th century, the likelihood of kokugaku influence through personal contacts with Motoori Norinaga and other nativist thinkers cannot be altogether excluded.

Economic reform measures of Higo are marked by a fairly successful restriction of commercial activities, above all outside the few recognized towns; the restraint which was thereby imposed on the spread of the money economy resulted in a relatively low degree of commercialization of wide areas of Higo. In agriculture, the main attention was directed towards the production of Higo rice, which was renowned for its high quality; apart from rice, the only produce exported to Ōsaka in bulk was wax. Forestry, which was also organized during the reforms of the Hōreki period, served mainly to ensure a sufficiently large supply of timber for use within the domain. Nevertheless, activities in forestry, which were all the more vigorous since efforts in Higo were lagging behind those undertaken by neighbouring domains, appear to have caused difficulties to some peasants in those communities still engaged predominantly in subsistence farming where iriai rights had to be restricted in order to protect the forest against excessive exploitation. The steadfast adherence of the Higo authorities to the kemi method of tax assessment which - unlike the jōmen method already widely applied in other domains at that time - did not leave increments in crop yield to the peasant, may well have been one of the major causes for the preponderance in rural Higo of villages primarily engaged in subsistence farming with a relatively low percentage of cash crops at a time when in the economically advanced areas of Japan a vast number of peasant families were already engaged in commercial farming. Without the incentive of profit, interest for new agricultural technologies was bound to be comparatively low, even where new techniques could have been applied in theory. Overall increase in productivity was therefore rather lower in Higo than in the advanced areas of Japan, with a few notable exceptions mainly in the vicinity of the castle town. With the gowari no sakutoku regulation added to the kemi method, capital accumulation by peasants in 18th century Higo may be said to have proceeded on the whole at

a comparatively slow pace. The little developed market economy in Higo resulted moreover in a relatively limited distribution of wealth among the different regions in Higo as well as among the inhabitants of a county or a village. To maintain, and to raise, agricultural production, dams were constructed to protect the arable against floods and land was reclaimed to gain new arable. Originally, the privilege of initiating riparian projects had been granted to all samurai, but later it was restricted to the Hosokawa house and the three karō houses. Only in the late 18th century and in the early 19th century were merchants and wealthy peasants invited to participate in such ventures. However, unlike in other regions of Japan, they did not gain rights on land; as a rule, donations for land reclamation were honoured by grants of samurai rank accompanied by relatively modest stipends. Land reclamation offered a new chance to many poor and landless peasants and thus helped to lessen the gap between rich and poor in village society. In locations close to the sea, the drainage of reclaimed land could cause serious technical problems, forcing at times individual families to abandon their land. While further inland, the restriction of iriai rights could bring about the ruin of families of poor and marginal peasants in those communities which had not yet effected the change from subsistence to commercial farming to a significant degree, the deteriorating soil quality of arable on reclaimed land along the coast was the result of a natural process which could be stopped only by a combined effort of the government, the merchants, and the peasants. With the sale of a wide variety of samurai ranks and privileges, the authorities opened up a new source of revenue and strengthened also the ties between the authorities and the wealthy peasants and provincial merchants; figures of rank sale around 1800 may tentatively be taken to mirror the comparatively narrow distribution of wealth among the peasants of Higo at that time.

All this tends to confirm the general impression gained by our traveller Furukawa Koshōken which we have quoted at some length at the beginning of this chapter. Can we say therefore that the living conditions of the peasantry in Higo were generally worse than those of peasants in the economically advanced areas of Tokugawa Japan where the early development of a market economy had enabled wide sections of the peasantry to improve their quality of life considerably? In order to examine this question further, let us turn to the next chapter where everyday life of the ordinary peasant in other regions of Japan is contrasted with reports of peasant life in Higo.

Notes to Chapter 2.

1. Yamada, "Sagamai," 24.
2. Furukawa, Saiyū zakki, 367.
3. Morita, "Sonraku no seiritsu," 70.
4. Yamada, "Sagamai," 21 ff.
5. Bureau of Statistics, Statistical Handbook, 20.
6. "Japan," EB, vol. 12, 882.
7. Morita, "Zaimachi," 348.
8. Furukawa, Saiyū zakki, 368.
9. ibid., 372.
10. ibid., 370.
11. ibid., 371.
12. ibid., 370.
13. ibid., 370.
14. ibid., 365.
15. ibid., 368.
16. Taeuber, Population, 24, Table 3.
17. Ōe, "Hansei kaikaku," 16, Table 1.
18. Go-kattemuki shirabe, quoted in Ōe, "Hansei kaikaku," 23.
19. Go-kattemuki tairyaku shirabe, quoted in Ōe, "Hansei kaikaku," 23.
20. Harada, "Kumamoto-ken no rekishi," 203.
21. Taeuber, Population, 20.
22. Ozaki, Kumamoto no rekishi, vol. 4, 189 ff.
23. transl. in Crawcour, "Observations," 90.
24. Ozaki, Kumamoto no rekishi, vol. 4, 197.
25. Morita, Kumamoto no rekishi, 233.
26. Joüon des Longrais, L'est et L'ouest, 163-4.
27. Shibuya, "Higo-han no nengū," 42.
28. Morita, "Kinsei no kokudaka ni tsuite," 36.
29. "Satsu," NKSJ, 642.
30. Craig, Chōshū, 44.
31. Ōe, "Hansei kaikaku," 18. Also, Morita, Kumamoto no rekishi, 234.

32. "Satsu," _NKSJ_, 636.
33. _Kunitake oboegaki_, quoted in Ōe, "Hansei kaikaku," 18.
34. Kawakami, "Chūka, satsu, oyobi tegata," 315.
35. "Satsu," _NKSJ_, 636.
36. Morita, _Kumamoto no rekishi_, 234.
37. _Yoshimura Fumiuemon jōsho_, quoted in Ōe, "Hansei kakaku," 18.
38. _Tokugawa jikki_, quoted in Morita, _Kumamoto-ken no rekishi_, 234.
39. Ozaki, _Kumamoto no rekishi_, vol. 4, 189 ff.
40. Morishita, "Kinsei no chihōseido," 54.
41. Morita, "Bakumatsu," 209-10.
42. Uchimura, _Higo-han no nōson seido_, 204.
43. (_TN_: 348.)
44. (_TN_: 351.)
45. (_TN_: 349.)
46. (_TN_: 350.)
47. Kodama, _Nōmin seikatsushi_, 108.
48. Morishita, "Kinsei no chihōseido," 54.
49. Uchimura, _Higo-han no nōson seido_, 177.
50. ibid., 133-4.
51. ibid., 177-8.
52. ibid., 178.
53. (_TN_: 345.)
54. (_TN_: 345.)
55. (_TN_: 368.)
56. Matsumoto, "Murayoriai," 109.
57. ibid., 109-10.
58. Henderson, "Tokugawa Law," 204.
59. (_TN_: 340.)
60. Morita, "Hosokawa Shigekata," 92.
61. Kodama, Nōmin seikatsushi, 176.
62. quoted in Morita, "Hosokawa Shigekata," 110.
63. Morita, _Kumamoto-ken no rekishi_, 194.
64. ibid., 194.
65. Kodama, _Nōmin seikatsushi_, 178.
66. Ototake, _Shomin kyōikushi_, vol. 3, 779.

67. Hall, "Confucian Teacher," 276.
68. Harada, "Kumamoto-ken no rekishi," 197.
69. Morita, "Hosokawa Shigekata," 110.
70. Harada, "Kumamoto-ken no rekishi," 209.
71. *Jishūkan gakki*, in *HBS*, vol. 1, 357.
72. ibid., 356.
73. Craig, *Chōshū*, 80.
74. Sheldon, *Merchant Class*, 19.
75. Kodama, *Nōmin seikatsushi*, 177.
76. Morita, "Kumamoto no shōkōgyō no seikaku," 12.
77. Morita, "Meijiki sangyōshihon," 3.
78. Ōe, "Hansei kaikaku," 24.
79. ibid., 24.
80. ibid., 24.
81. ibid., 25.
82. Ishida, *Geography*, 33, Fig. 21.
83. Morita, "Engyō," 184.
84. Morita, "Kyūshūji," 36-7.
85. Morita, "Ringyō," 107.
86. ibid., 117-8.
87. ibid., 108.
88. ibid., 114.
89. ibid., 118.
90. ibid., 114.
91. ibid., 116.
92. ibid., 116.
93. ibid., 117.
94. (*TN*: 411.)
95. Hulin, "Contributions," 449-50.
96. Fisher, "Daigaku Wakumon," 305.
97. Hefele, "Reiseeindrücke," 152.
98. Ishida, *Geography*, 33, Fig. 21.
99. Fisher, "Daigaku Wakumon," 305.

100. (TN: 409.)
101. (TN: 409-10.)
102. Morita, "Ringyō," 113.
103. ibid., 119.
104. Morita, "Rinsei," 8.
105. Morita, "Ringyō," 113.
106. Fisher, "Daigaku Wakumon," 305.
107. ibid., 303.
108. (TN: 408.)
109. Smith, "Land Tax," 289.
110. Ōishi, "Kyōhō Kaikaku," 285.
111. Kodama, Nōmin seikatsu, 37.
112. Smith, "Land Tax," 285.
113. Smith, Agrarian Origins, 159.
114. Ono, Nōsei shiryōshū, 187. Art. 11 and 12. (vol. 1)
115. Smith, "Land Tax," 285.
116. Ōishi, "Kyōhō kaikaku," 286-7.
117. Smith, Agrarian Origins, 160.
118. Dokō kankenroku, quoted in Morita, Nōsei Goishū, 89.
119. Nakamura, Agricultural Production, 28-30.
120. Morishita, "Kinsei no chihōseido," 20.
121. Smith, Agrarian Origins, 99.
122. Shimada Katsuji shiki, quoted in Ōe, "Hansei kaikaku," 16.
123. (TN: 381.)
124. Minoda, "Higo-han no jūmensei ni tsuite," 2.
125. ibid., 2.
126. Smith, Agrarian Origins, 87.
127. Shibuya, "Higo-han no nengū ni tsuite," 41.
128. Smith, Agrarian Origins, 94.
129. ibid., 102.
130. Dokō kankenroku (1856), in Morita, Nōsei goishū, 89.
131. Kakizuka, Kanshiki seidokō, 164.
132. Dokō kankenroku (1856), quoted in Morita, Nōsei goishū, 177-8.
133. Tamamuro, Nōmin seikatsu, 26.
134. Sheldon, Merchant Class, 82-3.

135. Satō, "Kantaku shinden," 70.
136. Minoda, "Kantaku shinden," 59, and 62 (Note 5.)
137. Kitamura, "Kantaku shinden," 3.
138. Minoda, "Kantaku shinden," 60.
139. ibid., 62-3, Note 18.
140. Ozaki, Kumamoto no rekishi, vol. 4, 264.
141. Titsingh, Mémoires, 207.
142. (TN: 389.)
143. Kodama, Nōmin seikatsushi, 150.
144. (TN: 389.)
145. Morisue, Seikatsushi, vol. 2, 215.
146. quoted in Ōe, "Kaikaku seiji (Hōreki) no nōmin seisaku," 35.
147. Furukawa, Saiyū zakki, 371.
148. De Geus, Fertilizer Guide, 45.
149. Nishimura, "Kantaku shinden nōson," 50.
150. ibid., 50.
151. ibid., 50.
152. ibid., 47-8.
153. ibid., 49.
154. (TN: 386.)
155. Nishimura, "Kantaku shinden nōson," 51.
156. ibid., 51.
157. ibid., 52.
158. ibid., 53.
159. ibid., 53.
160. ibid., 55.
161. ibid., 56.
162. ibid., 56.
163. Morita, "Zaimachi," 354.
164. (TN: 365.)
165. Morita, "Gōshisei," 74-6.
166. ibid., 56-7.
167. Iwamoto, "Sunshi sunkō," 11.
168. Morita, "Gōshisei," 84-5.
169. ibid., 85.
170. ibid., 85.

171. Morita, Kumamoto-ken no rekishi, 229-30.
172. Morita, "Gōshisei," 86-7.
173. ibid., 70.
174. ibid., 70.
175. ibid., 90-1, Charts VIII and IX.
176. Iwamoto, "Sunshi sunkō," 7-8.
177. Ōe, "Kaikaku seiji (Hōreki) no nōmin seisaku," 42.
178. Ōe, "Hansei kaikaku," 32 ff.
179. ibid., 33.
180. Nagakawa, "Higo no seiji/keizai/kyōiku," 286.
181. ibid., 288.
182. Ōe, "Hansei kaikaku," 33.
183. ibid., 33.
184. ibid., 34.
185. ibid., 32.
186. ibid., 32.
187. Smith, Agrarian Origins, 160.
188. Morisue, Seikatsushi, vol. 2, 113.

3. Peasant Life in Higo around 1800

From the description of the economic and political conditions in Higo during the second half of the 18th century and their consequences on the social sector which I have attempted to give in the last chapter, the reader has, I hope, gained a fair impression of general conditions of samurai and peasants in Higo at that time. With each government measure discussed, we have seen both the motivation of the authorities to implement it, as well as its consequences for the peasantry. Within this framework of general knowledge of the socio-economic situation of Higo around 1800, I would now like to go into details about the daily life of ordinary peasants. As in all of my commentary on the TN, it is my endeavour to achieve thereby two things; namely to examine the claims made in the TN and to make a contribution to our knowledge about the living conditions of the common people. In the search for additional source material I have put special emphasis on the topic of peasant distress, which looms large in the TN, as, for instance, food, housing, punishment for tax defaulters, treatment of peasants by local officials and by the priesthood. From the emerging picture we may establish whether or not the author of the TN has allowed himself to be carried away by his emotions in his descriptions of the conditions of the poor and marginal peasants in Higo[a].

Trying to answer the question of what the consequences of the political and economic realities were for the overwhelming majority of the population of Higo, enhances our awareness of the fact that history does not exist in a vacuum but that it leaves its visible imprint on the people of every period. In other words, we are made aware of the fact that a new edict or law is not merely a piece of paper but effects a change for

[a] For a general introduction to peasant life, see the chapter on farmers in, Dunn, Everyday Life, 50-83. For peasant life in Higo, see, Tamamuro, Nōmin seikatsu, an invaluable collection of source material. I have also drawn extensively on Kodama, Nōmin seikatsushi, especially in the section on the annual tax.

better or worse in the condition of the common people. Here is how the author of the TN describes peasant life in Higo. Replying to a village headman's allegation that peasants lived quite well on the returns from hidden fields, he has a peasant say:

> "Our 'life' does not deserve that name! As you can see yourself, we work hard every day of the year, be it hot or cold, beginning in the morning when the stars are still shining and finishing in the evening when the stars appear again. In summer we are especially hard pressed by our work, at times even working at night without getting any sleep; during the day the intensity of our work can only be compared with that of the sun-rays which wither trees and plants. Grandfather, grandmother, wife, and children labour so hard day after day that their breath smells of blood and yet year after year, when the time has come to pay the tax, there is not even enough rice to pay it. When we have finished paying our dues little by little, either by taking up loans or by selling firewood, we are left in the cold winter nights without a single padded garment, not to speak of straw or rushmats to pull over our head. Just imagine our suffering! I am not the only one affected; there are many others in the village. Being young and vigorous I stand up to the cold very well, but to the old people and the children it is indeed so cruel that one cannot bear the sight of it. Getting up in a bitterly cold night to light a fire and warm oneself because one is unable to sleep in spite of all the rushmats and strawmats piled on top of one is something which you will know from your own experience"[1].

Although throughout the TN the author makes his point that, whatever the authorities do, it is invariably the peasant who has to suffer, this is the passage which sums up his impression of the predicament of the peasantry in the most heart-rending fashion. But does the author here really give a realistic account of peasant life in Higo? Could it be that he exaggerated to lend force to his account which was intended as a memorial to the government? If his description does reflect reality truthfully, can it be said to hold true for all peasants alike or only for the poorer sections of the peasantry?

Before we turn to these questions let us first try to answer the question as to what extent the description of peasant life in Higo in the TN and in other sources can be considered

typical for peasant life in Tokugawa Japan in general. Is it justifiable to infer from conditions in Higo on living conditions of peasants in other domains of Tokugawa Japan around 1800 or do we have to look upon peasant life in Higo as an illustration of the life of the common people in the economically backward regions?

The author of the TN was, of course, not the only author in 18th century Japan to give a rather bleak description of everyday peasant life. So, for instance, the way ordinary peasants were treated by the authorities was described by Tanaka Kyūgū (1663-1729), a high-ranking official in the service of the Shogun Yoshimune, who as a son of a village headman from the Kantō area had an intimate knowledge of this subject. In a passage of his Minkan Seiyō (Essentials of Civic Life, 1721), he wrote:

> "Those people whom we call peasants are no better than cattle or horses. The authorities pitilessly compel them to pay heavy taxes; they are the objects of a most onerous corvée, but they have nothing to say about it. We hear of many cases where they lose all their fortune, sell their wives and children and suffer all sorts of violence or are even put to death. They pass their whole life enduring blows and insults.... Petty officials lord it over them so that the peasant cringes before their threatening stare.... The arrogant behaviour of these officials is like that of a heartless driver of some horse or ox[a]; after loading it down with a great weight he proceeds to rain blows upon it; then when it stumbles he becomes more and more angry, cursing it loudly and striking it even with greater force - such is the fate of the peasant"[2].

Leaving aside for once the obvious exaggerations due to the influence of Chinese literary style, there can be little doubt that life of a large number of ordinary peasants at the beginning of the 18th century - before the jōmen method of tax assessment had brought on widespread improvements in peasant life[b]- was in striking contrast to that led by the wealthy peasants, the provincial merchants, and, of course, by many samurai and merchants in town. A multitude of laws imposed

---

[a] An allegory often used by writers on peasant problems during the Tokugawa period. (See, TN: 371 ff.)

[b] (See, 144 ff.)

strict rules of conduct in every sector of life - a code which would be supplemented by a new regulation whenever easing economic pressures were permitting an improvement in the quality of life of the common people. The body of sumptuary legislation which regulated the minutest details of peasant life affords to some extent insight into what Confucian administrators thought everyday life of ordinary peasants should be like. Such legislation was not uniform throughout Japan, although it would be similar in the points considered most important; neither was such legislation enforced, or even obeyed, with the same rigidity in all periods by all peasants. Often, it is even doubtful whether sumptuary legislation had any measurable effect at all - indeed, their very existence and the regular repetitions are proof of the fact that the living standards of a wide section of the common people was gradually rising.

Legislation put great emphasis on finely graded status differences in the amenities of life. Whereas the wealthy lived on comfortable _tatami_ mats in wooden houses, peasants were allowed ordinary floorboards only. Legislation pertaining to clothing was equally stringent. According to the _Keian Ofuregaki_ - a collection of laws governing various aspects of peasant life issued by the shogunate in 1649 - no fabric other than cotton cloth was permitted for the clothing of peasants (Art. 16)[a] - a regulation which was even further specified in Higo where peasants could wear only dyed cotton cloth without crest. Silk was prohibited even for sashes, foresleeves, and collars. A decree of 1736 in the Higo domain states that of late, wives and children of the well-to-do had begun to indulge in unbecoming luxuries and that those who could not afford to do so were beginning to imitate them. Excesses could be observed not only during wedding celebrations but also at ordinary village meetings; so regulations concerning clothing should henceforth be constantly on display in front of the village headman's

[a] (See, 19n.)

house. As to women, they were allowed to wear clothes with patterns, but silk was also strictly prohibited. Silk under-garments, if discovered at spot checks, would be torn away by the officials, who would then punish not only the woman who had flouted the law, but also all members of the five-family group to which she belonged, as well as the village headman[3]. The consumption of rice was prohibited to peasants who were exhorted to grow sufficient amounts of other cereals[a]. Buying sake or tea[b] or smoking tobacco[c] was equally forbidden, though the authorities do not seem to have objected to peasants consuming tea or smoking tobacco which they had produced themselves. Travel was restricted, especially after the rural population had begun to decrease in many regions after the mid-Tokugawa period, and so peasants had to notify the village headman as well as the headman of the five-family group to obtain permission to leave. Working times were prescribed by law; peasants in the Kagoshima domain, for instance, had to work from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. according to a regulation issued in 1804. In Fukuoka, according to a law of 1740, the village headman had to beat a drum or some iron implement to let the peasants know the time when they had to begin work in the fields. Holidays were scarce and strictly regulated by the authorities in each domain. Even trivia like smoking breaks were made the subject of legislation later in the Tokugawa period. In the Higo domain, a schedule was set up for the work to be done in the course of a year in order to ensure payment of the annual tax.

Women are only rarely the subject of legislation; the Keian Ofuregaki specifies the position of women in Tokugawa society in article 14 where they are exhorted to work hard with ramie and loom - if a wife did not work sufficiently hard, her husband should send her away, "regardless of how pretty she was"[4]. The same provision discourages leniency in all cases, except with

---

[a] Keian Ofuregaki, article 11. (See, 19n.)

[b] ibid., article 6.

[c] ibid., article 23.

women who had accrued merit either by giving birth to several children or in some other way. The Go-Kyōyusho[a] of the Higo domain is equally explicit: "The woman must be subservient to her husband. She must have high regard for him, never divide her loyalty nor be jealous. She must consult with her husband about every matter concerning her daily work"[5].

Something which the authorities tried hard to suppress was the custom of infanticide and abortion, practiced by peasants and town-dwellers alike to limit the size of their families[b]. Methods of family limitation known to the Japanese of the Tokugawa period were contraception, abortion and infanticide, the first being apparently less important than the post-conception limitation of fertility. While abortion by medicinal or mechanical means was confined to the wealthy owing to the high fees charged for the treatment, infanticide, known as mabiki (thinning), by which the midwide suffocated the newly-born immediately after birth, was cheaply availabde to the poor. Evidence concerning abortion and infanticide is in a way conflicting and does not permit to draw conclusions as to incidence or geographical distribution. On the one hand, the existence of a widespread practice of family limitation is evident in the many policies that were designed to lessen it[6],

[a] The Go-Kyōyusho (Official Book of Instruction) is a collection of laws and directives for the peasants, compiled and issued by the Kumamoto authorities sometime during the first two decades of the 19th century. Its purpose was to dispel the "great uncertainties about the law" which existed among the peasants, and to protect them from "unwittingly infringing on regulations". Four times a year, it had to be read out aloud to the peasants and its content had to be explained to them. The headmen of the five-family groups were enjoined to raise individual points from this book to the other members of his group whenever they met in the course of their daily duties. Most important, however, was the provision requiring all calligraphy teachers to use it as textbook[7].

[b] On the topic of family limitation, see, Taeuber, Population, 29-34.

including moral exhortations by the authorities, investigations, rice or money subsidies given to families as stimulants to raise children, and punitive measures against those who destroyed children. On the other hand, as Taeuber has pointed out, it is nevertheless a fact that if limitation had been carried out in the numbers alleged by contemporary writers, this would have led to a rapid decline in total population - a decline which is not reflected in Tokugawa reports of commoners[8]. It may well be that the moral indignation of contemporary writers on the subject introduced an element of exaggeration into their accounts[a]; what is of paramount importance in this study of peasant life is the fact that family limitation was practiced out of motivations far more complex than the simple fact of physical poverty[9]. Apart from purely economic pressures impinging on such decisions, we may identify other motivations such as unfavourable zodiacal and calendar combinations, when the parents were older than was thought proper for a couple to rear children, but above all the pre-eminent necessity of the continuity of the family through the male line. While the eldest son stood no risk of willed death, with second and third child still being relatively secure, it was a fact of peasant life that prospects of second, third, or higher order sons were dark; often the only chance for them to avoid migration to the city or day labour in later life was the chance of adoption by another family. With high infant mortality, however, we must realize that many families never faced the problem of infanticide as such a decision as to whether a child could be reared or not would not normally have to be made until after a family

[a] So, for example, Satō Nobuhiro (1769-1850) who wrote: "Many women become pregnant, but they can not nurse their children. They murder their babies or procure abortion. By travelling around our country, I know this custom prevails. It is a very terrible fact that in a village consisting of ten houses, every year over two babies are killed... This custom is most prevalent in the provinces of Ohu and Kantō. In Chūgoku, Shikoku and Kyūshū abortion is universal. Even in the provinces of Dewa and Oshu alone, every year about sixteen or seventeen thousand babies are killed. But no one is startled by this deplorable custom."[10]

had five or even six children[11]. In the larger context, Taeuber sees the relevance of post-conception limitation of fertility in the substantial reductions in death rates below what they would have been otherwise by permitting the replacement of children who died. In this sense, mabiki was not only a consequence of the poverty of peasants, but indeed an "adjustment to living conditions consistent both with the survival of the individual families over the generations and with the maintenance of the national population"[12].

As I have already stated, legislation governing peasant life was only an indirect indicator of the changes in the quality of everyday life of the one or the other segment of the peasant population. In order to give a more accurate impression of living conditions of the peasants, I propose therefore to quote in some detail reports by European travellers to Japan. In my search for comments on the daily life of the common people, I have found the following sources, listed in chronological order of their stay in Japan, most useful (dates of stay in Japan in brackets):

a) The German Physician Engelbert Kämpfer (1690-92)[a].
b) The Swedish botanist Carl Peter Thunberg (1775-76)[b].
c) The German scientist and physician Ph. Fr. von Siebold (1823-30)[c].
d) The American plenipotentiary Townsend Harris (1856-62)[d].
e) The British minister Sir Rutherford Alcock (1859-62)[e].
f) W.E. Griffis, an American instructor in physical sciences (1870-74)[f].

---

[a] Kämpfer, Engelbert. The History of Japan. Transl. by J.G. Scheuchzer. 2 vols. London, 1727.

[b] Thunberg, Carl Peter. Reise durch einen Theil von Europa, Afrika und Asien, hauptsächlich in Japan, in den Jahren 1770 bis 1799. 2 vols. Berlin, 1794.

[c] Siebold, Ph. von. Nippon. Archiv zur Beschreibung von Japan. 7 vols. Leiden, 1832-51.

[d] Harris, Townsend. The Complete Journal of Townsend Harris. New York, 1930.

[e] Alcock, Sir Rutherford. The Capital of the Tycoon. 2 vols. London, 1863.

[f] Griffis, W.E. The Mikado's Empire. New York, 1876.

Crawcour, quoting from Alcock, Harris, and Griffis[a], pointed out that divergencies in the accounts of the quality of every-day life in mid-19th century Japan by these Western observers were spanning the whole range from "utter poverty" to "evidence of plenty". How do we account for these differences? Were they, as Crawcour asks, due to "different expectations or temperaments of the observers" or rather to "regional differences"[13]? As we look closer at all statements on the life of the common people in the available sources, including those quoted by Crawcour, we find that existing contradictions are rather less marked than the quotations chosen by Crawcour would seem to suggest at first. Certainly, both of the explanations offered by Crawcour for the existence of such diverging comments hold true to some extent. Griffis, for instance, who aired his disappointment with the realities of Japanese life in the bluntest manner, openly admitted that the only reason why he could be disappointed at all was because he had come to Japan with unrealistic preconceived notions as to what an "Oriental" country should look like. This emerges clearly from the description of his feelings when he saw Fukui for the first time - the town where he was to stay for one year as instructor in physical sciences:

> "I shall never forget my emotions, in that sudden first glimpse of the city embowered in trees, looming across the plain, amidst the air lade with snow-flakes, and seen in the light reflected from storm-clouds. There were no spires, golden-vaned; no massive pediments, façades, or grand buildings such as strike the eye on beholding a city in the Western world. I had formed some conception of Fukui while in America: something vaguely grand, mistily imposing - I knew not what. I now saw simply a dark, vast array of low-roofed houses, colossal temples, gables, castle-towers, tufts of bamboo, and groves of trees. This was Fukui"[14].

A similar bias may well have coloured the impressions of the other Western observers quoted below, whose personal and cultural background as well as the extent to which they could travel in Japan could not but have an immediate bearing on their impression of life in Japan. Nevertheless, as is evident in almost every

---

[a] See, Crawcour, "Tokugawa Heritage," 26-7.

source I have looked into, regional variations in the quality of life are undoubtedly a major reason for the diverging impressions of these travellers. Judging by their accounts and contrasting them with the description of peasant life in Higo following below, the comment by Smith that "widespread poverty - a condition by no means characteristic of all areas - was quite compatible with numerous instances of impressive wealth and elegance"[15] seems to be applicable not only to the peasant population within one domain but also to whole regions representing different stages of economic development.

That commerce was a prerequisite to a higher quality of life emerges already from the account given by Kämpfer for the years 1690-92. So, for instance, a passage describing the scene in Muru - a safe harbour in the Inland sea region in the province of Bizen - reads:

> "It consists of one long narrow street, which runs along the semicircular shores, and some few others, which run backwards up towards the mountains. The number of houses may amount in all to about six hundred. It is inhabited chiefly by Sacki[a] brewers, ale-house keepers and mercers, who can richly maintain themselves, because of the multitude of ships, which daily resort to this harbour"[16].

Communities which were located on lively trade routes were clearly in a favourable position to benefit from the exchange of goods, although, as we shall see presently, even this did not necessarily guarantee prosperity. Odawara, for instance, which was a stage on the Tōkaidō route situated on the margin of the Kantō plain, prospered although most of its inhabitants apparently were not directly involved in trade or manufacture:

> "It reckons about a thousand small houses very neatly built, white wash'd for the most part, with square court yards before, and curious gardens behind... The empty shops shew, that there is no great trade, nor manufactures carried on at this place, for all it lies so near the sea... The politeness in the dress and the civil behaviour of the Inhabitants of this place, particularly the women, are a proof, that there are only rich people live here, which

---

[a] Sake. Throughout my quotations from Kämpfer, I have retained the spelling of the original English edition of 1727.

> are under no necessity of getting their livelihood by trade, but are able to maintain themselves by their own revenues, and chose this town to live, preferably to other places, by reason of its good air and pleasant situation"[17].

Another example is provided by his description of Sakanoshita, a village situated on the pilgrim route from Kyōto to Ise, which appears to have prospered mainly by lodging pilgrims:

> "Sakanosta is a village of about an hundred houses, the first in the Province Isje. It is a rich village with many Inns, and lies in a very pleasant country. We took notice here of a small chappel, wherein was kept a good provision of small thin boards, with some sacred and singificant characters writ upon them, suppos'd to have the infallible virtue of keeping off all sorts of distempers and misfortunes. They were sold at some few farthings a-piece"[18].

Other writers, too, mention the existence of prosperity in places throughout Japan which were predestined by their location to play an important role in the exchange of goods. The harbour of Shimonoseki at the westernmost point of the main island of Honshū where travellers would ferry over to Kyūshū was described by Thunberg in 1776 as "very prosperous and sightly" owing to its harbour where often as many as 200 to 300 ships would be moored at one time[19]. The port of Kokura, situated on the opposite shore of the straits of Shimonoseki on the island of Kyūshū was characterized by Siebold as a prosperous town, where inland trade, handicrafts and agriculture offered all of its 16'000 inhabitants a livelihood[20]. Alcock, who travelled to the northern island of Hokkaidō in the mid-19th century mentioned signs of modest prosperity even in the port of Hakodate which occupied a similar vantage point on the traffic route between Honshū and Hokkaidō. Although Alcock found "very little beyond the commonest articles of consumption", shops appear to have been well stocked with foodstuff[21].

A reading of these travel diaries leaves no doubt that it

was above all in the Kantō plain centring around the large urban area of Edo and in the Kansai plain with the towns of Kyōto and Ōsaka where European travellers were most impressed by the widespread prosperity, while local centres of the kind described above represented pockets of prosperity in areas which were relatively little developed, kept alive mainly by trade on the arterial roads of Japan. Siebold, for instance, who as a medical practitioner had close contact with the population, realized during his stay in prosperous Kokura that, even within such a relatively important trading place, prosperity was confined to the town itself and was hardly spread even as far as the "suburbs" where the common people and the lower samurai were living:

> "The kinds of ailments of which the numerous patients from these places who came to consult me were suffering - mostly chronic skin disease and diseases of the eye, inveterate syphilis and cachexies[a] deriving from long-standing ailments of the abdomen and the chest - indicated that the nice living quarters which we had admired upon our entry into Faramats[b] were harbouring but poverty and misery"[22].

All travellers agree in their admiration for the riches produced by human skill in the large towns of Kyōto, Ōsaka, and Edo as well as by the peasants of the surrounding rural areas. For these economically advanced regions, we find enthusiastic comments which express the astonishment of Europeans and Americans alike for the achievements of Japanese civilization with hardly any qualifying remarks added about poverty still evident at the lower end of the social scale.

Of Kyōto during the Genroku period (1688-1704), Kämpfer wrote that "there is scarce a house in this large capital where there is not something made or sold"[23] and that "there is nothing can be thought of, but what may be found at Miaco[c]"[24].

---

[a] Depraved condition of the body, in which nutrition is everywhere deficient.

[b] Probably Haramachi, a suburb of Kokura.

[c] Miyako, Kyōto.

Seeing the wealth of products available in this town, Kämpfer wrote that "...for my part, I could not help admiring whence they can have customers enough for such an immense quantity of goods"[25].

The living quarters in the cities were described by Kämpfer as follows:

> "The houses in Jedo are small and low, as indeed they are in all other parts of the Empire, built of firwood, with thin clay'd walls, adorn'd within, and divided into rooms by paper skreens, and lattice windows. The floors are cover'd with fine mats, the roofs with shavings of wood"[26].

According to Thunberg, the houses of the rich and noble were distinguished "by their size, outward appearance and beauty"[27]. In Ōsaka, too, houses of merchants were

> "...according to the standing laws and custom of the country, not above two stories high.... They are built of wood, lime and clay. The front offers to the spectator's eye the door, and a shop where the merchants sell their goods, or else an open room, where handicraftsmen and artificers, openly and in every body's sight, exercise their trade and manufactures"[28].

As to the kind of food eaten by the inhabitants of the large cities in the late Tokugawa period, a good impression may be gained from the list which Siebold's assistants compiled in Edo in 1826[a]. They had been told to go around the shops of Edo to take notes of all articles on sale, and so the resulting picture may be considered to be fairly representative of the range of food items available to the ordinary citizen of Edo in the first half of the 19th century.

Counting the different varieties of food on sale, Siebold found close to a hundred different kinds of vegetables and fruit on sale in the shops of Edo, namely eight kinds of sprouted pulse and roots, fourteen kinds of pickles made of fruit, roots or vegetables, 25 kinds of fresh and dried mushrooms, 20 kinds of edible seaweed and fresh-water green algae,

[a] See, Siebold, Nippon, vol. 6, part VI, 70-2.

jellies and different varieties of starch-flour, and 28 kinds of fruit. Among seafood, he counted 70 varieties of fish, lobster, crabs, sepia and other species of mollusca, 26 kinds of shellfish, 30 kinds of birds and game. Furthermore, twelve different kinds of cereals were recorded.

Requirements of carbohydrate and vegetable protein of the citizens of Edo were covered from the following sources:

> Rice; dumplings made of rice, wheat, millet, or buckwheat; sweet cakes; various kinds of starch-flour made of arrowroot, rice, wheat or of bracken-starch; malt of barley; fermented soybean paste; konnyaku - a paste made from the starch of the devil's tongue; bean curd; jelly of seaweed; wheat gluten in liquid and dry form; sweets made of wheat and barley malt; sweet potatos; sprouts of pulse; soy sauce.

Animal protein food included the following items:

> Fish, especially tuna and whale. Fishbread - still today a popular dish - made of fat conger and shark, kneaded around bamboo sticks, basted with oil and broiled on charcoal. The most popular dish in Edo was whale meat and blubber, the latter slightly salted. Boiled whale guts were also popular and were served in special cook-shops. Fresh baleen, grated and coloured red, green, or yellow with natural dyes, was served as salad.

All considered, this is quite an impressive list of food on sale in Edo, although we have, of course, no way of knowing how many of these items could be purchased by the poorer sections of the public. Except for the remark that prices of commodities were "often three times as high in Edo as they were in the smaller towns and in the country"[29], Siebold does not give any indication whether prices of commodities were such as to exclude parts of the population from the ranks of potential consumers. However, judging by the remarks made by Alcock and Harris concerning the general state of health of the people in Edo[a], we may assume that food supplies were generally not only plentiful but also cheap enough as to be available to the majority of the population.

---

[a] (See, 216-8.)

Widespread prosperity was evident not only in the great cities and the towns, but also in the countryside. Describing his impressions of a journey from Ōsaka to Kyōto, Thunberg marvelled that the densely populated Kinai area was so beautiful that he could not remember having ever made such a pleasant journey, except in Holland:

> "The multitude of its natives and its culture surpass every description. On both sides of the road, the countryside is but an expanse of fertile fields as far as the eye can see. Today's journey took us through villages stretching along the whole length of the highway; no sooner is the end of one village reached than the next begins"[30].

Descriptions of Edo and the Kantō plain strike a similar note. So, for instance, Alcock wrote:

> "...both country roads and streets in the city of Yeddo will bear advantageous comparison with the best kept of either in the West. No squalid misery or accumulations of filth encumber the well-cared-for streets, if a beggar here and there be excepted - a strange but pleasant contrast with every other Asiatic land I have visited, and not a few European cities"[31].

He was also most favourably impressed with the conditions in the countryside on the Kantō plain. On a walk between Kanagawa and Yokohama, he was struck by the "evidence of plenty, or a sufficiency at least"[32]:

> "...cottages and farm-houses are rarely seen out of repair - in pleasant contrast to China where everything is going to decay - public buildings and private dwellings alike, but more especially the former"[33].

What was the quality of life of the common people in general and that of the peasantry in particular? Alcock, speaking of the Kantō plain, answered this question in the following passage:

> "There is no sign of starvation or penury in the midst of the population - if little room for the indulgence of luxury or the display of wealth. Their habits of life are evidently simple in the highest degree"[34].

Nevertheless, Alcock pointed out that the peasant, "the labour of the day over, can always look forward to the luxury of a hot bath, and a still more luxurious shampooing - if not by his barber or the blind professor of the art, who go about all the evening, with a whistle for their cry, seeking customers - he can always make sure of it by his wife's aid"[35]. That hot baths were indeed available even to ordinary people is also confirmed by Harris who noted in Shimoda that "the Japanese are a clean people. Everyone bathes every day. The mechanic, day laborer, all male and female, old and young, bathe every day after their labor is completed"[36], the only difference between rich and poor being the fact that the former had their baths in their own houses while "the working classes all, of both sexes, old and young, enter the same bathroom"[37] in one of the many public bath houses in Shimoda. Summarizing his impressions of peasant life in the Kantō area, Alcock wrote:

> "The poorer classes seem perfectly to answer the description of a happy peasant-life, drawn from another race, who 'lead a careless life, with nought to wish and nought to spare'"[38].

The observations by Alcock are all the more valuable for the fact that he had not kept his eyes shut to less agreeable sights on his extensive travels through Japan. In Fujizawa, for instance, he "passed a dead man on the road - evidently a beggar" - an experience which prompted the following reflections:

> "...so destitution does exist, however rare, and men die on the high roads - at least this one instance seemed to show such things were, even in Japan, though somebody has said or written there were no beggars in Japan. Beggars there certainly are, and in and about the capital in considerable numbers; but they are very far from being either so numerous, or so frequently to be seen at the point of starvation, as in the neighbouring country of China"[39].

Harris, too, speaks of poverty in the surroundings of Shimoda, a village situated on the very margin of the Kantō area almost at the southern tip of the Izu peninsula, adding, however, that "you see none of the squalor which usually attends poverty

in all parts of the world. Their houses are as clean as need be"[40]. Walking about five miles up the valley of Shimoda by the banks of the Shimoda river, Harris observed that this was a "poor place, where all are poor"[41], yet they "live comfortably, are well fed according to their wants and are abundantly clad, and their houses are clean, dry and comfortable"[42]. In the surroundings of Shimoda, he had "never seen a person that had the appearance of want marked on his countenance"[43]:

> "The children all have faces like 'full moons,' and the men and women are quite fleshy enough. No one can for a moment suppose (after seeing the people) that they are not well fed"[44].

Travelling from Kanagawa to Kawasaki in 1857, Harris described the common people he could see from his palanquin as follows:

> "They are all fat, well clad and happy looking, but there is an equal absence of any appearance of wealth or of poverty, - a state of things that may perhaps constitute the real happiness of a people"[45].

In Edo, too, "the people all appeared clean, well clad and well fed"[46]. In fact, Harris appears to have never come across a case of "squalid misery"[47] during his whole stay in Japan; indeed, what he had seen of rural life was "more like the golden age of simplicity and honesty"[48] than he had ever seen in any other country. After one of his walks in the vicinity of Shimoda, Harris even went as far as to say that "in no part of the world are the laboring classes better off than at Shimoda"[49].

Let us now contrast the picture emerging from the above accounts of travellers' impressions of the Kantō region with other entries in their diaries pertaining to regions which were farther away from the great cultural and economic centres of the period. In the context of this study, the observations made by Alcock on a "Journey Overland from Nagasaki to Yeddo across the Island of Kiusiu"[a] are, of course, of particular interest. On the first leg of the journey from Nagasaki to Kokura, Alcock wrote:

---

[a] See, Alcock, Capital, vol. 2, chapter IV. 64-87.

"Pretty hamlets and clumps of fine trees were rarely wanting; and if the villages looked poor, and the peasant's home (bare of furniture at all times) more than usually void of comfort, yet all the people looked as if they had not only a roof to cover them, but rice to eat, which is more than can always be said of our populations in Europe. As groups of women and children crowded round the doors of the cottages, the whole interior of which the eye could easily take in at a glance, it would sometimes appear a problem how so many living beings could find sleeping room... They must of necessity herd together very much like cattle; - but neither is that peculiar to Japan, unfortunately"[50],[a].

What struck Alcock most on his journey through northern Kyūshū was the fact that "the extreme richness and fertility of the soil were in striking contrast with the apparent poverty of those who lived on it"[51], and that "even in the large towns, though there were of course better houses to be seen than in the villages and hamlets, there was no sign of activity or prosperity"[52]. Upon his arrival in Kokura, where he was to embark on the ferry to cross the straits of Shimonoseki, Alcock summarized his impressions of northern Kyūshū in the following passage:

"...from all I had seen, I drew the conclusion, that although the fertility of the soil is great, and turned to the best account by a plentiful supply of the cheapest labour, yet little superfluity is left to those who have to live by the cultivation of the land. Whatever surplus there may be in the produce, must be absorbed by the Daimios and their thousands of hungry and idle retainers, who form the unproductive classes in Japan.... Rent is usually paid in kind, and whatever the exact proportion, the general poverty of the people, in the midst of surpassing fertility, goes far to prove it must be high"[53].

Of course, as we have already seen at the example of the Higo domain, reasons for such poverty as existed were far more complex than this simplistic explanation would suggest. However, the account by Alcock is of quite some importance for our aim of comparing the quality of peasant life in the economically advanced areas and in Kyūshū, for while he had seen no sign of

[a] Neither does this seem to have been peculiar to rural areas: Thunberg noted in Edo that "although every family has its own house one or two stories high, there are rather many people packing into one house[54].

penury among peasants in the Kantō area, he had received the impression that peasants in north Kyūshū were "as a race, so frugal and penurious...that, judging by the general aspect of poverty, nothing but a bare sustenance of rice and vegetables can be left to the cultivators, with just enough over to buy the very homely and scanty vestments they habitually wear..."[55].

It was, however, not only in Kyūshū that Alcock made such observations; he witnessed similar scenes even along the Tōkaidō route between Ōsaka and Edo:

> "These villages, as I have observed, are rather poverty stricken, even in Nipon[a]; and the interiors of the thatched cottages do not really promise much beyond mere shelter for man and beast, and not much better for the one than the other. Except a raised platform or matted room, where all the family, no matter how many in number, or of how many generations composed, must be huddled together at nights, there is no provision for comfort, placing that at the lowest standard..."[56].

The worst case of poverty was met by Alcock immediately after Hamamatsu; what he apparently did not know was the fact that this was not an ordinary village but an outcaste settlement, as is evident from the occupation of its inhabitants:

> "One of the villages we passed through was entirely devoted to straw shoe-plaiting; and notwithstanding the enormous consumption there must be, it evidently was not a trade on which people could grow rich. It was, in truth, the most wretched and poverty-stricken village I have ever seen in the country. They all looked like beggars' hovels"[57].

Alcock took also note of the state of health among the common people along the Tōkaidō route; his comment conveys a somewhat different picture from the impressions received by Harris of peasants in the Kantō area:

> "As we moved through town after town, and village after village, in our daily journeys, I observed a good deal of ophthalmia; blind people not unfrequently also. And among the children, scald-head is very common; a disease generally held by the faculty to have some association with dirt. And the children do look dirty, despite the many washings they must undergo. But the truth is, people of the lower classes in Japan herd, and sleep, and bathe

---

[a] Honshū.

> so promiscuously huddled together, that if there be any disease communicable by contact, they cannot fail to spread it. They seem to have a very inveterate form of itch, which Dr. Pompas in Nagasaki assured me was not to be cured by the ordinary treatment in Europe - yellow soap and sulphur it defies..."[58].

As our last Western witness to living conditions of the common people in 19th century Japan, I would like to quote Griffis, whose comments of a trip from Ōsaka to Fukui in Echizen, where he was to assume his post as official instructor, afford valuable insight into conditions in an area which, although not far away from urban Kinai, was - and still is to some extent today - relatively little developed. As I have pointed out above, the account by Griffis is certainly strongly biased by his great disillusionment about this "Oriental" country. Nevertheless, he did clearly distinguish different degrees of economic development in the regions through which he travelled. So, for instance, he was quite taken aback by the contrast with Ōsaka and Kyōto and their surroundings when he disembarked from the boat which had taken him from Ōtsu to Han-no-ura at the northern end of Lake Biwa:

> "We stepped out into what seemed a village of surpassing poverty. The houses were more than ordinarily dilapidated. The streets were masses of slush and mud. The people seemed, all of them, dirty, poor, ragged...I began to realize the utter poverty and wretchedness of the people and the country of Japan"[59].

Near Takefu on the Japan Sea coast, Griffis wrote that "in these villages good-nature and poverty seemed to be the chief characteristics of the people"[60] - an impression which even the castle town of Fukui could not rectify:

> "I was amazed at the utter poverty of the people, the contemptible houses, and the tumble-down look of the city, as compared with the trim dwellings of an American town. I rode through many streets, expecting at last to emerge into some splendid avenue, I rode in vain... I realized what a Japanese - an Asiatic city - was. All the houses of wood, the people poor, the streets muddy, few signs of wealth, no splendid shops. Talk of Oriental magnificence and luxury! What nonsense!"[61].

All of these eyewitness accounts suggest the existence of pronounced regional divergencies in the quality of life of the common people in the late Tokugawa period. In the populous urban centres where trade and manufacture were flourishing and in the surrounding agricultural areas with a relatively high productivity, a comparatively wide section of the population could profit by the new chances offered by the growing market. In the lesser provincial towns and their far less commercialized hinterland, the number of men to enjoy the same quality of life as their peers in the Kinai and Kantō areas was accordingly smaller.

Roughly speaking, it is safe to say that there did exist a marked gap between the spread of prosperity in the Kantō and Kansai regions on the one hand and those regions not yet sufficiently urbanized and commercialized on the other hand. With regard to our study of peasant life in Higo, the clear difference in the quality of life between North Kyūshū and the economically advanced areas of central Japan as suggested by Alcock is of particular interest. If this was so, what was the quality of everyday life of the common people in Higo - a domain which, if anything, was even less commercialized than the domains through which Alcock had travelled? Let us therefore now turn to peasant life in Higo as it emerges from literary sources. Keeping in mind what has been said above, we shall then be able to place peasant life in Higo in the wider context of living conditions of the common people in late Tokugawa Japan.

To begin with the housing of peasants, we may refer once more to the interesting commentary of our traveller, Furukawa Koshōken[a]. On the way from Kumamoto to the Aso region, he noticed that "there were shabby little houses everywhere"[62] around Ōtsu which lies still in the comparatively prosperous alluvial plain, but once he had entered the Aso county - a plateau on the Kyūshū mountain range - he had to realize that

---

[a] (See, 85 ff.)

things could be still worse. To his dismay, he saw that few of the peasants' houses had doors at all.

> "Seeing them living on the bare ground behind bamboo curtains as makeshift doors, which they roll up as one would do with a map, made me feel sad"[63].

And below a little sketch he had made of one of these wretched dwellings he wrote that although these did not lack a certain elegance with their roofs thatched with miscanthus and their braided doors of bamboo, they still looked like a beggar's house in the Kamigata area[a] since they had no walls.

A look at the type of house which was in wide use by the ordinary peasants of Higo well into the Meiji period will explain the apparent impossibility of having a house without walls yet with a door. These dwellings, known as horidate goya, were hut-like structures with a thatched roof covering a hole dug in the earth which was filled with chaff and covered by strawmats. With the roof almost touching ground-level, the entrance took the form of a few steps leading down into the pit. Rather than speaking about a house or a hut, these horidate goya might therefore be more aptly referred to as pit-dwellings. Depending on their economic situation, peasants would build up to ten or fifteen such huts on their land without the help of a carpenter, each of them measuring between 2 to 8 tsubo[64]. The chaff had to be changed every 10 days to be mixed with the ash of burned garbage and fishbones for use as fertilizer[65]. Furukawa then goes on to tell further details which appear to have been so startling to a man used to the comforts of town life that he considers it necessary to assure the reader of the truthfulness of his account:

> "On my journey, I always picked the better houses when staying somewhere for the night, but not even there did they use mosquito nets in summer. They would simply put some green grass into the cooking stove to fumigate the whole house before going to sleep. Thus, they lived an uncomplicated life without either walls or doors. The reader of this book will no doubt think that I am telling lies, but it is indeed almost impossible to write a description of this secluded place"[66].

---

[a] (See, 87n.)

Even in the comparatively mild winters of Kyūshū, these open pit-dwellings afforded inadequate protection from inclement weather. It is one of the persistent prejudices held even today by inhabitants of the central regions of Japan that the climate of Kyūshū is mild whatever the season. Furukawa, too, held this preconceived notion, but had to revise it when travelling in Higo:

> "I used to think of Kyūshū as an island blessed with a warm climate, as it borders on the South Seas, but local peasants in the Aso county assured me that in certain years, the depth of snow could reach seven to eight feet"[67].

In these circumstances, only warm clothing and strawmats could bring relief from the cold. Cotton for the use of the peasants was generally cultivated by themselves, not bought. It was the task of women to spin the cotton during the slack season and then to weave the fabric, to dye it, and finally to sew the clothes. The men in the household, on the other hand, took on the job of making straw sandals, ropes, and also the strawmats used for keeping warm at night and for a multitude of other purposes. To most peasants in Higo, sumptuary legislation compelling them to wear only clothes made of cotton must at times have had a strange ring about it, for - as one peasant in the TN said - "we do not mind plain cotton cloth as long as we have sufficient of it so as not to freeze to death in winter, but as you can see, we don't even have white thread to mend our clothes with"[68].

Neither were the peasants of Higo generally blessed with a plentiful food supply; on the contrary, Furukawa's conclusion that Higo could compare only unfavourably with its neighbouring domains seems to have been applicable not only to outward appearances as they struck the eye of the traveller passing through, but also to daily food of the peasants. That Furukawa does not comment on the food in his travel journal may well

indicate that he was not offered plain peasant fare, but, in keeping with Japanese hospitality, the best that could be procured at that time. The economist Seishi Kōki, however, stated in his Keizai Mondō Hiroku (compiled in 1833)[a] quite unequivocally that "of all places in Kyūshū, Higo has the poorest food"[69]. According to this source, the staple food in Higo was foxtail millet - a striking contrast to food in the neighbouring domains, if we are to believe this eyewitness. To demonstrate how great, in fact, the poverty of peasants in Higo was, Seishi recalls how he had once, on the outskirts of the town of Hakata in the Chikuzen domain, seen a peasant eating white rice. Wondering how this was possible, he asked someone on the road about that peasant's family, only to be told to his amazement that he came from a rich background but was now so poor that he had to work the plough with his own hands. Whereas in the provinces of Chikugo and Hizen, clothes were beautiful and the diet was varied, in the villages of Higo and Bungo, barnyard millet and buckwheat were, it seems, considered good food.

It is reported that as late as 1836, even the wealthiest peasants in the alluvial plain of Higo could eat rice at best during the New Year celebrations and on festivals[70]. In each village, between 6 se to 1 tan of rice land were set aside for the benefit of the shrine association[b]; the rice grown on these fields by common cultivation was eaten by the members of this association either once a year on the occasion of the shrine festival, or - the size of the field permitting - on several occasions in the course of a year. These fields, which were exempt from tax as the rice grown on them nominally belonged to the tutelary deities worshipped in the local shrine, gave the members of the shrine association the possibility to eat their fill with rice at least once in a while. Ordinary peasants, however, generally had no such possibility at hand; the only way

---

[a] NKT, vols, 34 and 35, 3-176.

[b] (See, 50 ff.)

they could taste rice was to rake together the earth around the strawmat on which the rice and other cereals had been threshed, and store it away wrapped up in the matting. In spring, when food supplies were running low, they would then take the mats, sift the earth for crushed bits of cereal and use these for making cakes and dumplings[71]. When a little rice could be procured in some way, the father in a family would receive a small dish containing what was known as bunmeshi - a dish consisting of equal parts of rice and barley - while the rest of the family would receive a dish with barley only. Millet and barley were the main cereals eaten by peasants, together with some upland rice growing on dry fields. One standard dish consisted of these cereals - the grains were soaked overnight and then boiled - with the dregs of soy sauce and tea poured over it. To the comparatively spoiled palate of peasants living in the mountains of Higo today, this reportedly tastes so dreadful, that it can only be enjoyed while it is steaming hot[a]. The authorities had every interest in making sure that sufficient of these cereals was sown as a precautionary measure against peasants eating rice before they had paid all of their annual tax.

Salted fish was a rare delicacy; ordinarily, dried radish (kiriboshi daikon) was substituted for fish as a sidedish. Radishes were - as is indeed still today the custom in Kumamoto - laid out in a row along the front of the peasant dwellings exposed to the sun where they shrivel from their original size of about thirty centimetres to a mere six to nine centimetres. Peasant diet was further supplemented by sweet potatoes, red beans, soy beans, and buckwheat. Every little patch of land was used to grow something; in the plain, river dikes were often used by the peasants to grow beans, and in the mountains, peasants would, wherever possible, clear a patch of land by

[a] According to my informant in Hamamachi, until the end of World War II, the greatest ambition of young people in the mountains of Higo was to be able to eat bunmeshi in later life.

burning trees and undergrowth and then sow rye and buckwheat without ploughing. After two or three years when the soil quality began deteriorating, another patch of land was cleared. To ensure that fields used for growing the peasants' own food received enough fertilizer, official orders compelled the peasants to put up large earthenware vessels or tubs in the vicinity of rye fields to hold night-soil and the carcasses of dogs and monkeys[72].

A major source of food was provided - especially in the mountainous regions - by the forests, where peasants would dig for edible roots and collect various plants. Kämpfer noted that in Japan, there were numberless plants "that grow in the Fields, upon hills and mountains, in woods and forests, in morassy grounds, in barren and uncultivated places, along the sea-coasts, and in short every where. Of all these, there are very few, but what afford their roots, leaves, flowers and fruits, not only for the sustenance of the common people, but even for the delicious tables of people of quality. There is a great variety of mushrooms, most of which are eat. Some indeed are poisonous, and unlucky accidents happen frequently. The use of some other plants is often attended with the like dangerous consequences, the venomous being sometimes mistook for the wholesom by ignorant people"[73]. On the 7th day of the 1st month, for instance, peasants in Higo would gather wild plants and herbs, such as wild rocambole (nobiru), sagebrush (yomogi), and thistle, for eating. This custom had its origins in an ancient aristocratic observance called the 'Seven Herbs' (nanakusa), when finely-cut herbs and plants were cooked in the morning rice gruel[a] as this was believed to be an effective remedy for all kinds of illnesses likely to befall one in the course of a year, and also to help the body and the intestines to recover from overeating. In Higo, not many peasants were

[a] namely parsley (seri), shepherd's purse (nazuna), chickweed (hakobe), dead nettle (hotoke no za), Chinese rape (suzuna), garden radish (suzushiro), and cudweed (gogyō).

faced with this problem; for many, this custom was rather an excuse to gather all the plants and herbs they could lay their hands on, even though plants growing in the forests provide rather little nutritional value.

A particularly important role among the various plants found in the forests was played by the arrowroot[a], which provided plenty of starch to supplement the diet of peasants until the first cereals could be harvested. Whereas in normal years, only the poorer sections of the peasantry had to resort to eating roots, in years of famine most peasants were glad if they found sufficient arrowroot to keep alive. Arrowroot was prepared and eaten by squeezing the sap out of the root, which was then mixed with water and allowed to stand for some time. When the starch had settled on the bottom of the container, the water could be drained off. The starch was then boiled and fashioned into small cakes. Since arrowroot only grows in forests, peasants from the plain would, in years of famine, ascend to the mountains in groups, so that in certain years no edible plant could be found after some time. Other roots collected by the peasants in the forests were described by Kämpfer:

> "...out of the _konjakf_[b], which is a poisonous sort of a _Dracunculus_, they prepare a sweet mealy pap. In the like manner by expressing the Juice, by macerating and boiling the roots of the _Warabi_ or _Fern_, of the _Ren_, or _Faba Aegyptiaca_, call'd by some _Tarate_ flower, as also of what they call _kashe_, they make a fine sort of flour, which is of great use in dressing their victuals, and which they eat besides, by itself dissolv'd in water"[74].

The insufficient and unbalanced diet told on the life expectancy of peasants - the author of the _TN_ mentions a lifespan of fifty years for peasants[c] - and also on their health. Lack of calcium in the diet, for instance, was the cause of a

[a] (See, _TN_: 397.)

[b] _konnyaku_, devil's tongue.

[c] (See, _TN_: 424.)

pronounced tendency towards developing humpbacks - even today, old peasants with backs bent at almost right angle are not too rare a sight in the countryside. Moreover, with such plain fare at normal times, it is not difficult to imagine how great the hardship of a large majority of the peasantry must have been in times of famine when even these food supplies were running low. That famine as a result of bad harvests or total harvest failure was not all that infrequent is borne out by the following list[75], which is based on the records of the Oguni county. I have chosen the entries from 1783 to 1802, the period of immediate interest to our study of the TN:

1783 Natural calamity. Severe frost in the 8th month causing famine in the whole of Kyūshū. Free distribution of rice-gruel. Relief rice distributed to all villages by the authorities.

1787 Heavy rainfalls from the 1st to the 7th month. Severe frost in the 8th and 10th month. All crops fail. With the foxtail millet, not even the seeds could be gathered. No food, peasants have to live on edible roots.

1788 Large amounts of rainfall in the 6th month.

1791 Great inundations.

1793 Earthquake in the 3rd month. Large inundations in the 6th month. Houses and animals washed away by the floods.

1795 Very bad harvest of rye in the 6th month. Rice prices shoot up to 400 monme.

1797 Very cold in the 1st month. Much snowfall. Chicken eggs freeze and break.

1802 Inundations in the 5th month. 6th month and 7th month drought. 8th month heavy rainfall and inundations.

With the exception of 1783, this list gives no hint of government help to peasants in famine years. Indicative of this official neglect is also a passage in the TN where one peasant answers a proposal by another peasant to collect the 'first ears of rice' tax and store it at the district headman's office to be distributed to the peasants when they are about to starve, quipping that "if relief is given only every twenty or thirty

years, the rice accumulated would be rather more than is necessary!"[76]. In fact, although special taxes were levied to stock up cereal provisions for times of famine, it seems that whenever a famine occurred, the authorities first had to make an appeal to the public to donate rice to be distributed to the people in need[77]. District headmen also bought rice from other districts to sell it to the peasants in their district. Although local shortages could be bridged in this way, enabling peasants to pay their annual tax, this practice could put some peasants so deeply in debt that it would take them several years to recover[78]. Whenever relief rice was distributed to the hungry, it was, moreover, given not according to need, but according to status[79] - i.e. a landless peasant would receive considerably less than a honbyakushō[a]. Another example of token help to the peasants is reported during the Tenpō famine, when, in 1836, the Higo authorities decided to present every man older than 90 years with an annual allowance of six bags of rice. Realizing how low the average lifespan of peasants was[b], this offer strikes one as rather cynical - apparently, of some 10'000 peasants living in the Oguni region at that time, only 11 fell into this category[80].

The most interesting information on the kind of food many peasants had to eat when they were deprived of normal supplies of cereal is afforded by the notes of a peasant from Oguni. In his Kyōnen konkyū no tekagami (Notes on Distress suffered in Years of Famine)[c] compiled between 1836 and 1837, Anami Jinbei wrote down his observations of peasant life during the Tenpō famine. Not much is known about the author, but judging from the fact that he had a family name and possessed a considerable degree of literacy, he may be presumed to have held some post in local administration. This supposition is

---

[a] (See, 49.)

[b] (See, 228.)

[c] See, Kumamoto kenritsu Oguni Kōtōgakkō, ed. Kyōnen konkyū no tekagami.

only confirmed by the moral exhortations to peasants which are included in the text.

The fifth paragraph of his notes, entitled 'On the preparation of morning and evening meals in years of famine'[81], gives us a detailed list of food substitutes to which many peasants had to resort in times of food shortage. (Items 11 and 14 cannot be translated owing to lacunae in the MS.)

1) Bracken and arrowroot, which are ready to be dug up in autumn, make excellent food.
2) One can collect yam in the woods, mix it with rice bran and then steam it in the same way as rice cakes. How good they taste in a year of famine!
3) Snake-gourd cakes: Dig up snake-gourds, bleach them, then prepare like item 2.
4) Tokoro[a] cakes. They take a lot of time to bleach, but are not tasty.
5) Straw cakes: One either uproots the stumps of rice-straw which remain in the fields after the harvest, or one cuts off the bottom part of other straw, shreds it and then rubs it in one's hands as one does with arrowroot cakes. When the dough is firm enough, it is then formed into dumplings and boiled. They are edible, but one cannot live on them. Making them is moreover very time-consuming. Their quality is even worse than that of item 4.
6) Mud cakes: In parts of the Gōshi county, and along the Yanagi river in Chikugo, people sift mud and make dumplings out of it. This may be disastrous.
7) Pine-tree dumplings: There is a way of making dumplings out of the sweet tips of pine-tree branches, but in this region there is nobody who does this.
8) Rice bran cakes: This is the household favourite. Rice chaff, bran of rye and foxtail millet are finely cut and mixed with very little buckwheat, rye, and crushed rice, and then prepared. It is indeed a sign of wealth if a family can

---

[a] A climbing plant, similar to yam.

afford to put a little more of the cereals into the cakes than is usually the case.

9) Arrowroot starch: One can eat it either in the form of cakes or else mix it with other food. It is used very often and is very tasty.

10) Acorns: If one pulverizes the acorns and bleaches them well one should be able to eat a little of it at a time. It is, however, not really suited for human consumption.

12) Hemp-palm roots: Among these roots there are some which are edible and some which are not. One must skin the roots carefully, and pulverize the white flesh. I must say that it does help to stave off the pangs of hunger, but there may be ill side-effects on the human body.

13) Mansha flower[a]: There is nothing one can do with this flower.

Of course, it would be misleading to infer from food of the ordinary peasants in years of famine on the quality of peasant life in ordinary years, when sufficient food was available. Nevertheless, we must acknowledge the fact that the evidence cited above clearly assigns Higo around 1800 a place among the backward regions of Japan; from this follows by implication that the quality of life of the majority of the peasantry in Higo was rather more simple than peasant life in the economically advanced areas. As far as famine is concerned, the political authorities during the Tokugawa period were to a large extent unable to relieve hardship of the peasantry on a large scale. For one, considering the stage of development of agricultural technology, the population of Japan was too large, so that natural catastrophes could perilously upset the food supply of large parts of the country. Here, mention must also be made of the limited possibilities to control pests. For another, the exclusion policy of the Tokugawa was precluding the possibility of food imports in years when major portions of the crop had been destroyed. The economic organization more-

[a] Lycoris radiate.

over harboured the danger of food being hoarded by dealers who were waiting for the right price, thus causing prices of staples to rise precipitously. Although all of these factors severely limited the range of possible action by the domain authorities in cases of emergency, it is open to question to what extent the adherence of the Higo authorities to the kemi method of tax assessment and their enforcement of the gowari no sakutoku regulation in times of crop failure were responsible for the lack of food reserves of many peasants. All considered, there can be no doubt that, had they been in a position to do so, peasants in Higo would surely have followed the advice of a priest in Oguni who, during the Tenpō famine, told his hungry congregation in a sermon that they should always put some rice aside because the next famine was sure to come[82].

Payment of the annual tax was for most peasants easily the most important and the most feared recurring event in everyday life. As the main point of contact between the peasants and the authorities, it will be well worthwile to take a closer look at tax payment as experienced by the peasantry in Higo.

3.1. The Annual Tax

To make plain the consequences to domain finances of the heavy tax burden on the peasantry, the author of the TN used the metaphor of an overloaded horse which may break down any moment as various things are added to its burden without consideration for the total weight[83]. Even if we make some allowance for polemical distortion in the TN, there can be no doubt that, with the kemi method of tax assessment, peasants in Higo around 1800 were at a considerable disadvantage if compared with peasants in those regions where the jōmen method had already been introduced. In this sense, the complaints of our author are to a large extent justified, although he may have been prone to exaggerate the degree of peasant distress as a result of taxation. Before looking at the way the annual

tax was collected in Higo, here are some general observations.

The tax payment procedure differed in each domain to some extent; apart from minor departures from the norm, however, domains followed the pattern set forth below, simply because its task of collecting rice from the peasants and transporting it to the centres of consumption or sale was the same everywhere. Basically, peasants were required to transport their tax rice to a specified place where it was controlled by the authorities. Then, rice wholesalers and shipping merchants would take over to transport the tax rice to the market where it was to be sold. Sometimes, orders might also be given to sell the rice in the county and to pay the annual tax in currency[84].

During the late Tokugawa period, there were three principal categories of tax. Firstly, there was the regular annual tax (nengū) levied by the domain authorities. Secondly, there were the village taxes (mura iriyō) collected annually by the village officials together with the regular tax. Thirdly, there were a number of extra taxes, levied by both the village officials and the domain authorities. The regular tax, in turn, consisted of two major categories, namely the principal land tax (hontomononari), comprising the bulk of the peasants' ordinary taxes which was levied on all arable and even on residence land not used for cultivation[85], and the miscellaneous taxes (komononari) imposed on mountains, forests, highland plateaus, rivers, and the sea. The village taxes were those exactions which were levied on the peasants by the village officials to cover their expenses incurred during their duties. Village officials were responsible for assessing how much they would need, for collecting the tax, and for spending it. Since it was a feature peculiar to village finance during the Tokugawa period not to distinguish clearly between expenditures of a public and private nature[86], it was only natural that the village taxes in Higo should have grown steadily in the course of the Tokugawa period. Although the village during this period was

much smaller than the present-day village in Japan and was, moreover, not a self-governing unit, with expenditure amounting to not much more than petty cash, the village tax in Higo increased from a little over 2 shō per 50 koku during the Kan'ei/Shōhō period (1624-48) to over 3 to per koku towards the end of the Tokugawa period[87]. Whereas originally the village tax had been used to cover the headman's expenses for writing brushes, paper, ink and oil, gradually all salaries of the local officials came to be burdened on the village budget. An investigation of village finance in the 1850's reveals that the greatest part of the village expenses was taken up by payments to the domain administration and the district office, with only between 10 to 20 percent of the village budget remaining for the good of the community[88]. The total of village expenses was normally shared among the villagers in proportion to their kokudaka (takawari), but there were also instances where it was shared equally among the households, thus putting the poorer families at a disadvantage[89].

The heading of extra taxes comprises an immense number of smaller and larger levies by the domain authorities and the local officials. As a rule, such taxes were introduced at one point for a specific purpose, but were not abolished afterwards. Thus, we meet with a number of tax dues where it is difficult to gather for what purpose they were levied. An idea of the number of these various exactions may be gained from an order of the Meiji government of the 2nd month of 1876 which abolished 1'553 items of both miscellaneous and extra tax[90]. Among the most common was the kuchimai, a tax thought to have originated in the Kamakura period (1185-1333) to cover the expenses of the local officials. Under the Tokugawa, the kuchimai was increased to 1 shō for each rice bag containing 3 to 7 shō[91]. Besides the kuchimai there were furthermore the kanmai and komigome taxes, originally introduced to make up for losses of rice during transport owing to damaged wrapping but later required as a matter

of course, and the unjō tax for transport of the tax rice. These taxes had to be filled into the rice bags intended for payment to the domain authorities[a], so that a rice bag of 3 to 5 shō could easily grow to 4 to, thus increasing the annual tax somewhat above the level of the official tax rate. In Higo, the 'first ears of rice' (hatsuho gome) tax intended for temples and shrines but more frequently held back by the village officials also belonged to this category of extra taxes[b]. The author of the TN further mentions that the authorities demanded additional rice contributions (sunshi) of the kind of forced loans exacted periodically from town merchants[c]. All things considered, the extra taxes imposed on the peasants appear to have posed at times severe problems - in the opinion of the author of the TN, they were a major cause of the peasants' inability to pay the regular annual tax:

> "...peasants would not have the least difficulties in paying that part of their tax which is due to the authorities. Nowadays, taxes are such a crushing burden for the small peasants because there are so many miscellaneous dues which have to be paid together with the annual tax; to the officials, the district office, and the village headman"[92].

Before the introduction of the jōmen method in 1803, the first visible sign of the imminent annual tax assessment in a village in Higo was the kokemi[d] - the "small" assessment - when the village headman, village officials, and the scribe assembled to go from one field to the next to inspect all arable of their village. They would stick bamboo tags indicating the size and the assessed yield into each field and record at the same time their findings in a list which was to be handed over to the tax inspector on the day of the kemi - the "real" assessment.

---

[a] Before 1725, the shogunate had allowed their deputies on government land to use the kuchimai to cover their expenses. As a consequence, the takings of kuchimai grew rapidly, so that orders were given to include the kuchimai in the regular tax payment, while expenses of the deputies were defrayed through other channels[93].

[b] (See, TN: 368.)

[c] (See, TN: 370.)

[d] (See, TN: 341.)

This took place some time later, when the tax officials were dispatched from the castle town to all villages to carry out this important procedure. On the day when the tax inspector from the castle town was expected in a village, there was "an extraordinary hustle and bustle"[94] everywhere; the village headman and his aides would wait on the boundary of the village, dressed in formal wear even in warm weather, to greet the important visitors and accompany them on their inspection tour of the rice fields. Pleasing the officials' whims and putting them in the right mood with presents and by offering them local delicacies was of decisive importance to the favourable outcome of the assessment of the rice yield, for the whole technical procedure had too many loopholes to allow peasants to disregard the emotional factor in their dealings with tax officials. As was the case with land surveys in general, methods of assessing the harvest yield depended very much on the officials who carried them out; whether they held the measuring string taut or loose and where they considered the borderline of a field to be, all bore directly on the outcome of the inspection in the form of drastic differences in expected harvest yield. If an official was in a lenient mood, he would place the measuring rods a little apart so that their ends did not quite touch, which could reduce the measurement of the land area by up to 20 or 30 percent[95] for a whole village. In fact, undermeasurement of arable land was not regarded as tax evasion but rather as a tax alleviation measure which, together with some other allowances like the practice of dropping fractional amounts in both linear and square measures or allowing for ridges between rice fields, compensated for irregularities on part of those officials who carried out their task too zealously[96 a]. For this reason, peasants were much more concerned with the land survey than with the actual tax rate[97]. On this important day, peasants were therefore eager to please the officials, since their welfare of the coming year

[a] (See, TN: 379, 383.)

depended on the outcome of this survey. Bribing the officials could not be done too openly; it had to be done in such a way as to make it possible for the official to accept the "present" without loss of face. So, peasants would approach the official from the side, insert their arm into the wide sleeve of the official and slip a few koban silver coins into the official's hand. Another way of doing this discreetly was to put the koban into a cake-box and present the money gift in this inconspicuous manner to the officials, who could easily guess the value of the gift by its weight. However, the burden imposed on the village finances by the necessity to present officials with bribes must not be overrated; according to Smith, bribes may generally be supposed to have paid out handsomely by way of special considerations granted by the officials[98].

Basically, the procedure of assessing the harvest yield was simple and straightforward. The tax inspector would pick a rice field and order the villagers to either harvest a sample of one tsubo (tsubogari), or - as is the case in the TN - the whole field. After the quality of the cereal and the soil of the harvested field had been taken into consideration - often also the distance over which the grain had to be transported, the number of crops that the land could produce each year, and the sources of village revenue other than agriculture[99] - the total tax of the whole village was computed by extrapolating from the result of the test-harvest, since to measure each field separately would have been too time-consuming. The result of this calculation was the taxable yield of the village, the village kokudaka. The amount of tax which the village was expected to pay was communicated to the village officials in a document called nengū wappujō, sometimes also called menjō. It was now the task of the village headman, with his officials, to apportion the tax burden to each household. Usually, this document carried a reminder to village officials that the individual shares should be decided upon by mutual consultation to

avoid injustice - a piece of advice which seems to have been often flouted by village officials who preferred to deal with this matter arbitrarily, just telling each peasant what he had to pay without divulging any details about the total amount of tax levied on the village[a].

A possibility to appeal against the tax inspector's decision existed in the form of the re-assessment (hamen kemi; in Higo, go-sonbiki), such as, for instance, when a sudden change of weather had decreased the harvest yield after the kemi. The re-assessment caused great expense to the village as the whole procedure of the assessment had to be repeated. As the author of the TN alleged, the cost of the re-assessment could swallow up most of the tax remission granted for the whole village, with the local officials again benefitting most by the commission they charge[b]. It was therefore in the government interest to abolish re-assessments altogether, in order to do away with yet another opportunity for local officials to enrich themselves. Since this proved to be impossible, even after the introduction of the jōmen method of tax assessment, attempts were frequently made to at least discourage villages from applying for re-assessment in all but the most serious cases of crop failure, by making them pay the costs of sending officials from the castle town to the village[c].

Once the rice was harvested, the strictest precautions were taken to ensure that the rice remained in the village. On all the roads leading to the market places, guards were set up, villages were closed to traders and beggars until the day of tax payment, while movements of peasants were generally restricted.

---

[a] Official orders to village officials, that they must not allocate the individual tax burden arbitrarily, are frequent in every domain; in the mid-18th century, the shogunate issued an order to the effect that the amount of tax imposed on the village be made known to all villagers by displaying a notice in front of the village headman's house[100].

[b] (See, TN: 377.)

[c] In the Fukuoka domain, villages were promised 600 bags of rice if they had not applied for a reduction in their tax for a considerable length of time[101].

They were particularly strictly forbidden to move rice or pay back personal debts. This was especially important since moneylenders apparently tried hard to recover their loans at this opportune moment. When the tax rice was ready for payment, moneylenders toured the villages, sometimes with a samurai who had also lent out money heading their party, to confiscate as much tax rice and personal belongings of their debtors as was required to cover the outstanding debts[102]. To curtail further unnecessary expenses, collections for pious purposes and visits to temples and shrines were prohibited[a]. Rare pleasures like banquets were only allowed until the end of the 3rd month, well before the harvest of winter crops, to ensure the solvency of the peasants. According to regulations of the Tenpō period, those infringing on this order were to be imprisoned, regardless of their status[103].

In the first half of the 12th month, the tax rice had to be delivered to the authorities. The peasants had to take great care in selecting the rice and packing it. High penalties faced those in whose bags husks were found in the rice, or if some rice was lacking. The rice bags had to be double-walled to protect its content from moisture. Even the way the bags had to be tied up was laid down in regulations.

In Higo, peasants on the alluvial plain had to bring their rice directly to one of the eight domain storehouses[b], where it was checked and stored. From every village, a long procession of peasants with packhorses set out on their journey together, full of anxiety about the outcome of the payment procedure. In front of the storehouse, the rice bags were lined up according to the instructions of the tax officials. It was common to elect one of the peasants in the party to the post of Head of Payment (haraigashira), whose responsibility it was to accompany

[a] In the Satsuma domain, the village assembly was not allowed to meet during this time, while weddings, the construction of new houses, and even the sewing of new clothes had to be postponed[104].

[b] Kumamoto (East and West), Kawashiri, Takase, Yatsushiro, Ōtsu, Kujū, Tsuruzaki, Kagami.

the rice through all the checks[a]. The storage officials first of all checked the ropes and strawmats of the rice bags, returning to the Head of Payment all those that showed some defect (nawahane, tawarahane). Then, two officials called sashiko stood at each end of the rice bags facing each other and inserted a ladle from each side diagonally into the bag. Taking out about 6 or 7 shaku of rice and pouring it into their left hand, they examined it for dryness, polish, and to find out whether several sorts of rice had been mixed together. Next, the weight was checked by the weighing officials. If found correct, the tax payment of the village was accepted, confirmed in writing, and stored in and around the storehouse. The two Kumamoto storehouses alone could accomodate 60'000 koku of rice - it was from here that all salaries and annual stipends were paid out[105]. Rice which had been rejected was handed over to men employed at the storehouse to repair straw bags and quite generally to bring refused consignments of tax rice up to the standard required against payment of a charge. All formalities completed, the Head of Payment handed over to the village headman the document confirming payment of tax (o-kurabaraikitte) which he had received from the tax officials. Thereupon, the peasants were free to return home.

Peasants who lived in the mountainous regions or in places which were not in the vicinity of a government storehouse, had to pay their tax at the district office, where the same inspection took place as outlined above. The peasants were each handed out their receipt confirming payment of tax, whereupon they had to transport their regular annual tax - the village taxes had already been subtracted - to one of the domain storehouses. There, it was put into store without further checks. All that now remained for the tax officials in Kumamoto castle to do was to add up their takings[b].

[a] In some domains, these were called komebarai.

[b] In the Kokura domain, where the tax had to be paid by the 10th day of the 12th month, the district headmen assembled around the 3rd day of the same month with their scribes and other lower officials in the offices of the County Administration in the castle town, where they worked almost day and night. The 25th day was the day of the final settlement of the county storehouses, and on the 27th day all the officials were in-

Whereas tax payment could be a time of trial for many peasants, a number of officials profited considerably by it. There were little opportunities for peasants to deceive the officials; the most they could do was to moisten the rice to increase its weight or, if they knew that not every bag would be checked singly, they would take chances by inserting stones in the rice. With severe penalties this was, however, most dangerous, and so, presumably, little practiced. Officials, on the other hand, found plenty of opportunity to turn the whole business of tax payment to their advantage. For one, the post of sashiko was much coveted among officials, since the rice which they extracted from the rice bags was their property afterwards. To be dispatched for this duty was regarded as a favour; equipped with extra large ladles, these samurai could thus better their finances[a]. The weighing official, too, was often bribed by those who had the right to keep the rice which had fallen on the ground to drop as much as he could when measuring tax rice with a dry measure[106]. Much like in the case of the tax assessment, it was vital to bribe the key officials in the tax payment procedure, for they could refuse rice bags for trifling reasons. The contents of a rice bag could vary considerably, depending on how the levelling device, the tokaki (in Higo: tobo), was used to scrape over the top of the dry measure, so that it was important to win the goodwill of the official operating this device.

What the author of the TN considered to harm government interests most in the long run was the practice of tax payment loans (jōnōgashi), by which local officials advanced rice to peasants in time of need - often when they could not pay their tax - demanding repayment on the day of tax payment the following year. Although this practice brought immediate relief to the

---

vited to the castle for a ceremony of thanks by the lord[107].

[a] In the Satsuma domain, for instance, this post was given only to officials with long service, instead of a gift of money[108].

peasant who was unable to pay his tax, it could mark the beginning of a vicious circle of indebtedness which, if things came to the worst, could lead to the ruin of the debtor. As supervisors of tax collection, local officials found it easy to collect any outstanding debts plus interest simply by subtracting their claim from their debtor's tax rice the following year. The TN describes this practice as follows:

> "In the case of the villages in the plain, well-to-do villagers, among others the village headman and the village officials, lend rice by mutual agreement to those with a deficit in their tax payment at a rate of interest of forty to fifty percent, so that they can pay their taxes. But when, in due course toward the end of the following year, the tax has to be paid, the officials subtract the borrowed amount of rice plus interest from the storehouse receipt of their debtors. Now, all they have to do to pay their own tax is to add up all these amounts. For this reason, those who lend enough rice can get away without paying even a single bag of rice themselves and gain plenty of surplus rice at that"[109].

Often, the capital for these loans originated in merchant circles, for whom this arrangement known as karigae (debt transfer) was a safe and reliable method to increase their capital since the village headman and the district headman, as nominal creditor, vouched for the repayment of the loan[a]. The author of the TN may well have been correct in blaming such tax payment loans for the ruin of poor or marginal peasants; even though a hard-working peasant may have been able to pay the interest on his debts for some years, a single bad harvest could suffice to ruin a family. But why did peasants accept such potentially dangerous offers? Why did they not simply admit to the authorities that they were unable to pay their annual tax?

According to the TN, peasants who did not have sufficient rice to honour their commitments to the domain authorities sold their "oxen and horses, their family possessions and,

---

[a] Lending by officials for their own profit seems to have been prevalent in other domains, too; an edict of 1763 by the Chikuzen authorities strictly forbade the village officials to pay their tax with rice other than that produced by themselves[110].

needless to say, all of their provisions down to the last grain as well"[111]. When even then they did not have sufficient rice and money, as, for instance, when they were unable to procure a loan, they were tied to poles in front of the district office on the day of tax payment until they promised to pay up within a couple of days. We are told that some of these unfortunate peasants, released after having made promises which they knew they could not keep, committed suicide in their despair, while others absconded to evade their obligations. To cover the tax payment of such peasants, any possessions which remained behind were confiscated and sold. If there still remained part of the debt unpaid, it was equally shared among the members of the five-family group and then the other villagers. In Higo, the pledging of family members - above all of second and third sons, but also of wives and daughters - as security for loans was still frequent in the late 18th century[a]. This possibility of raising money constituted in many cases the last ray of hope for indebted families and as such it was undoubtedly appreciated by them. This system, by which family members were sent away to work with their creditor for varying periods of time, could, however, in certain cases create human problems, above all with women who, thus sent away from their families, appear to have been deprived at times of even the most rudimentary protection. For instance, documents regulating indentured labour of women in Higo contain legal provisos which denied women who became pregnant during their years of service the right to appeal for justice[112]. The more straightforward sale of wives and daughters to brothels brought handsome returns, paying up to twenty times as much as for an ordinary servant[113]. The phrase "As we find ourselves unable to pay our annual tax..." - undoubtedly sometimes used to conceal mercenary motives - was almost a standard opening phrase on applications for such posts as girl-servant - a euphemism for prostitute - who predominantly came from a peasant background[114]. Morally,

[a] (See, 38-9.)

the act of selling one's wife and daughters to brothels was made possible by the notion that for a wife to yield to the inevitable was proof of a high sense of conjugal duty and is praised in literature as an act of self-abandonment. This idea was rooted in the samurai code of ethics, in which the relationship between master and retainer took predominance over all other human relationships, and is well expressed in the "Treasury of Loyal Retainers" where someone remarks about a samurai who has just sold his wife to a brothel-keeper for 100 ryō in gold, for a term of five years, that "it's no disgrace to sell his wife - the money is for his lord's sake"[115]. It is open to question to what extent lower peasants shared this high samurai ideal; to the indebted peasant, the thought of losing even his family in a time of misfortune could not but have added poignancy to his sorrow. That Japanese peasants were indeed not immune to feelings of love towards their families is borne out by the Shiki Nōkaisho by Naoe Kanetsugu[a], in which peasants are reminded that if they did not pay their annual tax, their wives, whom they would not even expose to a rough wind, would be taken away from them as a pawn to become the toy of young men[116].

Corporal punishment, as it is described in the TN, was common in all domains of Tokugawa Japan, although with the passing of time it tended to become milder. The reason for torturing a peasant was the conviction that had he devoted himself single-mindedly to his business, Heaven would not have allowed things to come to such a pass, not even in years of calamity[117]. This idea implied that those who were unable to pay their tax had been guilty of contravening the laws of Heaven, for which they now had to be duly punished. Another, more tangible, reason was that officials had a strong suspicion that peasants had hidden away some of their harvest, which made them all the more determined to break the peasants' obstinate

[a] (See, 24-5.)

silence. The TN, too, suggests that this idea was widespread - and perhaps not altogether unfounded in some cases - among local officials, when a village headman turns down a peasant's request for tax reduction by insinuating that were it not for some other untaxed source of income to provide him with a livelihood, he would not be alive[a].

A peasant who could not pay up on the day of tax payment was immediately confined to prison in the district office; he was not allowed to return home before the other members of the five-family group had guaranteed his tax payment[b]. Most common, however, were poles erected in front of the storehouses where tax defaulters were tied up to intimidate the other peasants. These poles had taken the place of an earlier punishment, known as water-dungeon (suirō), which had been in use in Higo until 1756. In front of the district office, several ditches had been dug which were filled with water. In the centre of each, there stood a pole to which peasants, together with their families, were tied in the dead of winter. At night, the ice forming on the surface would penetrate their skin, causing agonizing pain[118 c].

To sum up the experience of ordinary peasants of the annual tax, let us hear how the peasant Takanabe Jinzō (born in 1840) from Komori village in the Futa district of Higo, recalls the day of tax payment at the official storehouse towards the end of the Tokugawa period[119].

"At that time we paid our tax in rice, but in years of crop failure we paid in silver. This was called gindate. When we could not pay either way we were tied to poles in front of

---

[a] (See, TN: 361.)

[b] The Kokura authorities had decided in 1801 that peasants who had attempted to run away should have their heads shaven and be turned over to outcases to be sent into exile[120].

[c] In the Yonezawa domain, the colder climate allowed a similarly cruel punishment - there, the peasants were pulled in the deep snow around the village[121].

the district office. There were about five to six of these wooden poles, each measuring about 8 sun in diameter. When one was tied up to a pole, it was usual for someone of one's five-family group to come and redeem one."

"We used to make straw bags in two sizes; large ones holding 3 to 5 shō, and small ones holding 3 to 2 shō 4 gō. When we paid the tax rice at the official storehouse (the officials) did what was known as "waritobo". Having filled a wooden measure (masu) heaped full with rice, they would then hold the levelling device at an angle, to smooth the rice down around the edge of the measure, but leaving it higher in the middle. This meant that a large bag would in the end contain 3 to 7 shō instead of 3 to 5 shō if measured correctly, while a smaller bag made to hold 3 to 2 shō 4 gō would be filled with 3 to 3 shō."

"When the day of tax payment had come,the peasants would elect one among them to be the haraigashira[a]. Among the officials at the official storehouse there were the toboko, sashiko, tachiyokome, and the yamakoshi. The job of the toboko was to apply the levelling device when the rice was measured, the sashiko took samples with a sharp-edged bamboo scoop (sashi), the tachiyokome was a sort of supervisor, and the yamakoshi had to stack the rice bags."

"At that time there were two ways of testing the quality of rice. One was to chew some grains; if a loud sound was produced, the rice was accepted; if the opposite was the case, the rice was rejected. The other method was to weigh one bag and, if found too light, to measure its content. If it was then found to lack rice, all the bags found to be too light had to be filled up with a rice supplement equivalent to the deficiency in the one bag. Alternatively, just one bag was picked for sampling, and if its content was found to be short of the amount required, the deficit had to be filled not only into this one bag but into all other bags as well. To be sure, a deficit

[a] (See, 240.)

of up to 2 gō was permissible, as that much could easily stick to the bag."

"It was said at the time that 60'000 koku of rice produced by the peasants could be stored in the three buildings of the Eastern storehouse and the two buildings of the Western storehouse, but at the time of tax payment it was still impossible to fit all of the tax rice into the buildings, and so the bags were piled up mountain-high under the open sky. There were 10'000 koku mountains and 20'000 koku mountains; topped by straw roofs for protection, they were an impressive sight indeed."

Then, Takanabe goes on to recall one occasion around 1860 on which he joined a group of peasants from his village on their trip to the storehouse in Kumamoto to deliver their tax:

"I think it was when I had just turned twenty. I was then serving in the family of Taihei-don in Futa village. Once I joined the others on their trip to the storehouse in Kumamoto to pay the tax. We left our village on the 25th day of the 12th month. Of the 130 bags which our group took there, 83 failed to pass the checks and were rejected. So, the next day we mended the straw bags, hoping to get them through the checks the same day, but by the time we had finished it was already too late. We did not know what to do as we had no money left to spend another night at an inn. We thought that we could pay our tax the following day, the 27th, but that day of all days was the anniversary of the death day of some noble person, and the work had to rest. We knew that unless we could pay our tax on the 28th, we would no longer be able to do so, and so we gave the officials various bribes, but to no avail. We were told that our tax payment would only be accepted at the Western storehouse. This gave us a real headache as there were only sixteen of us to carry 83 straw bags full of rice over the hill over a distance of about 6 chō. We were at our wits' end, but then, maybe because our bribes had helped a little, we

were told by the officials that our rice would be accepted as tebyō, i.e. rice shortly to be transferred elsewhere. We were overjoyed and paid our tax. But even now one bag was rejected and we had to buy two or three shō of rice from the town to make up for the deficiency, repair the straw bag and then hand it in. We finished at about six in the evening in the dark of the 12th month." On this evidence, we may understand Takanabe's final conclusion which sums up the peasantry's experience of the annual tax: "When we were young, nothing was quite as fearsome as the day of tax payment at the official storehouse."

3.2. The Peasants and the Priesthood

Besides the topic of taxation, attacks against the various priests living among the peasants take up a large part of the TN. What may at first sight strike the reader as proof of a struggle between the political and religious institutions in the domain turns out on closer inspection as the reaction of the domain authorities to the slow but persistent efforts of religious bodies, among others mainly the Shinshū sect, to expand their foothold among peasants beyond the limits imposed on their activities by domain legislation. The stand on religion taken by the author of the TN, in fact, betrays the fear of the domain authorities of Higo of losing tax revenue as a result of the activities of the priesthood of the various denominations, including mendicant priests and soothsayers. Priests of the large sects, who were integrated in local administration[a], had to go about their activities very carefully lest they should arouse the wrath of the authorities, but as is tentatively suggested by the passages on religion in the TN[b], priests were by 1800 widely abusing their influence on the peasantry to an extent which warranted serious concern on the part of the Con-

[a] (See, 27; also 269.)

[b] (See, TN: 414 ff.)

fucian scholars. Their fears revolved basically around the economic issue - to the author of the TN it was vexatious to see peasants spending considerable amounts both of cereals and money on the priesthood, even in hard times, for such purposes as prayers for recovery from fever, prayers for a good harvest, for the recitation of sutras, and even for the construction of new temple buildings. What to a man of religion would have appeared only natural, struck Confucian scholars as odd, even harmful to the state. So, for instance, the TN states:

> "...the greater the suffering of the people in the countryside, the more donations they give. Saying that the afflictions of the present cannot last longer than the lifespan of fifty years, they believe that it is far more important to think about future hardships of eternity, and so they give even larger donations to the priests"[122].

The priesthood is thus depicted as a weakening factor of domain finances, as they not only deprived peasants of resources which, if not vitally needed by the peasants themselves, rightfully belonged to the domain authorities, but also sapped the peasantry's strength by their added exactions, which could only result in a general slackening of agricultural work and a resultant drop in production.

In conjunction with the economic argument, the author of the TN raises the problem of peasant dependence on the priests. In his opinion, it was only through realizing the magnitude of this problem that one could understand why peasants should, in spite of great hardship, advance money donations to the temples without the least consideration for themselves. Looking into the future, the author expresses his fears that this dependency may bring things to the point where priests may encroach on the government sphere of influence with impunity; an apprehension which is all the more acute since already in his day, priests were "generally more influential than those who govern the realm"[123]. To emphasize this point, the author paints a gloomy picture of a time when the priesthood could successfully demand

that the annual tax be paid to the temples rather than to the authorities[124]. This vision of a government official probably says more about the situation of the peasantry versus the various priests than it does about real economic threats to domain revenue. As far as the relationship between the priesthood and the peasantry is concerned, the passages on religion in the TN may well be taken to give some indication of how many peasants experienced the various religious institutions in their everyday life.

The author of the TN does not stand alone with his criticism of the activities of the priesthood. All major Confucian writers of the Tokugawa period engaged in criticism of the Buddhist religion and the priesthood of the various sects. Just as in pre-Tokugawa days, their carefully argued vituperations formed a major part of the literary activities of Confucian scholars until the early 19th century when the kokugaku scholars espoused the anti-Buddhist cause in their effort to establish Shintō as the national cult. Whether criticism of Buddhism was based on theological grounds as in the example of Hirata Atsutane (1776-1843) and Tominaga Nakamoto (1715-46)[a], or on economic grounds as in the case of Ogyū Sorai[b], Kumazawa Banzan[c], or Nakai Chikuzan, such anti-Buddhist tracts would, as a rule, culminate in the demand for the abolishment of Buddhism or, more realistically, in the call for a determined reassertion of state control over the religious institutions. The arguments against the priesthood and the individual points taken up in the TN appear to follow exactly the line of the Bible of anti-clericalism, the Sōbō Kigen[d] by Nakai Chikuzan. Written on the

[a] See, Katō, Tominaga Nakamoto. (Also, 290.)

[b] In his Seidan, Ogyū warns against priests meddling in politics and advocates the reintroduction of a strict ordination system under state control (kaidan) to decrease the number of priests. See, Ogyū, Seidan, 181 ff.

[c] His vociferous anti-clerical attack, in which he claims that not even 100 out of every 10'000 monks had taken the vow out of sincere religiosity, may be found translated in Fisher, "Daigaku Wakumon," 325-28.

[d] Nakai Chikuzan, Sōbō Kigen, in NKT, vol. 23, 315-543.

orders of Matsudaira Sadanobu[a] in 1789, this comprehensive appraisal of social conditions at the end of the Tanuma era contains a large section concerned with organized religion[b], in which the author denounces the tyranny of temples and priests, the destruction of the social order by Shinshū priests and komusō mendicants as well as the rampancy of superstition and heretic teachings in temples. In spite of the prohibition to build new temples, Nakai Chikuzan claims that this was still being done under the pretext of rebuilding old temples[125] - a point which is also taken up in the TN[c]. The rising anti-Buddhist tide towards the end of the 18th century is evident in the extreme allegations made by the obscure physician-philosopher Andō Shōeki[d] concerning the treatment of the common people by the priesthood:

> "A beggar lives on the charity of other people, but even if he starves to death because nobody aids him, he does not molest the peace of society. Saints, on the other hand, if they fail to collect such taxes as they desire, even resort to arms to extort tribute, and when rejected, go to the extremity of killing the innocent masses of people. Really it is the saints who are obliged by the benevolence of the common people[e]. Yet they talk to the people of their own benevolence..."[126].

The fact that priests were the only people in Tokugawa Japan to have a regular income, was enviously recorded by the author of the Sejikenbunroku (1816), who contrasted their fortunate circumstances with the unstable economic situation of warriors and peasants, who received rice depending on the harvest yield, and that of merchants, who were dependent on the market situation[127]. Other critics concentrated on the covetousness of priests by exposing their eagerness to collect alms and such

---

[a] (See, 46-7.)

[b] Nakai, Sōbō Kigen, 471-90.

[c] (See, TN: 415.)

[d] (See, 289-90.)

[e] Compare the similar argument in, TN: 427.

practices as the sale of honourable suffixes to posthumous names against payment of considerable sums of money[128] [a].

In the poorer regions of Higo, the saying that "life in a temple is as luxurious as in a castle" (ichijō ikkaji) has, until recent years, held certainly true for lower peasants, to whom even a plain temple must have appeared like a palace. It is quite true that the priests enjoyed privileges which lifted them well out of the mass of common people, and the higher a priest's official rank, the more privileges he would have. These privileges did not only affect their standing under the law - priests in Higo were placed under the jurisdiction of the county official - but also in their daily life, the clothes they wore, the buildings and comfort of their temples, and the way they could dispose over their servants. Such privileges only added fuel to the argument in government circles against the Buddhist sects; extra duties demanded of peasants by priests, such as personal transport of the Yamabushi priest, who is in the possession of an official pass, as described in the TN[b], certainly weighed all the heavier in the mind of a concerned scholar for being so elusive.

Pillorying the immoral life in temples at that time is something one invariably comes across in critical literature of the period, and it is easy to imagine that envy on the part of the less fortunate samurai played no small role in these frequently sharp attacks, in which objectivity is often questionable as the lack of evidence is compensated by imagination. The author of the TN leaves nothing unsaid as he sums up in a concise fashion the life of priests as he saw it, which stood in such a glaring contradiction to the samurai's dictate of self-restraint, frugality, and abstinence from worldly pleasures:

---

[a] See, for example, Ogyū Sorai, Seidan, 182.

[b] (See, TN: 430.)

> "As you have seen yourself, at a time when the peasants suffer distress and endure the severest privation, that priest bewitches the peasants with words to get more and more rice and money. Priding himself on his glory and splendour, he dresses beautifully and eats fancy food; he gives himself up to wine and women, and idles away all his time at recitations of ditties and ballad-dramas, performances of shamisen music, at archery games and at gambling"[129].

It is, of course, difficult to assess the extent to which these accusations are slanderous[a]. Even if they are exaggerated, however, we may assume that many priests in the Tokugawa period enjoyed a quality of life which was substantially better than that of most other sections of the population. Moreover, there is evidence to confirm accusations of depravity in temples and other blatant breaches of conduct, as is suggested by the fact that the shogunate had begun, as early as the beginning of the 18th century, to issue amendments to the Laws Governing Temples (Ji'in hatto) issued between 1601 and 1665, to integrate the religious organizations firmly into the framework of the Tokugawa polity. In 1798, in an effort to clamp down on clerical misconduct, over seventy priests were publicly displayed and then exiled to an island by the shogunate for having frequented the brothels of Yoshiwara in Edo, while in 1830, over fifty priests were convicted for rape and sentenced to the same punishment in the Kansai area[130]. Such cases of firm action by the authorities remained isolated instances, and were confined, as a rule, to the narrow circle of the most powerful political authorities, such as the shogunate. The reason for this was that while, in theory at least, temples were subservient to the domain authorities, authorities nevertheless met with great obstacles when trying to trace down a culprit or generally investigating in a temple. The great temples of the main sects and the monzeki temples, whose superior had close ties with the nobility at the Imperial court in Kyōto, commanded great respect, with their superiors enjoying a status among feudal

---

[a] Licentiousness in the behaviour of priests and nuns is an accusation which regularly turns up in anti-Buddhist literature. See, for instance, Nakai Chikuzan, Sōbō Kigen, 525-6.

lords second to none. By virtue of the closely-knit Buddhist organization, which affiliated every small temple in remote parts of the country with the main temple of a sect, officials would think twice before taking legal action. If a priest had committed an offence, he could not even be arrested by the authorities; they first had to consult with the head-temple, since no priest could be arrested as long as he wore his priest's garments, and so the political authorities could lay their hands on a priest only after he had been defrocked by his sect[a]. This inability on the part of the feudal authorities to take action against the priesthood spontaneously may explain to some extent the outraged tenor of many critical writings on the behaviour of priests composed during the 18th century.

If even the political authorities were restricted in their freedom of action as far as the priesthood was concerned, it is self-evident that especially the lower peasants could hardly offer resistance to the demands made upon them by the priests. The TN vividly depicts the influence of a priest in a peasant community, indicating at the same time where his authority derived from. In a homily against those who do not visit temples to worship, a Shinshū priest threatens eternal damnation to those who thus refuse his protection. The reaction of the peasants is described as sheer panic:

> "As he was speaking, everybody in the room broke into a cold sweat, and taking it all very seriously, they invoked the name of the Buddha over and over with trembling tongues"[131].

Constant threats of retribution in the next world sufficed to reduce recalcitrance among peasants to nil. The train of thought in a peasant who was inclined to disregard demands made upon him by some priest is described in the Keizai Mondō Hiroku[b]:

> "If one's donations to a temple fall short of the superior's expectations, he will not consent to come to one's funeral

---

[a] For the conflict between state and religious organizations, see, Itō, "Kinsei ni okeru seiji kenryoku to shūkyōteki ken'i."

[b] (See, 225.)

> to address the last words to one's soul for the passage to the other world. One puts off payment for a few days, but when this comes to one's mind, one inevitably borrows some money and pays up"[132].

Every sphere of peasant life was deeply enmeshed in a web of manifold religious ideas. The well-being of peasants depended precariously on the benevolence of Nature, and so they were strongly motivated to secure for themselves and their kind the goodwill of the gods[a] who, in their beliefs, populated every nook and cranny of their environment. Peasants felt dependent on these gods; a feeling which, in the course of cultural development, had given rise to a deep-seated fatalism and had exerted more than a passing influence on the shaping of social organization. This feeling of dependence on those above gave rise to what the author of the TN interpreted as the "peasant's nature," namely "enduring the intolerable without giving so much as a thought to justice or humiliation"[133]. Every stage of the agricultural year had to be accompanied by the proper religious ceremony, most of which could only be carried out by the priests. The religious atmosphere pervading the daily life of the common people, making them inclined to see supernatural forces at work in every natural phenomena, was described by Andō Shōeki:

> "Seeing a huge serpent near a shrine, common people think it the god incarnate but it is an error for man to revere a reptile which never deserves the epithet of god. When the wind is strong they think the angry god of wind, kaze no kami no saburo, has opened his bag of wind. They ascribe heavy rain to the whim of the sacred dragon. They worship a fox as the god of harvest, and regard Susanowo-no Mikoto as the god of infectious disease... God is believed to communicate his oracles and give narratives of the underworld through the mouths of clairvoyant blind women and priests' wives"[134].

Although the 18th century witnessed a gradual awakening of a critical attitude towards what the established sects re-

---

[a] including Buddhist, Shintō, and other gods which were never clearly separated in the popular mind.

garded as the superstitious aspects of popular religion[a], the readiness to interpret events in religious terms nevertheless maintained its predominance over the slowly advancing forces of enlightenment both in town and country. The reaction of the population of Edo to the drop in rice prices in 1785 to half the level of 1784 shows that the idea of spirits being responsible for favours and misfortunes was not exclusive to the thinking of backward rustics, but that it had a firm foothold in large sections of the sophisticated urban culture of Edo, too[b]. Especially in the tightly-knit village society, however, the close observance of all the rules imposed on one's life by various religious beliefs assumed an imperative importance, just as a village who had neglected the proprieties of the season ran the risk of being fined[135]. Considering the state of mind of the common people, any occurrence which they could not immediately explain served to strengthen their religious convictions; the author of the TN warned his readers of this fallacy when he remarked that "if one believes in the supernatural, many supernatural things are bound to happen, and the need for prayers will arise, be it for one thing or another"[136].

This omnipresent need for prayers in the rural areas was only too readily grasped by the priests, who provided a wide range of services from selling charms against dogbite, for winning in the kōjū[c] lottery, various divinations, prayers to heal disease, and so on. For the priests of the established sects which were represented in the rural areas by a branch

[a] Already in the Chōninbukuro, 1719), a merchant exposed the popular theory of lucky and unlucky quarters to ridicule by pointing out that in the densely built-up urban areas the east side of one house was the west side of another[137].

[b] Hall describes how the townsmen had ascribed the fall in prices to the revenge of Sano Masakoto's spirit, who had been sentenced to death for striking down Tanuma Okitsugu's son, Mototomo. Calling him the "Great Rectifying Spirit", they flocked to his grave in such large numbers that the Superintendent of Temples and Shrines had to order the gates of the temple to be closed, but even then people broke into the temple grounds to place flowers in front of his grave[138].

[c] (See, TN: 415n.)

temple, considerable competition arose from the numerous mendicant priests, each of whom had a special sphere of activity which he jealously guarded from intrusion by others. Whereas the priests of the large, prosperous Buddhist sects were mainly concerned with questions relating to life after death, with Shintō priests concentrating on the major prayers of the agricultural year, the Yamabushi, komusō, and diviners (onmyōji) were predominantly concerned with prayers which brought reward in the present life. The borderline between the two types of activities was, however, far from clearly defined; as is suggested by the incident described in the TN, where a priest has encroached on the diviner's prerogative to set the dates of the agricultural year[a], conflicts between the two were not uncommon. Although practical magic for everyday use, as offered by the mendicant priests, was officially treated with contempt by the main sects, who castigated such practices as heresy and black magic, it was in reality far too lucrative for most priests to miss out on this unique opportunity of increasing their revenue.

Easily the most popular of these mendicant priests among the peasantry in Higo appear to have been the diviners, who promised quick relief without further obligations to the person who had sought help, as they freely roamed about unlike other priests whose continued presence in the community entailed more obligations for favours received. These diviners, who are described in a contemporary kyōku poem as being utterly untainted by scientific thinking[b], were indeed employed with such regularity that the authorities deemed it necessary to introduce regulations concerning divination in the Go-Kyōyusho[c]. Article 30, directed against all kinds of diviners, forbids peasants to commission divination to find stolen goods, and in article 31, peasants are generally enjoined not to ask diviners

[a] (See, TN: 355-6.)

[b] Kitōshi no kao ni kagaku no kage mo nashi [139].

[c] (See, 207n.)

to perform their incantations and divinations[140].

Of equal importance in the religious life of the peasants, yet unlike the diviners backed by a religious institution, were the Yamabushi[a]. As their name denotes, they originally slept in the mountains, as they believed they could acquire the power of gods who appeared there by mediation and ascetic practices. Having acquired these powers, they then applied them to perform healings, exorcism, purifications, and to sell formulae and charms. Whereas in earlier periods of Japanese history Yamabushi had been unmarried mendicants who spent most of their time in their mountain recluse, they had lost their original character completely by 1800. Now, they functioned as masters of prayer and magic, living in temples at the foot of sacred mountains, often working in teams with a female shaman, the miko, to whom they were married in many cases. Their exorcist faculties predestined them to the healing of disease, and so they were frequently called to the sick-bed of a peasant. Kämpfer has described in detail how the Yamabushi proceeded to heal someone of a disease:

> "The patient is to give the Jammabos as good an account, as possibly he can, of his distemper and the condition he is in. The Jammabos after a full hearing writes some characters on a bit of paper, which characters, as he pretends, have a particular relation to the constitution of the patient and the nature of his distemper. This done, he places the paper on an altar before his Idols, performing many superstitious ceremonies, in order, as he gives out, to communicate a healing faculty, to it after which he makes it up into pills, whereof the patient is to take one every morning, drinking a large draught of water upon it, which again must be drawn up from the spring or river, not without some mystery, and towards such a corner of the world, the Jammabos directs. These character pills are called Goof[b]. It must be observed however, that the Jammabos seldom administer, and the Patients still seldomer resolve to undergo this mysterious, cure, till they are almost past all hopes of recovery, In less desperate cases recourse is had to more natural remedies"[141].

It also appears that they were often involved in the religious

---

[a] For a study of Yamabushi, see, Earhardt, Shūgendō. For a contemporary eyewitness account, see, Kämpfer, History of Japan, vol. 1, 232-7: "Of the Jammabos, or Mountain-Priests, and other Religious Orders."

[b] gofu.

celebrations of the agricultural year - the TN mentions them in connection with the prayers for a good harvest[142] - and sometimes even performed funerals and memorial services. At least as late as around 1700, the *Yamabushi* had also been consulted by the authorities to divine the guilt or innocence of peasants accused of a crime[143]. In the event of an epidemic, *Yamabushi* were called upon to prevent the disease from spreading. On his way through northern Kyūshū, Siebold found a village around which straw ropes had been drawn by *Yamabushi* to contain a smallpox epidemic[144]. Although their religion, known as *Shūgendō*, did not constitute a sect in the way that the Shinshū sect, for instance, did, the *Yamabushi* were much feared among the peasants as guardians of the mountain gods. By virtue of their long ascetic practices, which had taught them to converse with the spirits on the mountains, they were believed by the peasants to possess immense supernatural powers. This must have been particularly pronounced in the case of the *Yamabushi* in Higo, since they derived their authority from Mt. Aso, one of the largest active volcanoes in the world, with a fearsome emission of steam, sulphur, and irregular eruptions of stone and lava. The temple of the *Yamabushi*, who makes an appearance in the TN, stood in Bōchū on the Oguni plateau, inside the outer crater of Mt. Aso, right at the foot of the active inner crater. With such an impressive mountain in the background, this temple, the *Saigandenji*, had been accorded the status of guardian temple to the State Shintō Shrine (*shingoji* or *miyadera*) at nearby Ichinomiya. Furukawa, who visited the area on his visit to Higo, reported that the *Yamabushi* temple consisted of thirty buildings, and that it had received a gift of land yielding a total of 160 *koku* from the lord in Kumamoto[145] - a fact which accounts for the semi-official status accorded to the *Yamabushi* priests which is subjected to such heavy criticism in the TN[a].

[a] (See, TN: 430-2.)

As to the komusō priests, it seems that they made little effort to conceal their mercenary dealings under a cloak of religious philanthropy. They belonged to the Fuke branch of the Zen sect of Buddhism, but unlike other branches, the komusō priests were neither required to practice religious austerities, nor shave their heads or recite sutras. All they did was to go from house to house begging for alms, their faces completely covered by their characteristic braided hat, and playing a long flute. Their hat, which had only a small visor, afforded total anonymity and thus attracted many outlaws, who joined this order to evade prosecution. Often, this guise was abused by the authorities for spying duties[146], so that this order's activities were generally hampered by a poor reputation among the population. What they lacked in religious authority, they seem to have compensated at times with physical force - a public notice issued by the Kumamoto authorities in the 1st month of 1788 warns komusō priests against aggressive behaviour. According to this notice, there had been cases of such priests coming into the villages for begging and if they had been dissatisfied with the lodging offered to them by the village officials, had attacked and injured people with their bamboo-flute (shakuhachi)[147].

The burden of the native cult of Shintō was felt by the peasants in two different ways. Firstly, there were the expenses connected with the local cult of ancestor worship centring around the village shrine association[a], and secondly there were the Shintō priests of the large Shintō shrines, who offered very much the same services to the peasants as the other members of the rural priesthood - the TN names them in the same breath with the Yamabushi. The funds to cover the expense of village shrine festivals derived to some extent from public contributions by those villagers who could afford it. We know, however, that whenever these money collections did not produce sufficient money and rice, the deficit was paid directly from the village

[a] (See, 50-1.)

account[148]. This meant that even the poor villagers, who could take part in such festivities as onlookers only, were also taxed for this purpose. Whereas peasants, circumstances permitting, readily gave money contributions towards a village shrine festival - for not doing so could easily have resulted in the family being ostracized - they showed great reluctance to do so for the Aso shrine at Ichinomiya, the State Shintō Shrine, as well as for local shrines sponsored by the authorities[149]. These shrines received orders from the domain authorities to pray and perform ceremonies for a good harvest and for a safe journey of the tax rice to the domain warehouse in Ōsaka[150]; on a local level, it was the county official who gave personal orders to one shrine in each district to perform these rituals[151], for which he then had the district headmen exact the "first ears of rice" tax[a]. The importance attached by the Higo authorities to the Aso shrine as official place of worship may be deduced from the size of stipend land granted to the shrine, as reported by Furukawa:

> "About two ri from Bōchū, there is the Aso shrine. This shrine is famous for its long history, but is situated out of the way on a swampy plateau. Weeds are everywhere - to one's dismay they proliferate even around the sacred precincts. Compared with shrines in the Kamigata region[b], this one is rather small and has got nothing pleasing about it at all... Standing amidst the houses of peasants in rice fields, the atmosphere is melancholic beyond expression. The shrine has received a gift of land from the lord in Kumamoto which yields a 1'000 koku of rice a year; 300 koku are intended for the use of the superior, and the remainder of 700 koku is shared among the twenty-one priests and the nine shrine virgins"[152].

Considerable sums of money had to be paid by the provincial Shintō shrines to the Yoshida shrine in Kyōto, to which they had been subordinated by the "Laws concerning Shintō Priests of all Shrines" (Shosha negi kannushi hatto), issued by the shogunate in 1665. Title and office of Shintō priests, as well as coveted suffixes to the name of the shrine, had to be purchased in Kyōto. Ordination of a Shintō priest went together with the conferment of a court title, for which an application

---

[a] (See, 236.)

[b] (See, 87n.)

for the Imperial consent had to be submitted to the Yoshida shrine, together with a payment of 10 ryō - in the case of a top rank as much as 100 ryō[153]. The money for these contributions came from the peasants, not only from straightforward donations, but from peasant commissions for faith-healing, exorcism, purifications, and rain prayers.

The practice of praying for changes in weather was widespread in all of Japan. Known as o-komori, villagers would assemble at the village shrine for collective prayers. If the ordinary prayers did not produce results, peasants in some regions tried to enrage the dragon god by disturbing the waters of his supposed abode either by beating the water surface or, as is reported from another region, by pouring sewage into it[154]. Buddhist priests were at times also involved in such ceremonies - certain sutras like the Daiunkyō[a] had, since the 7th century, been believed to be especially efficacious to release rain by magical means, while yet others were read to stop rain when floods were feared. The Ninnōkyō[b], too, was read to produce rain, besides stopping pestilences of smallpox, leprosy or other epidemic diseases, and to avert the evil consequences of bad omens, such as eclipses and comets[155]. This was, however, the result of a syncretic process, in the course of which Buddhism had integrated on Chinese soil elements of popular religion in order to gain a firm foothold in an alien culture - in the case of rain prayers, this was achieved by declaring the various dragon gods (ryūjin or ryūō) tutelary deities of Buddhism. In Higo, praying for rain was the exclusive domain of Yamabushi and Shintō priests, although the TN makes mention of the fact that there were also Buddhist means of producing rain. The fact that the author of the TN puts such great emphasis on this problem at all should suffice to indicate the popularity of rain prayers in Higo. Since this custom was connected with tremendous expenses for the village community,

---

[a] "Great Cloud Sutra".

[b] "Sutra of Benevolent Kings".

it is only natural that the authorities should have been eager to explain to the peasants that such methods were ineffective. Already in 1736, a decree by the Higo authorities mentions rain prayers among other celebrations which should be curtailed[156].

Furukawa Koshōken fortunately had the chance to witness one occasion on which peasants in the southern part of Higo had asked Shintō priests to perform such a ceremony. From his account of this event, Higo emerges as a truly remote and secluded place, with customs so quaint as to stun a sophisticated urban dweller from the Kamigata area[a]:

"In Minamata in the Higo province, where the merchants from Zashiki are said to strike secret paths on their way across the border to the province of Satsuma, temples abound on one's way from one postal station to the next, as all villagers are followers of the Shinshū sect. When I was there, no rain had fallen for many days so that even the wells were dry, and so several tens of villages had agreed to perform rain prayers. I heard a rumour circulating among the natives that a human sacrifice was going to be offered to the Dragon God. I thought that this was extraordinary and so I decided to go and have a look. On the beach, a little hut had been built and an effigy of a woman about ten feet tall had been fashioned out of straw. Dressed in a long-sleeved paper kimono, which was painted with a red pattern, its jet-black hair made of flax fell loosely over its shoulders. By now several hundred spectators had assembled, among them village officials and Shintō priests accompanied by the shrine virgins. Then, the Shintō priest, whom I took to be the superior of the other priests, took a book from an ancient Chinese chest and, facing the sea, started to chant at the top of his voice. The words of his litany were quite unintelligible, but I suppose it was some old text written in syllable script. Upon this, the beating of large drums began, which was to continue until evening, and most of the spectators joined in the chorus of incantations to the Dragon God (*ryūjin*),

[a] (See, 87n.)

to the Dragon King (<u>ryūō</u>), and to countless others: "Please appease the stormy waves and hear our prayers!" They prayed to a princess of the age of Gods: "Please bestow rain on us lest our trees and plants should wither and even we humans should become extinct. Please, send rain, we beg you, princess!". In this way, they were going on, offering one prayer after another until rain would finally fall. The idea was that once rain had fallen the straw effigy would be thrown into the sea. (As the above incantations are chanted at the tops of their voices, the bystanders beat the rhythm by clapping their hands and chant: "Oh yes, indeed!".) The natives told me that up until two centuries previously, before effigies were used, young girls had been summoned from the villages in the vicinity and then had to draw lots to decide which of them had to throw herself into the sea. In these out-of-the-way regions, there survive customs which strike us as peculiar indeed; they have been handed down since ancient times and thus have never fallen into oblivion"[157].

The evidence concerning the religious life of the peasantry in Higo which I have listed so far, gives some indication of the strength of the position of the priesthood in rural areas; it also explains the concern of Confucian scholars as to the possible consequences of this fact on peasant administration both at that time and in future. Let us therefore now turn our attention to the relationship between the sects and the political authorities, with special reference to the Shinshū sect, which Furukawa has already mentioned as being the predominant sect in Higo[a]. By tracing its development in Higo we will be able to grasp the historical development of the relationship between the sect and the domain, and thus also understand the background to the argument against the Shinshū sect in the <u>TN</u>.

The attitude of the political authorities towards the priesthood was generally highly ambivalent. While they were aware of the importance of the religious sects for local administration, they could not afford to disregard the economic cost

---

[a] (See, 264.)

of too large a number of priests actively soliciting donations among the peasantry. The range of countermeasures was, however, limited by the great value attached by the feudal authorities to religion as legitimization of political power[a]. The TN, too, reveals clearly that feature of Japanese civilization, to which Bellah has drawn our attention by remarking that "the relation of religion to political rationalization is a close one in Japanese history"[158]. The terminology used to describe the relationship between subject and ruler is basically religious - a similarity which is obvious in two passages. In one place, the priest Dōmei expounds the Shinshū doctrine of the repayment of blessings (hōon) as follows:

> "One must repay the blessing of the Buddha's immense compassion even if it means having to grind one's body to dust. It is impossible to repay the blessings of the founder of our religion[b] and the exalted priests who followed him even if we were to break our bones"[159].

The author of the TN, although a determined opponent of the Shinshū sect himself, then uses practically the same wording to describe the gratitude peasants should feel towards the authorities:

> "Even in our wretched lives there is not a thing which we do not owe to the authorities. Down to the rice-bran and straw there is nothing which is essentially ours. Even if we were ordered to cut off our hands and feet and offer them to the authorities we should not refuse"[160].

A similar example from Higo is afforded by Anami Jinbei, who concluded his report on the Tenpō famine of 1836/37 with an official notice from the authorities addressed to the peasants to remind them as to whom they owed gratitude. Peasants are told in the same breath to obey to the letter the orders issued by the domain government, to be firmly aware of their indebtedness to the domain, to take to heart every item set out in the Go-Kyōyusho[c], and - changing to the realm of religion - to observe the five cardinal virtues[d], to respect all Shintō and

---

[a] (See, 23 ff.)

[b] (See, TN: 414n.)

[c] (See, 207n.)

[d] Gojō (chin. wu ch'ang); the Confucian virtues of benevolence, righteousness, propriety in demeanour, wisdom, and good faith.

Buddhist gods, above all the three gods of fire, water, and the cereals who all worked such wonders and without whose blessings man would cease to exist[161]. By equating the obligation to supernatural powers with the obligation to the domain authorities, it had become possible to justify tax payment by the peasantry in philosophical terms. Tax payment was to be thought of by the peasants in the same terms as donations to temples, namely as an integral part of one's repayment of blessings received[162]. The priests who, in their sermons, continually instilled into the peasants fears of eternal damnation in retribution for disobedience in the present life, as is so dramatically described in the TN[a], were thus instrumental to the authorities for ruling their realm peacefully. Priests were deliberately used by the authorities to influence the peasantry for political ends. During the Tenpō famine, for instance, Anami Jinbei tells us of a sermon delivered to the hungry peasants at a temple where they had assembled to receive a free distribution of rice-gruel, in which they were exhorted to do all in their power to increase the number of population, as there were too few peasants in the Oguni region[163 b]. The tremendous influence of priests on the peasants explains the awareness of the political authorities of the problems engendered by the presence of strong religious organizations among the peasantry already at an early stage in the Tokugawa period, when only those sects were allowed to carry on their activities which were ready to submit to the political authorities. For another, firm control was maintained even over these sects, for there was always the danger that priests, once they were aware of their authority, would disregard in their activities the latitude accorded to them by the domain authorities and infringe on the government's sphere of influence.

[a] (See, TN: 414-5.)

[b] This is rather similar to the Shirakawa domain authorities who, in 1784, had ordered the priests to travel through the countryside to describe to women the tortures awaiting them in hell if they dared to kill their newly-born children, illustrating their dire prognosis with pictures of hell[164].

In the struggle among the various Buddhist sects for domination of rural Higo, as elsewhere in Japan, the Shinshū sect[a] emerged victorious owing to its skilful political manoeuvring and radical about-faces wherever it proved rewarding to do so. This did not exclude basic tenets of the sect. Whereas prior to the Tokugawa period, the Shinshū sect had taken a firm stand against the warlords in their struggle for power bases on the side of rural warriors and village headmen, it began under the new political arrangement of the Tokugawa to fill out the vacuum left by the samurai, who had been called away from their land to take up residence in the castle town. In this way, the Shinshū sect could quietly consolidate and then expand its basis among the common people. Domains where the social organization had not undergone significant changes even after the re-organization of feudalism under Ieyasu proved hostile soil to the Shinshū sect. So, for instance, in Satsuma, Ōsumi, Hyūga, and Hitoyoshi, where warriors continued living on their land in close contact with the peasantry. In these regions, the Shinshū priests would have constituted an immediate and tangible threat to the warrior's subsistence, so that there was little inclination among the ruling class to allow the Shinshū priests freedom of action in their sphere of influence. This fear of having to share revenue from the land with too many Shinshū priests was only increased by the charisma surrounding the latter as a result of their earlier exploits in politics, as is suggested by the official explanation given for the prohibition of the Shinshū sect in Satsuma. According to this notice, Toyotomi Hideyoshi had only succeeded in overpowering the Satsuma troops in 1587 by displaying a piece of calligraphy executed by the founding father of the Shinshū sect, Shinran, and representing the saviour's name, Amida. When the generals of the Satsuma troops saw this, so we are told, they vied with each other as

[a] For a survey of the development of the Shinshū sect in Higo in the 16th and 17th centuries, see, Tamamuro, "Higo han ni okeru Jōdoshinshū no tenkai."

to who would be first to retreat from the battlefield[165]. In these regions, the Tendai, Shingon, and Zen sects remained the dominant religious organizations, as their emphasis on esotericism, estheticism, and meditation had traditionally more appeal to the educated samurai than the Shinshū tenet of a better life awaiting the believer in the next world.

The rise of the Shinshū sect in Higo was thus not the result of active government sponsoring; it was the involuntary consequence of the policy of concentrating the warriors in the castle town, which had opened the door wide for the activities of the Shinshū priests. The first Shinshū temple in Higo was built only around 1500, but owing to the strict hierarchical organization of this sect, designed to make up for its belated appearance on the religious scene, the sect was well equipped for expansion. Within the next 150 years, the Shinshū sect had firmly established itself in Higo, especially after the introduction of the danka system after 1634 had solidified their economic basis by assigning each temple a certain number of peasants for registry who, in order to receive the necessary documents to give proof of their association with the temple, had to give donations in various forms on the occasion of the bi-annual registration (tsuke todoke), during the bon festival in summer and at the end of each year[a]. The expansion of this sect received a steady impetus from the high exactions levied on local temples by the head temples in Kyōto, the East and West Honganji, who by this method shared out the enormous costs of their own upkeep among the rural population. The exactions levied on branch temples of the Shinshū sect were by far the highest among all sects, and so Shinshū priests were forced by necessity to increase the number of their adherents in order to survive - temples which could not fulfil their obligations to the head temple were simply closed down[166]. So, even after the erection of new temples had been prohibited by the shogunate in 1665, the Shinshū sect continued its expansion by

[a] As early as 1686, Kumazawa Banzan had pointed out in his Daigaku Wakumon that the first step to free the peasantry from the grip of the priesthood was the abolition of the danka system. See, Fisher, "Daigaku Wakumon," 326-7. (See also, TN: 427.)

building new places of worship under different names[a]. These new temples known as kakedokoro were then, in due course of time, elevated to the full status of temple by money donations from the priest concerned to the domain authorities, who in times of financial pressure on the domain finances were not indisposed to waiving the rules. The Shinshū sect spread so rapidly that all sorts of people had to be given posts as priests, as even the number of priests' sons did not suffice to cover the demand. Converts from the Tendai, Shingon, and Zen sects, masterless samurai and the like were permitted to join in the effort to spread the Shinshū teachings among the common people in the rural areas. Once a priest had settled down in some village, however, he would, whenver possible, at least secure the most important positions in the temple for his own descendants[167]. Many of the Shinshū priests in Higo tilled their own land as peasant priests (hyakushō bōzu), which placed them in a position where they could have close contact with the population in everyday life. It further permitted them a life style which could easily compare with that of a village headman; unlike priests of other sects who devoted themselves wholly to their calling, Shinshū peasant priests could even employ servants[168]. It was among the well-to-do peasants that the Shinshū sect was rooted most firmly in the rural areas; according to sources relating to the early 17th century, the Shinshū sect appears to have been in close liaison with the wealthy peasants with a taxed revenue of between 26 to 30 koku, although there were also those peasants with as small a revenue as 5 koku or less[b]. From this influential and economically well-founded social stratum which encountered the least difficulties in making plentiful donations and setting aside one hut of their living compound for the house altar (jibutsudō) - with its sacred pictures and holy images a distinguishing mark of the Shinshū household -

[a] (See, 252.)

[b] In his investigation of the distribution of Shinshū household altars in the Gōshi county during the Kan'ei period (1624-44), Tamamuro found that of 202 Shinshū households, 31.3% belonged to the 0-25 koku class, 38.4% to the 26-50 koku class, and 27.3% to the 51-100 koku and over class[169].

the Shinshū teachings later filtered into the lower strata of rural society[170]. By 1728, the Shinshū sect claimed a total of 424 temples in Higo, almost double the number of its closest competitor, the Zen sect, with its 238 temples[171]. Of these 424 temples, only 70 were in the castle town, while the rest were concentrated in the most fertile regions of the alluvial plain[172]. Even in as poor a region as the Yabe district in the mountains of Higo, there were 9 Shinshū temples by 1859, as opposed to only 3 of the Tendai sect and one of the Nichiren sect[173]. These figures do indeed suggest an extraordinarily strong presence of the Shinshū sect in comparison with other sects, confirming the descriptions in the TN whose author claimed that "wherever one goes in the country, the people are followers of the Shinshū sect..."[174].

That the Shinshū sect was so successfully expanding during the Tokugawa period, even after the authorities had become sensitive to the issue in the late 18th century, may be ascribed to the skill of Shinshū priests in avoiding any open clash with the domain authorities. Wary of endangering their own economic base, which alone could safeguard the continuity of their missionary work, the Shinshū sect had,over the centuries, displayed a high degree of adaptability to the specific historical situations. Already in its early years during the 15th century, when its base was as yet too weak for the sect to survive any confrontations with the political authorities, its priests openly supported the warriors. So, Rennyō (1415-99), the eighth patriarch of the Shinshū sect, but the actual founder of the religious organization, proclaimed that the observance of all Confucian virtues[a] and obedience to the law of the land and the will of the sovereign formed a vital constituent of the believer's daily conduct, since "one cannot leave oneself in Amida's hands with complete faith and trust unless one has abandoned selfish desires and fleshly lusts"[175]. The sect

[a] (See, 266n.)

posted supervisors in the countryside to keep an eye on the demeanour of the priests of branch temples and to report even slight cases of misbehaviour or blunders to the head temple. In this way, any unruly priest who might provoke the wrath of the political authorities and thus invite retaliatory measures against the whole Shinshū sect, was excommunicated and removed from his office[176]. In the mid-16th century, the Shinshū sect even abandoned one of its basic tenets, according to which sinners stood an even better chance of salvation than the virtuous, when they began to sell remissions of sin (goshō gomen)[177].

During the 15th and 16th centuries, when the Shinshū sect felt stronger and political conditions were favourable, they were frequently involved in armed struggles to secure land for themselves. The most famous instance is 1588, when they gained power over the whole Kaga region, which they could hold for as long as 90 years. Frequently, the Shinshū priests also led or participated in revolts of local powerholders against domination by absentee warriors (ikkō ikki). Once the turmoil of the 15th and 16th centuries was over, however, the Shinshū sect found itself confronted by the task of somehow fitting into the bakuhan system created after Ieyasu's victory. The authorities, too, were determined to get the priesthood away from practical politics; the shogunate, for instance, encouraged priests to devote themselves to learning by making this the sole criterion for promotion and the granting of land and money gifts[178]. Continued preaching activity of the Shinshū priests among the common people was only connived at because they showed themselves willing to renounce their claim to political power and adapt their teachings to the requirements of the Tokugawa polity.

To a much greater extent than the other sects, the Shinshū sect stressed the belief that men owe everything to a single deity, Amida, and that therefore one's whole life must be one long expression of gratitude - indeed that peasants "must regard life as a service which Amida demands"[179] of them. Bellah

has shown that this concept of obligation was linked with the theory of filial piety, and - rather important for tax-paying peasants - that blessings received could never be fully requited, however hard one worked[180]. The monotheistic theology of the Shinshū sect, furthermore, lent itself ideally to the requirements of the domain authorities who were faced with the task of welding independent regions, in pre-Tokugawa days ruled by local nobles, each with their own ancestral cult, into a state governed from the castle town and, concomitantly, creating among the whole population a feeling of allegiance to the highest authority in the domain. The Shinshū sect acknowledged only Amida in its pantheon, without, however, denying the existence of other deities - a vital addition to the doctrine which made it possible to justify the bakuhan system in metaphysical terms. Amida, so they taught, combined in his person all the faculties for bringing about success in this world which all other Buddhist and Shintō gods shared together. This superordinate position of Amida provided the required inter-regional link between villages and provinces, something which Shintō with its ancestral gods could not achieve. The Shinshū sect moreover developed its doctrine of the primacy of devotion (shinshin ihon) into the doctrine of the primacy of the lord's law (ōhō ihon). Thus, the sect exhorted its followers to observe above all the state laws and the Confucian ethical command of benevolence and righteousness (jingi isen). The doctrine of the primacy of the lord's law aided the acceptance of the state among the common people and made it possible to integrate all Shinshū followers quite peacefully into the polity. Also important as rationalization of the tax demands made on the peasantry was the doctrine that protecting Amida, the founder of the sect, and the head of state were acts of gratitude to repay the Buddha's blessings. With the aid of these teachings, it had become possible for the Shinshū sect to serve both its own interests and those of the state by enlarging the number of followers and ensuring the smooth working of local administration[181].

*

In this chapter, we have looked at the three main aspects of peasant life discussed in the TN, namely the quality of peasant life in Higo, the tax burden on the peasantry, and the influence of the priesthood on peasants. A comparison of living conditions of the common people in various parts of Japan between the late 17th and the mid-19th centuries culled from contemporary European and Japanese sources has shown that Higo around 1800 belonged to those regions in Japan with a comparatively low quality of life of the peasantry, not only in the backward mountain regions but even in the relatively well-to-do areas on the alluvial plain. Consequently, we must beware of unduly extrapolating from conditions in Higo on peasant life in Tokugawa Japan; the picture of peasant life emerging from the TN is certainly not representative of peasant life in Japan around 1800. It is likely that further studies will reveal a basic similarity between life of the common people in Higo and that in other backward regions; all we can say here is that the quality of life of the peasants in Higo appears to have been rather lower than even in the neighbouring domains in North Kyūshū - a difference which was likely to have been even more pronounced in years of bad harvest as a result of the relatively narrow spread of wealth among peasants. However, as far as tax payment is concerned, allegations of hardship in the TN are likely to be an expression of the lacking opportunity of industrious peasants to profit by accumulating increments in crop yield, rather than of actual distress. Although some peasants may have experienced hardships in connection with tax payment, there can be little doubt that the author of the TN was exaggerating peasant distress after a bad harvest to underline his case in favour of the change-over to the jōmen method of tax assessment. The account given by a peasant of the annual tax payment procedure shows perhaps best how the payment of the annual tax was experienced by ordinary peasants. In the section on the relationship between the peasantry and the priesthood, we

have seen that while we must not allow the anti-Buddhist polemic contained in the _TN_ to intrude into our conclusions, the report by Furukawa on rain prayers confirms the impression one gains from a reading of the _TN_ that as late as 1800, peasants in Higo were largely steeped in superstitious beliefs - apparently in a much larger degree than were peasants in the economically advanced regions. Given the fact that the peasants' understanding of religion was rather unsophisticated, there may well be some truth in the allegation of the _TN_ that priests were rivalling government officials in the respect and fear they commanded among peasants. All considered, there can be little doubt that the priesthood, above all the Shinshū priests who were active among the peasants in relatively large numbers, enjoyed a strong position of authority in rural society. However, the question as to what extent, and how frequently, priests abused this position of authority to improve their economic position cannot be answered with certainty at present and awaits further critical investigation.

Notes to Chapter 3.

1. (TN: 361.)
2. transl. in, Norman, "Andō Shōeki," 113.
3. Kodama, Nōmin seikatsushi, 191.
4. Kodama, Nōsei shiryō, vol. 1, 36.
5. quoted in, Tamamuro, Nōmin seikatsu, 171.
6. Taeuber, Population, 31-2.
7. Tamamuro, Nōmin seikatsu, 169 ff.
8. Taeuber, Population, 33.
9. ibid., 31.
10. quoted in, ibid., 30.
11. ibid., 31.
12. ibid., 33.
13. Crawcour, "Tokugawa Heritage," 27.
14. Griffis, Mikado, 423-4.
15. Smith, "Land Tax," 294.
16. Kämpfer, Japan, vol. 2, 469.
17. ibid., vol. 2, 515.
18. ibid., vol. 2, 495.
19. Thunberg, Reise, vol. 2, 73.
20. Siebold, Nippon, vol. 2, 88.
21. Alcock, Capital, vol. 1, 271.
22. Siebold, Nippon, vol. 2, 88-9.
23. Kämpfer, Japan, vol. 2, 485.
24. ibid.
25. ibid.
26. ibid., vol 2, 522.
27. Thunberg, Reise, vol. 2, 169.
28. Kämpfer, Japan, vol. 2, 474.
29. Siebold, Nippon, vol. 6, part VI, 72.
30. Thunberg, Reise, vol. 2, 80.
31. Alcock, Capital, vol. 1, 120.
32. ibid., vol. 1, 300.
33. ibid., vol. 1, 300-1.
34. ibid.
35. ibid., vol. 1, 302.

36. Harris, Journal, 252.
37. ibid.
38. Alcock, Capital, vol. 1, 302.
39. ibid., vol. 1, 453.
40. Harris, Journal, 203.
41. ibid., 258.
42. ibid.
43. ibid., 371.
44. ibid.
45. ibid., 428.
46. ibid., 441.
47. ibid.
48. ibid., 429.
49. ibid., 258.
50. Alcock, Capital, vol. 2, 73.
51. ibid., 74.
52. ibid.
53. ibid., 86.
54. Thunberg, Reise, vol. 2, 113.
55. Alcock, Capital, vol. 2, 86.
56. ibid., 138.
57. ibid., 148.
58. Alcock, Capital, vol. 2, 144.
59. Griffis, Mikado, 415.
60. ibid., 420.
61. ibid., 430.
62. Furukawa, Saiyū zakki, 370.
63. ibid.
64. Tamamuro, "Hōken seiji to shūkyō no riyō," 97.
65. Kodama, Nōmin seikatsushi, 175.
66. Furukawa, Saiyū zakki, 372.
67. ibid.
68. (TN: 429.)
69. quoted in, Tamamuro, Nōmin seikatsu, 71.
70. ibid., 71-2.
71. ibid., 73.
72. Kodama, Nōmin seikatsushi, 175.

73. Kämpfer, *Japan*, vol. 1, 122.
74. ibid.
75. Kumamoto kenritsu Oguni Kōtōgakkō, ed., *Kyōnen konkyū no tekagami*, 13-4.
76. (*TN*: 368.)
77. Iwamoto, "Sunshi sunkō," 10.
78. Kumamoto kenritsu Oguni Kōtōgakkō, ed., *Kyōnen konkyū no tekagami*, 16.
79. Iwamoto, "Sunshi sunkō," 10.
80. Kumamoto kenritsu Oguni Kōtōgakkō, ed., *Tekagami*, 16.
81. ibid., 30-1.
82. ibid., 32.
83. (*TN*: 371.)
84. Kodama, *Nōmin seikatsushi*, 81.
85. Chambliss, *Chiarajima*, 47.
86. ibid., 51.
87. Kodama, *Nōmin seikatsushi*, 58.
88. Ujiie, "Mura zaisei," 29.
89. Kodama, *Nōmin seikatsushi*, 58.
90. ibid., 50.
91. ibid., 45.
92. (*TN*: 376.)
93. Kodama, *Nōmin seikatsushi*, 47.
94. (*TN*: 341.)
95. Nakamura, *Agricultural Production*, 53 ff.
96. ibid.
97. Kodama, *Nōmin seikatsushi*, 31.
98. Smith, "Land Tax," 289.
99. Chambliss, *Chiarajima*, 48.
100. Kodama, *Nōmin seikatsushi*, 61.
101. ibid., 173.
102. Tamamuro, *Nōmin seikatsu*, 15.
103. Kodama, *Nōmin seikatsushi*, 176.
104. ibid.
105. Uchimura, *Nōson seido*, 221.
106. Kodama, *Nōmin seikatsushi*, 71.
107. ibid., 66.

108. Kodama, *Nōmin seikatsushi*, 68.
109. (*TN*: 363.)
110. Kodama, *Nōmin seikatsushi*, 61.
111. (*TN*: 339.)
112. Tamamuro, *Nōmin seikatsu*, 255.
113. Maki, *Jinshin baibai*, 144.
114. ibid., 144.
115. Keene, *Treasury*, 91.
116. Morisue, *Seikatsushi*, vol. 2, 91.
117. Tamamuro, *Nōmin seikatsu*, 59.
118. ibid., 230-1.
119. Uchimura, *Nōson seido*, 227-32.
120. Kodama, *Nōmin seikatsushi*, 149.
121. Shibuya, "Nengū," 44.
122. (*TN*: 424.)
123. (*TN*: 417.)
124. (*TN*: 427.)
125. Nakai, *Sōbō kigen*, 477.
126. *Tōdō shinden*, quoted in, Norman, "Andō Shōeki," 119-20.
127. Anonymous, *Seijikenbunroku*, 679.
128. Tamamuro, "Hōken seiji to shūkyō no riyō," 116.
129. (*TN*: 424.)
130. Itō, "Seiji kenryoku to shūkyōteki ken'i," 451.
131. (*TN*: 415.)
132. quoted in, Tamamuro, "Hōken seiji to shūkyō no riyō," 116.
133. (*TN*: 339.)
134. *Tōdō shinden*, quoted in, Norman, "Andō Shōeki," 163-4.
135. Smith, *Agrarian Origins*, 61.
136. (*TN*: 402.)
137. quoted in, Imai, *Rinri shisō*, 36.
138. Hall, *Tanuma*, 134.
139. *Monoshiri jiten*, *Shūkyōhen*, 61.
140. Tamamuro, *Nōmin seikatsu*, 177.
141. Kämpfer, *Japan*, vol. 1, 235-6.
142. (*TN*: 432.)

143. Kämpfer, Japan, vol. 1, 236.
144. Siebold, Nippon, vol. 2, 63-4.
145. Furukawa, Saiyū zakki, 371.
146. "Komusō," in NRDJ, vol. 8, 203 ff.
147. Tamamuro, Nōmin seikatsu, 153.
148. Ujiie, "Mura zaisei," 26.
149. ibid., 26.
150. Shibuya, "Higo-han no nengū," 45.
151. Iwamoto, "Chihōshinkan no sengyōka," 34.
152. Furukawa, Saiyū zakki, 372.
153. Kodama, Nōmin seikatsushi, 243.
154. "Amagoi," in Minzokugaku kenkyūsho, ed., Minzokugaku jiten, 9 ff.
155. Bellah, Tokugawa Religion, 66 ff.
156. Kodama, Nōmin seikatsushi, 191.
157. Furukawa, Saiyū zakki, 366-7.
158. Bellah, Tokugawa Religion, 86.
159. (TN: 415.)
160. (TN: 368-9.)
161. Kumamoto kenritsu Oguni Kōtōgakkō, ed., Tekagami, 41.
162. Shingyō, Ikkō ikki, 255.
163. Kumamoto kenritsu Oguni Kōtōgakkō, ed., Tekagami, 32.
164. Kodama, Nōmin seikatsushi, 244.
165. Tamamuro, "Hōken seiji to shūkyō no riyō," 99.
166. Kodama, Nōmin seikatsushi, 244.
167. Tamamuro, "Hōken seiji to shūkyō no riyō," 95.
168. ibid., 92.
169. Tamamuro, "Jōdoshinshū no tenkai," 48.
170. Tamamuro, "Hōken seiji to shūkyō no riyō," 96.
171. Tamamuro, "Jōdoshinshū no tenkai," 34.
172. ibid., 42.
173. Yabe tenaga tekagami, in Kumamoto joshi daigaku rekishigaku kenkyūbu, ed., Higo-han no nōson kōzō, 204.
174. (TN: 416-7.)
175. Eliot, Buddhism, 385.
176. Kodama, Nōmin seikatsushi, 244.

177. Kodama, <u>Nōmin seikatsushi</u>, 244.

178. Tamamuro, "Hōken seiji to shūkyō no riyō," 108.

179. Bellah, <u>Tokugawa Religion</u>, 72.

180. ibid., 71.

181. Shingyō, <u>Ikkō ikki</u>, 254-6.

4. The Tale of Nisuke

Let us now turn to Tokugawa literature to see how it reflected life of the common people, particularly that of the peasantry. The Tokugawa period has presented us with a rich literary heritage which with its many genres is depicting a multitude of facets of life in Japan between 1600 and 1868. Undoubtedly the most prominent among these genres is the literature of townspeople, also known as merchant literature (chōnin bungaku)[a], which - together with poetry - deservedly occupies a position of preeminence in the literature of this period. The great works of fiction have indeed received so much attention in Western works on Tokugawa literature that they have tended to overshadow other works of prose which, although of a less brilliant kind, are nevertheless of some value to complete the picture of everyday life during the Tokugawa period. In fact, when looking for information about life outside the great cultural centres of this period, it is often such less well known works of literature that one has to turn to. In this chapter, I would like to introduce the reader to the Tale of Nisuke (TN) as one of the texts belonging to this type of literature.

Tokugawa fiction was the product of the urban culture and is therefore naturally preoccupied with the lives of samurai and merchants seen against the colourful background of town life. The literary scene was dominated by the money of the educated townspeople who published books and bought them. By reflecting their world view, fiction gives a realistic account of town life as well as of the dreams and aspirations of the townspeople. It is the pronounced fanciful element in many works which may have prompted the modern novelist Masamune Hakuchō (1879-1962) to use the polemic epithet of "fool's paradise"[1] for Tokugawa belles-lettres. While this highly personal

[a] For a good introduction to the literature of townsmen as seen against the cultural background of town culture during the Tokugawa period, see, Hibbett, Floating World.

opinion may hold true of some works of fiction, there can be no denying the fact that townspeople had created with their literature an original mode of expression and an invaluable instrument of self-portrayal. The great value of merchant literature to us therefore derives not only from the fact that it enriched the cultural heritage of the Tokugawa period but also from the fact that it accurately recreates an impression of life in the largest population centres of the period.

Unfortunately, there is far less literary evidence to everyday life in provincial Japan. Judging from the considerable gaps in economic development existing between the different regions throughout the Tokugawa period, there can be little doubt that there existed also considerable cultural gaps between the major centres of Tokugawa civilization on the one hand and the remoter areas of rural Japan on the other[a]. Whereas in towns and cities all but the poorest were - in varying degrees - partaking in the cultural life, it was often but the wealthiest in the backward rural areas who had sufficient leisure as well as sufficient education to follow cultural developments in the towns. There is no novel which is set in the world of the ordinary peasants. On the contrary, far from simply ignoring the high esteem in which peasants were held by Confucian ethics for their instrumental role in providing the realm with food, peasants were sometimes even exposed to ridicule in works of literature as authors used the character of country yokel to elicit laugh from their urban audience. Except for occasional invectives against loose morals and ensuing temporary measures taken especially in connection with the theatre[b], the feudal authorities looked generally with leniency on the activities of the literary world in the towns, maybe because belles-lettres which reinforced accepted ethical

[a] For a description of town life in Edo during the Genroku period see, Sansom, Western World, 214-22. Also, Sheldon, Merchant Class, 85-99. For a collection of literary sources on town life, see, NSSSS, vol. 15.

[b] See, Shively, "Bakufu versus Kabuki".

values were recognized to be a stabilizing factor in society.

Besides belles-lettres, we may distinguish several further genres within the literary tradition of the Tokugawa period, namely political, economic, and philosophical writings, besides travel journals, gazetteers, and diaries[a]. What does each of these types of literature contribute to our knowledge of Tokugawa society? Needless to say that it was above all the educated classes of samurai, merchants, and priests which provided the fostering soil of all literary activities in the Tokugawa period, while the publication of literature was done either by explicit orders of the authorities or at least with their tacit consent. While this dependence on approval by the political authorities may have determined the content of a large part of the literary production of the Tokugawa period, official control was undoubtedly strictest with writings touching on social problems.

Bearing in mind that literacy in the remote and backward areas of Japan was confined to relatively few, mostly samurai or merchants and to some educated wealthy peasants in the villages, it goes without saying that we cannot expect to find descriptions of peasant life written by ordinary peasants themselves. Those authors who wrote on peasant life were not on the whole basing their accounts on their own experience but appear to have rather witnessed peasant life from close quarters.

---

[a] As a result of the wide meaning of the word keizai (economy) in Japanese - especially during the Edo period when it referred to a "broad system of political economy which concerned itself with the entire range of human activity and linked all life together in a neat chain of cause and effect"[2] - many of these texts may be found in collections of material relating to the economic history of Tokugawa Japan such as the NKT. Furthermore, I would like to draw the reader's attention to the recently published collection of source material on the life of the common people during the Tokugawa period which runs to more than 20 volumes. In undertaking their laborious task, the editors of this series have made it their task to bring to the attention of scholars a large number of texts of "humble subject matter"[3] hitherto unpublished or which had attracted little attention in some other collection of source material. Among these texts, a closer examination will reveal a number of interesting texts. See, NSSSS.

In fact, the only direct witness of the peasantry's attitude towards the authorities was handed down through generations in the oral tradition in the form of fanciful tales, and were fixed in written form only much later. In their folk tales[a], peasants gave their idea of a better world concrete form. Here, they could safely leave free rein to their imagination and vent their strong resentments against the authorities. One of the motifs of these tales is the reversal of the roles of peasant and lord, in which peasants imagined that for once it was they who gave orders or even outwitted the lord. One tale from the Higo domain is about a peasant who sold an umbrella to the lord, claiming that it was alive and could open and close by itself. When this claim is later found out to be false, the peasant wails: "You should have given the umbrella something to eat! Now it has died! How sad!". Another fanciful tale from the Aso region of Higo tells of the miraculous feat of a strong peasant who carried the lord in a palanquin all by himself! On the way, the peasant is suddenly seized by an urge to smoke. Leaning his elbow on the railing of a bridge, he smokes with his left hand while keeping the frightened lord in his palanquin suspended over the railing with his right arm, threatening to drop him[4].

Interesting as these folk tales may be in giving us a fair impression of the fantasy of the peasants, they yield little factual information about everyday realities. They will, therefore, serve above all to add colour to our picture of peasant life, rather than add significantly to what we already know.

Among literary witnesses to the life of the peasants, we may with due prudence distinguish three main genres. First, there are the travel journals[b] which are easily the most colour-

---

[a] For folk tales from the Higo domain, see, Araki, Higo no minwa.

[b] A comprehensive collection of travel journals and gazetteers may be found in vols. 1-4 of the NSSSS, including Furukawa's Tōyū zakki (Random Notes from a Journey to the East) in vol. 3, 439-593. Interesting to note in this context is the fact that Bashō's poetic Oku no hosomichi (written before 1691), which contains little reference to peasant life, is included in traditional selections of Japanese literature, whereas the travel notes by Furukawa are not. See, Yuasa, Narrow Road.

ful and in a way the least biased accounts of living conditions as they were apparent to the eye of the traveller. In the present study on Higo, for instance, we are fortunate in having Furukawa Koshōken, one of the most prolific writers of travelogues, as witness of contemporary conditions in Higo with his Saiyū zakki[a]. Second, there are the diaries and notes of government officials on all levels of bureaucracy. None of the esthetic pleasures of the refined merchant literature may be expected from these texts, but they reward the reader with detailed insight into the workings of local administration and quite generally into the macrocosm of Tokugawa society, where they are not confined to the minutiae of tax collection. Always afraid of incurring the wrath of the authorities, the more prudent among them avoid open criticism and make a point of demonstratively showing their loyalty to the authorities by reiterating at length moral principles and guidelines concerning the duties of the peasants as they were issued by the authorities. Yet others could afford to be quite frank about abuses in local administration. So, for instance, Tanaka Kyūgū (1663-1729), a village official from Kawasaki in the Kantō area, who, upon retirement, set down his own recollections of life in the provinces and local administration. His work, the Minkan seiyō (Essentials of Civic Life)[b] written in 1721, is today regarded as one of the major sources of information on local life in the economically advanced Kantō region during the first two decades of the 18th century. Another equally revealing text which might be ranged under this heading is the Sejikenbunroku (Record of Personal Experiences in Worldly Affairs)[c], which was written by an anonymous author in 1816. This text, too, contains interesting observations of life on all levels of society from the samurai down to the outcastes, with a considerable degree of criticism of contemporary conditions.

---

[a] (See, 85-6.)

[b] NKT, vol. 5, 1-514.

[c] NSSSS, vol. 8, 641-766.

In the third category, I would put the numerous essays, treatises, and memorials produced by men who concerned themselves with social and economic problems, in which they set forth their views on current problems of the shogunate or their own domain together with proposals of possible courses of remedy. As in the case of Motoori Norinaga's Tamakushige (Precious Comb-Box)[a] and Ogyū Sorai's Seidan (Discourses on Government)[b], such writings were sometimes produced directly on order of the authorities, who thus hoped to gain a deeper understanding of social and economic problems. But even where this was not the case, the obvious preoccupation with domain problems and their solution suggests the existence of some sort of a link between the author and the world of politics in almost every case. Government officials, too, committed their thoughts on paper and left valuable material; two of the most prominent are Matsudaira Sadanobu with his Ame no shita no hitogoto[c] and Kumazawa Banzan who wrote the Daigaku Wakumon[d].

The TN belongs to the third category of writings - a genre which on the whole offers the most comprehensive coverage of various problems of an economic or social nature, backed by long years of scholarship or experience in the field of government administration. In my opinion, it is also an example for the literary value of these texts revolving around immediate problems of rural Tokugawa Japan, for although they lack the polished elegance of some of the great works of merchant literature, this lack is often compensated by the insight they afford into the atmosphere of everyday life of the common people. The value of memorials, in spite of their tendency to overstate to make their point, has been well put by Sir George Sansom when he wrote that "the interest of these documents lies not so much in their importance as evidence of economic conditions - there is plenty of exact detail in more matter-of-fact records of

[a] Motoori S., ed. Motoori Norinaga Zenshū, vol. 6, 3-19.

[b] NKT, vol. 9, 6-194.

[c] Matsudaira, ed. Ame no shita no hitogoto

[d] NKT, vol. 3, 457-93. For the English translation, see, Fisher, "Kumazawa Banzan."

taxation, prices, land rents, currency, and so forth - but in the conflict between a soft view of life and a hard view of life which is brought out by a comparison between the pleasure-loving society...and the earnest Confucian doctors, given to high learning and frugal living."[5] This comment, made about two memorials of the first half of the 10th century, is equally valid for memorials of the Tokugawa period such as the TN, with the one important difference that pleasure in the Tokugawa period was not restricted to a narrow circle of court nobles as in the Heian period but was widespread among the population of the towns and cities and even among the rural population in some areas. Of special relevance to us is the fact that peasant problems always occupy a central place of interest in these texts; with detailed information on the most vital concerns of peasants, they undoubtedly constitute one of the most valuable sources of information on peasant life. By contributing to an understanding of those strata in society who, by their work, created the economic basis of the whole of Tokugawa society, such texts fulfil an important function to complete our picture of Tokugawa civilization.

Nevertheless, we must take into account that in almost all of these writings belonging to the third category, problems were not discussed by those who suffered most under the conditions described in the text, but by others who had assumed the role of advocate to help those who were not sufficiently literate to compose a memorial or who were not in a position to make themselves heard in government circles. Sensitivity by the political authorities towards social criticism ventured in too outright a manner imposed certain limitations on critical writing during this period; the wide margin of official tolerance applied to belles-lettres was considerably narrower in the case of prose touching on concerns of the common people. Social criticism put too concretely exposed its author to the risk of being prosecuted for subversive activities. It may be

that we have here one of the reasons for today's scarcity of literary material bearing testimony to the human condition of the lower sections of the common people as compared to the rich literature documenting the life of samurai and merchants, for any text on the life of the less fortunate among the townspeople and the lower peasants would almost ipso facto have contained some criticism of society or of the authorities. Peasant uprisings, to name but the most conspicuous expression of deep popular discontent, was a particularly sensitive topic in the view of the authorities. This subject was accordingly little taken up in literature - where literate men had been moved by the human suffering surfacing in these outbreaks to take up the issue in their writings, they had done so in a most cautious manner[a]. It seems that as long as the wording did not arouse the suspicions of the authorities, the author was fairly safe; the case of Baba Bunkō, however, who was sentenced to death in the mid-18th century for his account of a peasant revolt[6] is evidence that the feudal authorities were determined to set bounds to men of letters treating this delicate topic in their writings. It would be wrong, however, to think that the authorities had to resort to such measures with all independent thinkers. The physician Andō Shōeki (1701-?)[b], for instance, who argued in his analysis of social conditions on an abstract plane in highly philosophical language which was unintelligible to all but the most learned men, was simply "forgotten"[7]. In his examination of the basic assumption underlying state institutions he attacked the hierarchical order of men as the root of all evil and interpreted the Confucian teachings as projections of the feudal order. His studies led him to the utopian belief in a society without a ruling class where all men were equal (shizensei) - a conclusion which was unlikely to meet with approval among members of the ruling class

---

[a] For literary evidence of peasant uprisings, see, Ono, Hyakushō ikki sōdan. See also, NSSSS, vol. 6 (Early Tokugawa period until early 19th century), and ibid., vol. 13 (Tenpō period until beginning of Meiji period).

[b] For a detailed commentary and a translation of part of his

even though Andō's utopy was based upon the guiding principle of all reform during the Tokugawa period, namely a return to a simple, self-sufficient agrarian economy[8]. Writing about Andō Shōeki and Tominaga Nakamoto, Katō blamed a conspiracy of silence of their contemporaries for the fact that a large part of their works were never published during the Tokugawa period, "not despite, but because of, the originality of their thoughts in a society under military dictatorship"[9]. However, at least as far as Andō is concerned, personal reluctance to make unorthodox views public appears to have been primarily responsible for keeping his writings unpublished. As Norman has pointed out, Andō Shōeki believed his philosophy to be over a century ahead of its time; knowing that the times would not permit the publishing of a frank and rigorous critique, he had thus preferred to share the essence of his thought only with a small circle of congenial friends[10]. It was only in 1899, well after the Restoration, that his works were rediscovered and published for the first time.

The case of another natural scientist, Miura Baien (1723-89)[a], demonstrates the difficulties encountered by those who advocated unorthodox views in their writings. This scholar - a village physician like Andō Shōeki - had declined offers to enter government service in order to continue his research free of direct interference from above. Having furthermore been influenced by European natural science which trickled into Japan through the port of Nagasaki, the findings of his independent research departed radically from traditional systems of thought. So, he declared boldly that "the final source of knowledge is neither tradition nor the writings of men, but nature and man himself"[11], a view which set him off distinctly from traditional literati in Tokugawa Japan. This scientific basis

---

works, together with the Japanese text of translated excerpts in a supplementary volume, see, Norman, "Andō Shōeki." See also, Katō, Tominaga, which contains a revealing comparison between Andō Shōeki and Tominaga Nakamoto. For the Japanese text of Shizen Shineidō and Tōdō Shinden, see, NKBT, vol.97, 569-707.

[a] For an introduction to his philosophy, see, de Bary, Sources, vol. 1, 480-8.

allowed him to take a new look at society and at economic problems. His penetrating study of money, called Kagen (The Origin of Value)[a] written in 1773, together with his analysis of the circulation of bad money, won him wide acclaim among pragmatic government officials, but probably did not contribute to increasing his fame with other influential members of the ruling class. It is thus not astonishing when we hear that his main work, the Gengo (Discourse on Metaphysics)[b] which was completed in 1775, was turned down by the commercial publishers who claimed that it would not sell. Whether this undoubtedly valid objection had really prompted them to reject this work or whether the author's known tabula rasa approach to traditional philosophy and now his attempt to reconcile Neo-Confucian cosmology with European astronomy had made the publishers afraid of causing consternation in traditionally-minded circles we cannot know. The facts are, however, that his work was not promoted sufficiently to reach wider circulation, although it was eventually published at the author's own expense with the financial support of the peasants in his village. The Kansei Edict against Heterodox Teachings in 1790 finally doomed Miura's writings to oblivion.

What were the consequences of these various difficulties encountered by critical thinkers during the Tokugawa period? I think that in our search for material on the common people we should always be aware of the limitations to critical thinking imposed on the author by the reluctance of the authorities to allow the spreading of personal opinions which departed from tradition, unless, of course, they could still somehow be reconciled with the accepted philosophy. Criticism was thus by implication confined to the superficial, much in the same way that reforms were handled by the feudal authorities. Whereas the most obvious abuses, such as the maltreatment of peasants, could be openly pilloried, social inequality inherent in the

---

[a] NKT, vol. 17, 457-93.

[b] Nakamura, ed., "Miura Baien shū."

Confucian social stratification was not to be called in question. Their analysis of the society in which they were living and from which they were deriving benefit, had to remain within the framework of the social vision of Tokugawa Confucianism. Criticism therefore generally rested on the Confucian assumption that social problems were the visible signs of an imbalance caused by shifts and changes in society. The accepted function of the social critic in Tokugawa Japan was therefore that of an admonisher to restore society to the state in which it had been under the ancient sage rulers by reminding men of the maxims of antiquity - an ideal which, as we have already seen, assumed concrete shape in the various reforms of the 18th century[a].

As far as criticism of the living conditions of the peasantry is concerned, we must realize that wherever it occurs, it is mainly to add weight to the author's argument that a healthy economy could only be achieved if the taxpayers were treated with due consideration, according to the guidelines of Confucian ethics. To argue in favour of an absolute improvement of their quality of life would have been quite inconceivable under these circumstances; all that was normally done was to plead that they should be treated more in keeping with the high standing accorded to peasants in Confucian ethics. More often than not, it was not the plight of peasants which prompted an author to describe their life in moving terms but rather his deep concern for the agrarian economy which depended so precariously on the welfare of the peasants.

The writings of Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801) afford an example of unorthodox writings which were not objected to by the political authorities of his day[b]. This was mainly because Motoori, the founder and chief exponent of the kokugaku school, had not rejected Confucian values altogether but had merely expressed his doubts as to whether Confucian theories were

---

[a] (See, 42 ff.)

[b] For an introduction to Motoori's philosophy, see, de Bary, Sources, vol. 2, 15-35. For more detail, see, Matsumoto, Motoori Norinaga.

universally applicable, regardless of the period and the particular historical context. While recommending rulers to study the Confucian teachings and to use some of its helpful ideas, Motoori stressed his belief that the special characteristics of Japan demanded different theories[12]. It is true that his writings had less influence in their pure form on his contemporaries than on later generations - among them the founding fathers of Meiji Japan - when they reappeared, incorporated into a framework which was essentially Confucian. Nevertheless, we must take note of the fact that in 1787, Motoori was asked by the lord of Wakayama, Tokugawa Harusada (1728-89), for his views on politics and economy in relation to the current social situation - certainly a great honour for an unorthodox spirit. Furthermore, as we have already seen, Motoori also appears to have had more than a negligible influence on the Higo domain school among others[a] - a fact which Motoori himself confirmed in 1801 when he stated that a good number of his followers could be found in Higo[13].

In two of his writings, Motoori concerned himself with social problems. These were the Tamakushige (Precious Comb-box)[b] written in 1786 in which he set forth his world view, and the Hihon Tamakushige (Secret Precious Comb-box)[c] of the following year, in which he answered the questions of the lord of Wakayama concerning problems of his domain. I am quoting Motoori here not for concrete points of criticism contained in the latter work - although they are valid as such, they would not add to our knowledge of conditions in the late 18th century - but for the lucid and succinct statement of Motoori's social concept which it contains[d].

---

[a] (See, 111 ff.)

[b] (See, 287 n.)

[c] Motoori, ed., Motoori Norinaga zenshū, vol. 6, 22-60.

[d] For Motoori's approach to immediate social problems, see, Matsumoto, Motoori Norinaga, 120-176. Also, Hihon Tamakushige (see, note c.)

In the Tamakushige, Motoori explains history as the result of divine will - gods had created a Way for men to follow and undesirable developments in society were a consequence of man straying from this Way. In order to find one's way back to the path of virtue, which Motoori called the Ancient Way (kodō)[a], one had to study the ancient writings of Japan, in particular the Kojiki, a pseudo-historical work of the early 8th century, and the Tale of Genji, a romance of court life of the 11th century. The sphere of human problems, according to Motoori, eludes rational observation, nor can man change society according to his own wishes. All he can do is to divine the intentions of the gods concerning man and then to act in accordance with what is revealed to him. Motoori's radical negation of the potentialities of man's ratio was, in fact, a total rejection of progress in rational thinking made under the influence of Confucianism; in philosophical terms it meant nothing less than a return to the Middle Ages. Motoori's pre-rational world view, which betrays a marked influence by Buddhist philosophy, finds its practical expression in political fatalism. The essence of his political thought is summed up in his suggestion that the solution to social problems lies in men obeying the orders of their superiors and generally behaving according to the laws of the land. Concluding the Tamakushige, he writes:

> "The people in the present age should simply respect and observe the laws of their present rulers, refrain from arbitrary, self-assertive, and eccentric deeds, and perform their current duty. This is the true Way which has been handed down since the Age of Gods"[14].

The position of the individual within the social framework is an act of providence and thus inherently immutable. Put in practical terms of everyday life in Tokugawa Japan, this meant nothing else but the total submission of the common people to the orders of the authorities. In a poem included in another

---

[a] A detailed study of the Ancient Way and Motoori's world view may be found in Matsumoto, Motoori Norinaga, 68-119.

work, the Tamaboko Hyakushū[a], Motoori supported the feudal authorities with an argument which turned every act of disobedience not only into subversion but indeed into blasphemy, as the term kami can be used both for "gods" and "the authorities":

> "How could we disobey the laws of the times, since they are the edicts issued by kami for the times?"[15].

It is in this undisguised affirmation of the basic social distinction of Tokugawa society that we may find the key to the question of why Motoori Norinaga's opinion should have been sought by a lord and by scholars whereas the thoughts of Andō Shōeki and Miura Baien on the other hand faded away unheard. Nothing could have been more welcome by the feudal authorities than a philosophy which placed man's fate in the hands of some higher principle; nothing could have been more dangerous than a philosophy which placed responsibility for life on earth squarely with man himself. Fatalism, which moulded Motoori's philosophy, equally made itself felt on the thinking of other writers of the period who concerned themselves with society. Even a critical thinker like Tominaga Nakamoto, who displayed an almost Voltairian spirit in his criticism of the priesthood, subscribed to the same fatalism in the field of social philosophy[b]. In this sense, Motoori's work provides one example of the extent to which critical observation of man and society was permitted by the authorities. Empirical methods of natural science, which were developed during the 18th century, were connived at by the authorities only as long as they were applied to the observation of natural phenomena going as far as the human anatomy. Man as a social being, however, was treated as something transcending the laws of nature, from which it followed that only investigations based on a metaphysical basis could be correct. Attempts by the two physicians named above to extend empirical methods of study from the human anatomy to the anatomy

---

[a] Motoori, ed. Motoori Norinaga zenshū, vol. 10, 109-16.

[b] In his Okina no fumi he wrote: "If you have a master, you should be devoted to him. If you have children, you must teach them well. If you have retainers, you must govern them well. If you have a husband, you must follow him well..."[16].

of society would not have met with the approval of the authorities. Wherever man as a social being was the central concern of a study, the traditional, non-analytical way of thinking as inculcated in the Japanese mind by the philosophies of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Shintō, reigned supreme. Pre-rational explanations of society such as those advanced by Motoori were to furnish explanations for the social structure until the mid-20th century when they provided the ideological foundation for the Japanese brand of Fascism.

4.1. The Content

Before going into particulars, I would like to describe briefly the content of the TN. The text is in the form of discussions between several villagers and their visitors somewhere in a mountain village in Higo. Some peasants, the village doctor, priests, and outcastes are portrayed as they meet on several days on the occasion of the New Year celebrations - traditionally a time for festivities and parties, where friends and relatives visit each other for a chat and the eating of rice-cakes. In the course of these talks, pressing issues of the day worrying the peasants are raised and discussed thoroughly. In this way, the TN demonstrates the impact of government policies on the life of the peasant. Executed with a skilful blend of moods, ranging from the tragic to the humorous, the TN achieves its objective with a vividness lacking in other essays on peasant problems written by economic or political authors.

In the MS, the text of the TN runs continously. In my translation, I have followed the Morita edition[a] in subdividing the TN into seven chapters. With the exception of the last chapter, where the discussion of the previous chapter is carried on in a different setting, each chapter accomodates one day's talks. At the end of each chapter, there occurs a logical break as the peasants take their leave and return home; the next chapter opens with a description of the peasants assembling again to resume their talks with a new topic.

[a] (See, 12.)

The first chapter opens with a graphic description of the brutal treatment accorded by the authorities to some peasants who were unable to pay their annual tax. The author expresses his grave concern at such excesses as he fears that they may cause the people to harbour resentments against the authorities. As the method of tax assessment is discussed, irregularities in the procedure are branded one by one as the cause of the peasants' suffering and are accordingly subjected to severe criticism. So is the high-handed attitude assumed by local officials in this matter. The problem of senobi fields, i.e. fields which are larger in reality than entered in the cadastral record, is also considered in detail. One major reason for the persistent dismal state of affairs is seen in the spinelessness of village officials, who are here pilloried for their reluctance, even inability, to represent the interests of the villagers. In the view of the author, the district headman ought increasingly to bring his weight to bear on his subordinates and take a personal interest in the welfare of the peasants. The author then submits detailed proposals for alternative methods of tax assessment. Severe criticism of luxuries indulged in by village officials points out the need for stricter enforcement of the extensive body of sumptuary legislation. The view that the responsibility for the solution of social problems lies with the political leadership is quickly corrected - not the authorities but Heaven and, to a lesser degree, fate and destiny are said to be the main determining factors in man's life.

In the second chapter, the topic of tax reduction on barren fields is brought up in a discussion between a peasant and a village headman. It appears that in lean years, peasants in the mountains can fall back on the products of their dry fields for food, whereas peasants in the plain who may only till rice fields have nothing to eat. The peasant Naosuke then presents a passionate account of the misery of peasant life. The next item, that of debt transfer, lays open the problems engendered by the gradual replacement of feudal bonds by money

in the relationship between high and low. The costs of this process in terms of human suffering are drastically demonstrated as the author describes how peasants and their families succumb to spiralling debts. The role of the village officials and the district headman in this context is exposed and the callousness with which they often abuse their official position to gain personal riches is denounced. The author claims that the peasants are ruined rather by ruthless money-lending practices than by the regular annual tax. Moneylenders in turn use the money collected from the peasantry to purchase higher rank. As a remedy for these abuses, firmer control and sanctions are proposed, which would obviate the need for drastic penal measures. The ailment besetting society is diagnosed as the dwindling influence of the domain authorities owing to the growing strength of the money economy. Next, the example of the "first ears of rice" tax is used to show how the village headman levies additional taxes on any pretext. We also learn that relief rice is handed out only very rarely by the authorities; in an allegory, the author show that natural calamities could ruin peasants only because the latter were already weakened by the brutal treatment suffered at the hands of the officials[a]. At the present time, peasants had to pay with their lives for the authorities' failure to take adequate precautions for the inevitable years of bad harvest. The chapter is concluded by another allegory, in which peasants are likened to overloaded packhorses, driven to exhaustion by rapacious horsedrivers. Unless radical changes were introduced in the tax levying procedure, so the author warns, most peasants would be beggars within a few years.

In the third chapter, the author builds up his case in favour of the introduction of the jōmen method of tax assessment. The present-day kemi method is criticized as inaccurate, unjust, and too costly. By the jōmen method, on the other hand, the immense miscellaneous costs involved in the repeated assessments and re-assessments could be abolished. This would

[a] (See, TN: 369-70.)

not only benefit the peasants in the form of lower taxes, so the author claims, but would above all profit the authorities in highly increased revenue. The new tax rate should be based on the average harvest yield of the past decade and, once determined, should be pegged at that level. The possibility of recourse to re-assessment and subsequent tax remission in years of bad harvest should also be abolished, as most of the remitted part of the tax was anyhow pocketed by the village officials in the form of commissions. Not only that, but officials are also accused of tampering with the tax records. Taxation could again be entrusted to the sole responsibility of the district headman, as most administrative posts to do with taxation would be superseded by the new procedure. This would have the advantage of one official alone being responsible for all stages of tax payment. Concluding his case for the new method of taxation, the author then lists ten reasons in favour of the new method, all of them stressing the aspect of increased revenue to whet the appetite of the authorities. Profits for the peasants are also presented in such a light as to make the authorities realize that the peasants' welfare provides, in the final analysis, the basis for the welfare of the samurai, such as when the desirability of leaving the peasants an economic surplus is founded on the reason that this would enable them to buy commercial fertilizer and thus increase their production even more. Finally, the author points out how some peasants even ruin their own land to profit from a tax remission, but far from putting the blame for such action on the peasants, he accuses the tax officials for teaching the peasants "these wicked things".

In the fourth chapter, the cause of decaying villages in the plain is traced back to the construction of dams and dikes in an earlier period. These, by effectively preventing the flooding of the fields, are seen as the main single cause for the leaching of the soil, as decomposed organic matter can no longer be deposited on the fields by flood water. The steady deterioration of the quality of the soil effects a progressively

worsening crop yield to tax ratio. State-aided land reclamation projects to relieve the tax burden on villages with deteriorating soil quality would not only yield increased tax returns, but would also enable the peasants in decaying villages to recover and so obviate the need for charity. Such projects would, moreover, help to dispose of the growing number of itinerant craftsmen and the dregs of the town population, mostly peasants who had turned their backs on agriculture, by offering new opportunities on new settlements. If projects of this kind had in the past been unsuccessful, it was only because taxes imposed on such land had been too high. Such action would also dispose the people favourably toward the authorities, so that they would readily join in an effort to save the chaotic state finances. To prevent peasants from taking matters into their own hands, the author quickly adds that Heaven would not take kindly to any self-willed ventures on their part. Rain prayers, if offered by the peasants, are strongly criticized as ineffective if not downright harmful to the state. They only serve to enrich the priesthood at the expense of the peasants. However, the same prayers offered by the ruler may be answered by Heaven with rainfall. Next, the fact that peasants are forced to resort to dishonesty in times of famine prompts the author to ponder the paramount importance of the moral propensities of the authorities in the formation of a moral nature in their subjects. Filial piety is extolled in a father (authorities) - son (subject) allegory as the most important virtue of a subject which can only be instilled if the authorities set a good example. If the authorities succeed in doing this, the people will happily carry the burden of the state on their shoulders. The next item discussed is the problem of food substitutes. The link between disease and malnutrition is explained in terms of traditional Chinese medicine, and peasants are cautioned not to entrust their sick to the care of the priests. Rather than believing in the supernatural, one should know one's place in society and act accordingly. Concluding the chapter, the author defines the aims of learning and scholarship as serving the interests of the state.

In the fifth chapter, the peasants express deep concern at the dwindling quantity of river water. After some metaphysical speculation, this recent phenomenon is explained in terms of Chinese cosmogony and directly traced back to the large-scale afforestation of catchment areas with pine-trees by the authorities. The author states his conviction that nature should retain its original form, as he blames afforestation not only for the water shortage but also for the greatly reduced harvest yields as a consequence of the pollution of irrigation water with pine-resin. Yet another severe problem is posed by the gradual disappearance of common land, as more and more land is afforested by the authorities and already existing woods are re-designated as domain forests. Peasants are said to suffer in consequence considerable cuts in their supplies of fertilizer and forage. Village officials are censured for their reluctance in pressing the villagers' claim to access to domain forests situated within the boundaries of their community. Moreover, the officials are called upon to choose trees and plants very carefully for each region, making quite sure that they will fit in well with the environment and not exert any harmful influence on other plant life. For this purpose they should devote some time to studying the geography of the regions they administer. The author then warns the authorities against concentrating all efforts on developing one source of revenue to the exclusion of all others, and, even worse, to the detriment of the all-important agriculture, lest the state should be gravely endangered by their lopsided policies. To illustrate the dangers inherent in dependence on a single source of revenue and to demonstrate the consequences of "lack of foresight", the author concludes the chapter with an allegory in which a man who is wholly dependent on the sale of wooden planks for his livelihood is crippled in an accident caused by restricted vision due to the long planks on his back, and who, being unable to carry on his trade, faces an uncertain future.

A striking example of the tremendously influential position held by the priesthood in the rural areas is given in the sixth

chapter. The Buddhist priest Dōmei, depicted in a polemical style as a voracious parasite feeding unscrupulously on the starving population, crushes objections by the peasants to the money donations demanded of them with a volley of remonstrances. Only the village doctor, who, with his scientific training, has come to regard the priests with reservation, cannot be awed into submission, and so, while feigning reverence and admiration for the priesthood, he skilfully questions Dōmei about life in the temples. From their conversation we learn that priests use the donations given to them by their parishioners to live a life of luxury, idling their time away with fancy pastimes. The gist of the problem, as it appears to the author, is the fact that the priests command unquestioning obedience of their adherents, thus arrogating to themselves a position of authority which could pose a serious threat to the political authorities. The author fears that the peasants, torn between secular and ecclesiastical authorities, will side with the latter when faced with the choice. To show just how acute this problem is and that his fears are indeed well founded, the author then describes the clash between the doctor and the peasants on the question of the priesthood. The doctor's incautious criticism of the priesthood meets with strong opposition from the peasants, who blindly defend any action of the priests, however inconsistent with clerical office it may be. On the contrary, the villagers feel that the presence in their midst of a non-believer who mocks the priests and never visits temples for prayers is a danger to the whole community, and so they seriously consider whether they had not better expel the doctor from their village, in spite of his proven medical skills. As a unanimous decision cannot be reached on this problem, the peasants agree among themselves that before taking further steps in this matter, they would seek advice from another Buddhist priest.

In the seventh and last chapter, the topic of discussion is again the pervasive influence of religion and the priesthood in the rural regions of Higo. The author shows that the peasants'

confidence can only be won by treating the priesthood as an integral part of the administrative system. Any attempt on the part of the authorities to rule out the priesthood would imperil their own position in local administration. The author deplores the abject submission of the peasantry to the Shinshū priests while realizing at the same time that it is impossible to enlighten the peasants as to the true nature of the priesthood. Priests preach garbled doctrines to suit their own ends, and refer to donations from their parishioners as stipends, the expression normally used for emoluments given by the lord to his retainers. The author fears that if things develop in this direction, the annual tax will in future be paid to the priests rather than to the authorities. The luxurious life led by the priests in flagrant contradiction of the original teachings of the Buddha, weakens both the peasants and the authorities. This problem is enlarged still more by the fact that Shinshū priests are allowed to marry and so hand down their privileges to their descendants with the consequence that the costs of their upkeep multiply with each new generation. The author wonders why it is that whereas peasants are, quite rightly in his opinion, legally enjoined to refrain from all wasteful expenditure, they are, paradoxically, allowed to waste money on priests. The Yamabushi do not miss any opportunity to profit from their office, either. Equipped with an official pass, they summon peasants and horses for corvée without regard for the agricultural seasons. By upsetting the proper sequence of work, they make it impossible for the peasants to produce a good crop as they now have to contravene the Way of Heaven. Prayers for a good harvest by Yamabushi and Shintō priests which have been paid for by the peasants are dismissed as totally ineffective; the only prayers which may conceivably be helpful are those recited on the order of the authorities. In conclusion, the author states his belief that it is impossible to tackle the problem of priests within the context of the village community as the peasants are too deeply influenced in their thinking by the priesthood.

4.2. Commentaries and Interpretation

The TN was written anonymously; no evidence has been preserved which gives as much as a hint concerning the identity of the author and - linked with this question - the date of writing. Furthermore, it is equally unclear for what purpose the TN was written. All of our knowledge concerning the TN must therefore be culled from its content; by looking at the topics raised in the TN and the way in which they are discussed we may infer on the circumstances in which it was written, while the author's social standing and the interests he represents emerge fairly clearly from the world view underlying the text.

In the total absence of other evidence, this is in fact the method which was followed by all the scholars who tried to find out more about the origins of the TN. The first to do so was someone of whom we know only the pen-name of Master Reishōken. He had found what was presumably the original manuscript of the TN, "hidden in a basket at the home of a certain person who did not allow it to be taken away"[17]. Reishōken seems to have been rather moved by the description of peasant life in the TN, and so, thinking that it would benefit his son, should he ever be appointed to a government post, by helping him to "avoid extremes and thereby ensure a peaceful life for the people..."[18] he obtained the permission to copy the text personally. He completed the copy[a] on the 18th day, 10th month of 1812, together with a preface in which he expressed his conjecture as to the person of the author:

> "I suspect that hiding behind the unrefined literary style there is either a scholar or a warrior who is well-acquainted with the sweet and bitter in the life of the common people"[19].

More than a century after Reishōken had written the preface, the TN was made known to a wider public when it was published by Ono Takeo[b]. In his rather brief introductory notes,

[a] the Harada-MS (See, 11.)

[b] (See, 12.)

Ono argues that the author was indeed none other than Shimada Katsuji, the Higo Commissioner of Finance who had implemented the jōmen method of tax assessment in 1803. Ono's assumption was based partly on Reishōken's suggestion that the name of Nisuke was a pseudonym, and partly on the brief comment on the TN in a publication of the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce[a] which had tentatively linked the name of Shimada with the TN. It was accordingly assumed that the TN was written sometime during the Kansei period (1789-1801).

In 1952, the TN was again taken up as subject of study by Tamamuro Taijō, this time in rather greater depth. In the preface to his edition of the TN, Tamamuro interpreted the text as a literal rendition of events which had taken place in a real community in the mountains of Higo. He believed the author to have been a country doctor of Sawatari village, which belonged politically to the small town of Hamamachi in the mountainous Yabe district of the Kamimashiki county. Based on the content of the TN, Tamamuro suggested 1785 - the year of Shigekata's death - as the earliest possible date of writing, and 1803 - the year in which the jōmen method was introduced - as the latest date. In the explanatory notes to his edition of the TN[b], Tamamuro tells in greater detail how he arrived at his conclusions. Here, then, is a summary of his findings.

Tamamuro believed that the reason for both the author of the TN and the man who copied the TN wishing to remain anonymous lay in the fact that they were afraid of incurring the wrath of the authorities by publishing such severe criticism of social conditions. As to the author, Tamamuro first dismissed some current theories. One of the men frequently advanced as the likely author was Nakayama Ichinoshin (1761-1815), head of the

---

[a] Nōshōmushō, publ. Nōjisankōsho kaidai, quoted in Ono, ed., Nihon nōmin shiryō shūsui, vol. 9, 2.

[b] Tamamuro, ed., Nisuke Banashi, 1-10.

domain school and compiler of the 35 volume Seiden Engi, in which the TN is also included. Considering the simple style of the TN, Tamamuro dismissed this possibility as highly unlikely. Neither did he have much esteem for the opinion which saw Shimada Katsuji as the possible author; a man who had occupied in turn the posts of commissioner of county affairs, commissioner of temples, town commissioner, and senior vassal, could never reasonably be expected to muster such sympathy for the fate of the ordinary peasants as is evinced in the TN.

Reishōken's remark that the author belonged to the educated classes in Higo yet had tasted "the sweet and bitter in the life of the common people" himself, led Tamamuro to conclude that the author had to be sought among country doctors or the rural priesthood. Both of these professions would have offered plentiful opportunity to gather the kind of detailed knowledge of peasant problems displayed in the TN, as they lived in the peasant communities and possessed sufficient literary skills to express their thoughts in writing. Of these two professions, which together constitute rural intelligentsia, Tamamuro dismissed priests, since this choice is most unlikely considering the vitriolic anticlericalism expressed in the TN. A doctor likely to have been the author of the TN was found in the person of Watanabe Tadasu (1777-1848) of Sawatari village in the mountains of Higo. However, closer investigation into the family annals of the Watanabe family brought forth no conclusive evidence to prove his authorship. Nevertheless, certain details in his personal history bear some resemblance to the figure of Doctor Chihaku in the text. We are told of legends about Watanabe which have been preserved in the oral tradition of the region, which describe how he visited patients who had suddenly been taken ill even late at night in spite of rain and storm, braving the danger of precipitous mountain paths. Tamamuro made special note of one paragraph in the Watanabe family rules, in which it was laid down that no member of the family should ever

take on public office - a line which struck Tamamuro as bearing a strong similarity to the spirit of the TN in its outspoken criticism of local officials. Watanabe had studied medicine at the medical department of the domain school, the Saishunkan, and was promoted late in life to the post of county doctor with the rank of gundai jikifure, which put him directly under the jurisdiction of the county official. During his life, he had, besides attending to his patients, also taught about 300 students of medicine; in addition, his professional life had even left him sufficient spare time to devote himself to literary pursuits, namely the compilation of a gazetteer on the Yabe region and the writing of 20 volumes of Japanese poems.

As an educated man living among ordinary peasants and thus well-acquainted with their everyday problems, Watanabe Tadasu would strike one indeed as a most likely choice as the author of the TN, all the more since his literary activities prove that he was not averse to committing his thoughts to paper. Yet another clue speaking in favour of Tamamuro's choice of Doctor Watanabe was found when a public reading of the TN in Hamamachi ended with the result that the TN contained a number of expressions which were peculiar to that region. And was not the setting of the TN "a mountain village located in a certain district of a certain province"[20]? Sawatari near Hamamachi, a lively trade centre located on a plateau closed in on all sides by mountains, could certainly be said to match the description of the location in the TN.

In 1956, Tamamuro announced the discovery of new evidence to elucidate further the background to the TN. In the course of his research, he had found another text called Ni'ichi Banashi, which had been written in 1871, apparently as a sequel to the TN. The most interesting aspect of this discovery was for one the fact that it had been found in the possession of the Watanabe family - the descendants of Watanabe Tadasu - and for another that its preface contained a reference to the TN. Un-

fortunately, no sooner had it been found than it disappeared again. According to Tamamuro, the reference to the TN read as follows:

> "During the Kansei period, there lived among the peasants in Yamanaka village (Note: Kamimashiki-gun, Yabe-gō, Sawatari-mura, pseudonym Yamanaka-mura) a man called Nisuke. Among his close friends were Dohei, Sakusuke, and a doctor called Chihaku. He lived about 80 years ago"[21].

This new evidence prompted Tamamuro to change the latest possible date of writing from 1803 to 1789. This decision also toppled his theory of Watanabe Tadasu being the author, since the latter was born only in 1777, but Tamamuro nevertheless concluded that since the Ni'ichi Banashi had been handed down in the Watanabe family, some other member of this old family might have been the author.

Morita, in the preface to his edition of the TN, did not add to the speculation as to the origin of the TN; rather than committing himself to a definite year and author, he circumscribed the TN more cautiously as a product of the post-Hōreki reform era, when the individual reform measures had been in effect for a sufficiently long period of time to manifest results[22].

Tamamuro's findings undoubtedly appear conclusive at first sight; a man like Watanabe Tadasu could indeed have either been the author of the TN or else have served as inspiration for the figure of Doctor Chihaku. However, I believe that the relatively narrow scope of the investigation by Tamamuro, which was concerned only with establishing the authorship and the date of writing, cannot be said to exclude with any certainty other possible theories as to who the author was and when the TN was written. In order to expand the scope of investigation, I believe that we should also consider the question as to why the TN was written at all. It may well be that the answer to this question will give us valuable clues to help us in our search for a likely author. What concern motivated the author to write the TN, and for whom did he write it? These two interlocking

questions may be answered with certainty only on the evidence of the content of the TN. The text furthermore provides the necessary clues to ascertain the year in which it was written with fair accuracy. As to the question of authorship, we may infer from the world view and social concept, as evident in the text, on the author's social standing. Once we know this, the author's exact identity will no longer be of immediate importance, at least for arriving at an objective assessment of the information on Higo in the TN.

As to the interpretation of the content of the TN, Tamamuro departed from the assumption that someone in the village, possibly the village doctor, had made notes of conversations between himself and his friends. Tamamuro therefore interpreted the content of the TN literally, i.e. as if the events described in it had actually taken place in a real community in the mountains of Higo. This interpretation then logically led him to search for a community where these events could have taken place.

Although a literal interpretation has much to speak for it, following this line too closely harbours the danger of losing sight of some important aspects of the TN. Perhaps the most forceful argument against identifying a particular mountain community as the setting of the discussions in the TN is the fact that the main object of the discussions in the TN is to initiate changes primarily in the communities on the alluvial plain - the main centres of agricultural production - and not in the mountainous hinterland of Higo. The fact that the author decided to let peasants in some remote mountain valley speak up for their equals in the lowlands may be for the same reason which induced the author to remain anonymous, namely the fear of being exposed to retribution by local officials should the village in the text or the persons appearing in it be clearly identifiable. Limitation to one particular community, moreover, harbours the danger of a misunderstanding in that the reader may believe that conditions pilloried in the TN were peculiar to

either one community or a particular region. By presenting the difficulties of the peasantry in Higo around 1800 within the framework of a fictive location, the universal character of the criticism could be emphasized, as the reader was automatically invited to make comparisons with villages of his own knowledge. In fact, as Professor Morita pointed out to me personally, it is not even really possible to single out expressions in the _TN_ which could be identified beyond doubt as being peculiar to the Yabe region. The _TN_ is written in literary, not colloquial language of the period; dialect forms which do occur are not attributable to any one county, but are indeed quite common to all regions within the Higo domain. As to the evidence provided by the _Ni'ichi Banashi_, we might be well-advised to wait until this obscure text has been subjected to closer scrutiny before revising the latest possible date of writing of the _TN_ on the strength of its evidence alone - evidence which, as we shall see below, is in contradiction to the dating based on the content of the _TN_. Moreover, the phenomenon that the author of the _Ni'ichi Banashi_, who lived three generations after the _TN_'s author, knew more about the background of the _TN_ than did the contemporary Reishōken is a familiar one to the historian, who will be wary of allowing such claims to intrude in his research. It is probable that the author of the _Ni'ichi Banashi_, upon reading the _TN_ in the _Seiden Engi_, had indulged in speculations about the possible location of the place names mentioned in the _TN_. However, although villages with names like those used in the _TN_ may easily be found in Higo - as elsewhere in Japan for that matter - it would be futile to try to ascribe the _TN_ to any one community or region since these place names are of the most nondescript kind which, if translated literally, merely denote the geographic location of the village, as, for instance, Village-amidst-the mountains (Yamanaka-_mura_), At-the-foot-of-the-mountains (Yamashita), and Upper-mountain-village (Kamiyama-_mura_). If the _Ni'ichi Banashi_ can be accepted as source material at all for our purpose, then only to prove that _no_ member of the Watanabe family could have been the author, for what need could there

have existed under the Meiji régime to withhold the identity of the TN's author had he been a member of the Watanabe family?

4.3. The Tale of Nisuke as Political Allegory

In the following pages, I would like to set forth my own interpretation of the TN. It is based on an analysis of its content with reference to the general cultural background of Tokugawa Japan as outlined in the first chapter, as well as the particular historical circumstances of Higo around 1800, which I have outlined in the second and third chapters.

Let us begin with the literary form of the TN. I believe that it would be a mistake to assume that the discussions described in the TN took place in reality. As the ample use of allegories by the author suggests, the TN was conceived as a political parable to domonstrate general socio-economic problems facing the Higo domain at that time at village level. As a reading of the TN will confirm, this method of demonstrating the ailments of the domain in the macrocosm of village society, as it emerges from the discussions among the peasants, has resulted in a lucidity unmatched by any other way of presentation, and is especially devoid of that dryness of economic treatises which deal with the same problems on an abstract plane. Just as a remote mountain village was chosen by the author as the setting of the discussions to symbolize his aloofness and the disinterested nature of his mission, so all proper names in the TN are fictitious and bear a clearly recognizable allegorical character. So, for instance, the protagonist is named Benevolent (Nisuke), his friend is called Righteous (Gisuke), while the knowledgeable village doctor is called Wisdom (Chihaku)[a]. Then there is the priest Strayed-from-the-right-Path (Dōmei), an avaricious village headman Eager-for-Profit (Ri'uemon), an honest peasant Upright (Naosuke), and a father and his filial son, both called Virtuous (Zen'uemon and Zensuke). The choice of allegorical names for persons in the TN suggests that the

[a] These three names are all taken from the Five Confucian Virtues (ni of Nisuke being another reading of jin) (See, 266n.)

author attempted to create ideal types, with each participant in the discussions standing for a particular set of opinions current in Higo around 1800.

The author adopted the literary device of fictive discussions in order to pit controversial opinions against each other, very likely because this permitted him to guide the course of the discussions unobtrusively in such a way that his own convictions prevail in the end. Looking at the statements of each person in the TN, we can observe that they argue consistently throughout the text, acting to all intents and purposes as mouthpieces for certain sections of the population and their interests. To illustrate this point, let us look closely at each of the main characters in the TN in turn, namely at the four peasants Nisuke, Gisuke, Sakusuke, and Dohei, and at the village doctor Chihaku.

First an observation of a general nature: the group of four peasants demonstrates the basic division of the largely pre-commercial village society in late 18th century Higo between the few wealthy peasants with relatively large landholdings and the large number of "ordinary" peasants with relatively small holdings as well as poor or marginal peasants with little or no land at all[a]. The former group is represented here by Nisuke and Gisuke, the latter by Sakusuke and Dohei - a distinction which is again evident in the choice of the somehow elevate names of Benevolent and Righteous for the former and the humble names of Tiller (Sakusuke) and Soil (Dohei) for the latter.

Both Nisuke and Gisuke basically agree in their criticism of local officials, yet there are fundamental differences between them. Nisuke represents the viewpoint of officials in the top ranks of domain government - all of his arguments betray his eagerness to see justice done to domain interests. How staunchly he supports the authorities, even where he should have defended the interests of the peasants, is shown when he rebuffs the

---

[a] (See, 49-50.)

accusation that the authorities did not hand out sufficient relief rice in times of famine with the words:

> "To think frivolously of our authorities' kindness is criminal! Even in our wretched lives there is not a thing which we do not owe to the authorities. Down to the rice-bran and straw there is nothing which is essentially ours"[23].

Nisuke has a ready answer for all questions raised in the course of the discussions; as long as Doctor Chihaku is not present he is unquestionably the highest authority in the round. He conjures up the Golden Age of Katō Kiyomasa, when personal rule by the lord had united all men in the realm in an effort to carry out the huge land reclamation projects. This harmonious state of affairs, when "everyone from the common soldier to the samurai worked as hard as he could"[24] would now, too, be needed to overcome the tremendous financial problems of the domain. Although Nisuke's criticism is at times quite biting, he nevertheless remains quite factual in tone and cooly points out concrete examples of possible improvements, among which the jōmen method, advocated with great eloquence, is undoubtedly the most important. True to his name, Nisuke strictly adheres to the Confucian ideal of benevolence, according to which every member of society should receive his share depending on his calling. So, in the case of the peasantry, he is in favour of improvements in their quality of life to bring it up to a level which is consistent with the high esteem officially accorded to the peasants as nourishers of all men in Confucian philosophy. On the other hand, Nisuke advocates a curtailment in the revenue of village officials beyond what he considers a modest remuneration, since the present level of their income by far exceeded their due share. Underlying Nisuke's reform proposals, we may recognize his anxiety to keep reforms well within what the authorities could concede without incurring losses to themselves, for in his own words, "nothing could be easier than putting the onus on the authorities"[25]. Always mindful of the

interests of the authorities, he is also conciliatory in his attitude towards provincial administrators and is ready to excuse even the profit-mindedness of some among them although he believed this to be harmful to domain finances because "a district headman, too, has parents and relatives who depend on him"[26]. All this is uttered by Nisuke with an air of unassailable authority; in all discussions his arguments invariably win the day. The author has set Nisuke in relief to the lower peasants by other means as well. For example, his house is described as being fitted with _tatami_ rush matting on the floor - a luxury denied to poor and marginal peasants[27]. In the light of this evidence, the description of Nisuke as being poor and unmarried[28] can hardly be taken literally, but may be understood as an attempt by the author to underline the fact that he wanted the _TN_ to be understood as a record of the _vox populi_.

Gisuke, on the other hand, represents the viewpoint of the comparatively wealthy peasants. While agreeing with Nisuke in his criticism of corrupt village officials, his motives for doing so are entirely different. It is not primarily the interests of the domain that are on his mind, but his own losses and those of other wealthy peasants, incurred through the self-willed actions of the local government administrators. His approach to problems is hot-headed; his tendency to make rash judgements is corrected by Nisuke who calmly rebukes him for not keeping the interests of the authorities in mind. In the example of Gisuke, the author of the _TN_ may well have attempted to demonstrate the growing self-awareness of the wealthy peasants who were beginning to make claims which could not but strike a domain official as utterly arrogant. To some extent, the author appears to have been not altogether unsympathetic to the opinion expressed by the wealthy peasants. So, for instance, Nisuke only lightly reproaches Gisuke for his flippant proposal to increase government revenue substantially by levying a head tax on the quickly growing number of beggars in the realm[29]. Nisuke does not dispute the facts underlying

Gisuke's irreverent suggestion, but rather the impertinent manner in which the latter has taken up the matter. In the course of the discussions, Gisuke comes to accept Nisuke's point of view about keeping government interests in mind when tackling problems of an economic nature. In the fourth chapter, Gisuke even asks whether there was not a solution to the problem of decaying villages which did not involve a loss of revenue to the authorities, adding rather helpfully "even if it took a little longer"[30].

Despite their differences of opinion regarding the role of government officials in local administration, Gisuke and Nisuke stand united in their total rejection of the priesthood. In this question, they display the enlightening influence of Confucian education, to which these wealthy peasants had access. Both of them stand sqaurely in this world and, although still fraught with some metaphysical speculation, they have broken away from the absolute fatalism of Buddhism and are now trying to improve the lot of peasants. Their mocking attitude towards the priesthood, however, does not only meet with disagreement on part of the ordinary peasants, but indeed gives rise to concrete fears of retribution by the gods. Tension resulting from this disagreement increases throughout the last chapters, until ill-feelings are ultimately vented against Doctor Chihaku, who is most forthright in his criticism of the priesthood. Their attitudes towards the priesthood and religion, each again for different motives, set Nisuke and Gisuke most pronouncedly in relief against the other peasants who believe that they could not live without their priest, Dōmei, and are loath to part with their superstitions. Gisuke, in particular, displays a remarkable lack of empathy when, in the presence of the religious peasants, he proposes in a jocular vein that if it was true that the construction of tide barriers aroused the anger of the rain god, it would be better to construct dams in times of drought than having costly rain prayers recited by the priests[31].

Sakusuke and Dohei stand for the majority of villagers, namely the ordinary small peasants. Their main function in the tale is to ask questions which are then answered either by Nisuke or Doctor Chihaku. These questions are mostly rhetorical, such as when they ask why there should be such a shortage of crops to pay the annual tax - a question which those who had been living and working in the village for all their lives, could surely have answered just as well themselves. Their characters do not emerge clearly from the text, and so they remain rather colourless figures until the end of the tale. General traits attributed to the ordinary peasant by the author are nevertheless hinted at. For example, they are generally described as destitute beings, who, being dependent on the mercy of the authorities, cannot scrape a living unless they bow to the stronger. They are described as good-natured and willing to contribute their share in society on principle; if some among them had resorted to evil tricks to evade tax, it was only because officials had taught them by their example. Whereas their obedient character is considered a virtue in the relationship between authorities and the peasants, the same trait is branded derisively as gullibility in the relationship between the priesthood and the peasants. With peasants being so deeply steeped in religious ideas, the process of education and enlightenment of the peasantry is described as extremely arduous and even perilous for those who undertake to do this. Peasants believe staunchly that gods are responsible for the growth of the cereals as well as for the natural calamities; in consequence, they refuse to dispense with the priests' services of reciting prayers, however much this may deduct from their badly needed rice provisions. Where economic necessity forces the peasants to curtail expenses for religious ceremonies, the priesthood is shown to step in quickly to enforce compliance with the demands of religious propriety. The author demonstrates thereby the strength of the ties between the peasants and the priesthood. A solution to this problem is not openly forwarded

by the author; both Nisuke and Gisuke, however, caution Doctor Chihaku against making any statements concerning the priesthood which are likely to injure the religious feelings of the peasants.

Standing outside the village social structure, yet deeply implicated in political questions by a strong sense of social commitment, there is the village physician, Doctor Chihaku. Having come from another village, he has only been living in the mountain community for a few years. He thus knows enough about local conditions to have formed an opinion of his own, while his profession guarantees him a certain independence of mind, permitting him to study social problems unencumbered by moral obligations to some benefactor. His role in the TN is to represent the viewpoint of the domain school; except for a short passage in which he explains the origins of disease, Chihaku is concerned with political problems rather than with medicine, revealing deeper-lying connections to the peasants who, in Nisuke's words, "cannot tell causes from results"[32]. The symbolical character of having a doctor expound the fundamental difficulties of the domain is self-evident; as in the case of the 11th century Chinese historian, statesman, and essayist Ou Yang-Hsiu - his writings were to exert a great influence on the subsequent development of Neo-Confucianism - who wrote that China is to be doctored as a doctor treats his patient by nourishing its vital force (ki, chin. ch'i)[33], the author of the TN shows Higo as a patient whose disease is diagnosed by Doctor Chihaku. Medical explanations in the TN must therefore be understood as an extension of the political argument on another plane to elucidate the author's point of view.

That this is so may be established with fair certainty by looking at Doctor Chihaku's position in the history of Japanese medicine, which suggests that the author of the TN possessed little, if any, medical knowledge at all. Only scant reference is made to medicine as such; considered in conjunction with Chihaku's cosmological explanations, however, they clearly indicate to which school he belonged.

A brief survey of the development of medical science in Japan in the 17th and 18th centuries will answer this question conclusively. The history of medicine in the Tokugawa period is marked by the existence of two schools with radically different approaches to the problem of disease. The traditional school, the kosei faction, accepted the authority of the Neo-Confucian medical literature. Their medical theories were moulded by Chu Hsi's dualism, with its metaphysical principle determining the physical world[a]. Accordingly, this school diagnosed illness in man as being due to exogenous factors, which meant that the physician, rather than devoting himself to clinical studies, had to divine the significance of a particular disease in the cosmic design with the help of philosophical treatises. Such cosmological interpretations of disease were made in terms of the male and female principles of yin and yang and the Five Elements.

Although this school severely impeded the growth of a scientific spirit by restricting literate men to mere theorizing, a new school of medicine, later known as the ko'i faction, was able to develop during the 18th century, in opposition to the orthodox kosei school. A forerunner of this new, empirically orientated school was Nagoya Gen'i (1628-96), who, inspired by Ming period (1368-1662) medical literature, was the first scientist in Japan to trust his senses and allow the experiment to stand on a par with book learning, thus laying the foundation of modern empirical science in Japan. Rather than devoting himself to cosmological inquiries to find answers to medical problems, Nagoya turned to his patients to learn from clinical experience. Diseases were no longer considered a punishment sent by Heaven nor were they inborn, but were regarded as the result of certain processes of life, which meant that once they were understood they could be healed. The founder of the ko'i school

[a] (See, 32.)

was Gotō Konzan (1659-1733), whose dissections of otters disproved traditional Chinese concepts of anatomy. Almost simultaneously with Itō Jinsai's refutation of the orthodox dualism[a], Gotō called into question the traditional explanation of disease in terms of yin and yang. Instead, he postulated that the origin of all disease lay in the stagnation of the metabolism (ikki ryūtairon). Gotō's position was further elaborated by Kōgawa Shūan (1683-1755), especially with regard to his scepticism towards traditional assumptions and the emphasis on experimenting as a source of knowledge, rather than learning from books. The development of empirical medicine in Japan reached a climax in the mid-18th century, when Yamawaki Tōyō's (1705-62) dissections of human bodies with the aid of Dutch anatomy charts disclosed wide discrepancies between traditional assumptions and reality. Gotō's theories as to the origin of disease had given rise to tremendous progress in the development of effective treatments. Thus, Yoshimasu Tōdō (1702-73) evolved his homoeopathic theory (banbyō ichidoku ron) based on his extensive clinical experience. Hence, the foundation was laid for the process of assimilation of European medicine in the course of the 19th century. Certainly, empirical methods had gained a firm stand by 1800 and the positive results they produced in the healing of the sick could not be passed over in silence by any physician. On this evidence, Doctor Chihaku may be classified as belonging to the orthodox kosei school; he uses yin-yang dualist terminology not only in his explanation of natural phenomena, but also in his explanation of the origin of disease[34]. His indebtedness to traditional Chu Hsi Neo-Confucianism is furthermore made clear beyond doubt by the decisive role he assigns to metaphysical forces in man's life. I shall discuss below the consequences of this conclusion on the question of authorship.

The step from being a doctor of men to being a reformer of

---

[a] See, Spae, Itō Jinsai, 99-101.

society is not only logical, but indeed necessary if seen against the background of Confucian philosophy. For one thing, physicians were most painfully aware of disparities between theory and practice and were therefore naturally among the first to realize the futility of being preoccupied with theories without considering practical results. The human body did not allow of adjustment to preconceived notions of the medical profession in the way that society could be moulded by the world view of the samurai and the Confucian philosophers. Confronted daily with the realities of Nature when attending the sick, doctors had to accept Nature as the final judge of the accuracy of their hypotheses. Only by adjusting theory to reality with every new piece of evidence that was found could a doctor be successful in the long run. And since success in this profession was all that counted, it was easier for physicians to leave well-trodden paths of thinking than it would have been for political thinkers, to whom any attempt at adjusting political theory to reality could easily have had fatal consequences for their person. For another, the idea of one and the same principle pervading the three realms of Nature, society, and the individual, and linking them in mutual dependence, rules out categorically the possibility of any measure succeeding which does not take account of the whole. In concrete terms, this meant that giving medical aid to peasants for dropsy resulting from scanty nourishment could have no lasting effect unless accompanied by decisive government measures to mitigate the effects of bad harvests on the poor and marginal peasants.

Doctor Chihaku stands firmly on the philosophical position of orthodox Tokugawa Confucianism. With his rational explanations of natural phenomena he displays the enlightened position of 18th century philosophy without, however, completely dismissing pre-rational ideas which he draws upon to furnish explanations for phenomena which he cannot explain otherwise. Thus, he maintains that Heaven plays a determinative role in

man's life in addition to other factors like fate and destiny, which must be considered when trying to account for events which seem to be all too erratic to be ascribed to Heaven[35]. He interprets the Universe in moral terms - rain which causes the crop to rot he calls "rain of licentiousness"[36] and irregularities in the weather are interpreted as a result of disorder in society[37]. Chihaku's solutions to the domain problems are in the classical vein of Confucian reformers:

> "Generally speaking, a good harvest is produced by observing the Way of Heaven, by following the cycle of the seasons, and by making the best use of the land"[38].

His belief that man's life depends on the benevolent nurturing of Heaven is reflected in his rationalization of feudal rule when he says that man could not live if it were not for the "ruler of a realm who provides for the nourishment of the people"[39]. In order to preserve Heaven's protection, all things must retain their original form; not only do man and society therefore have well-defined limits set to their evolvement, but indeed all of Nature must be preserved the way it was intended by Heaven. Trees, for instance, can only grow well in a climate favourable to the particular species[40], from which follows that afforestation must, by definition, result in upsetting the balance of Nature. The same is true of man's interference with the natural flow of water by constructing dams and irrigation canals; however beneficial such innovations may be temporarily, it is only much later that their ill side-effects manifest themselves with a vengeance. Based on this world view, Chihaku defines the purpose of learning in accordance with the classical definition of Ogyū Sorai's Ancient School as "assiduously studying the path of righteousness as taught by the sages of ancient times"[41].

In spite of a certain tendency to assume the involvement of supernatural forces in Nature and society, we may recognize in Chihaku's firm stand against the Buddhist priesthood and popular superstition the continuation of a long Confucian

tradition of critique of religion on a rational basis[a] - a movement which had gained force in the intellectual climate of the 17th and 18th centuries when Confucianism enjoyed the backing of the political authorities. Now, as in earlier periods of Japanese history, Confucian scholars were in the forefront of men of learning who, motivated by their deep concern for society, focused their attention on social and political problems. However faltering their first steps in scientific observation of man and Nature may strike us today, impeded as they were by centuries of the domination of thought by supernaturalism, it was nevertheless Tokugawa Confucianism which laid the basis for the development of modern empirical science in Japan[b]. Even Chihaku, although not an exponent of empiricism in his day, does not follow ancient texts indiscriminately where they resort to religious ideas to explain the origin of disease. His remark that "we must not accept everything in print"[42] is ample testimony to the new spirit of 18th century philosophy. These critical faculties also left their imprint on Chihaku's attitude towards the Buddhist priesthood. His own attitude to metaphysics follows classical Confucian lines, according to which "magic was powerless in the face of virtue"[43]. Reminding the peasants to be sceptical of supernatural phenomena at all times, Chihaku says: "No prayer is as effective as showing restraint in one's behaviour and observing the rules of conduct in one's station of life"[44]. At the same time, it is quite clear that his opposition to popular religion does not spring from agnosticism. Chihaku is not against the Buddhist religion on principle, just as he speaks reverently of Shintō rituals celebrated on the orders of the authorities, and deplores the fact that festivals to worship the gods of mountains

---

[a] An early example of this is a memorial of 914 in which the distinguished Confucian scholar Miyoshi Kiyoyuki (847-918) alleged that the gradual deterioration of public finances and the decay of morality among the ruling class had been continuous since the introduction of Buddhism. See, Sansom, History of Japan, vol. 1, 147.

[b] For the development of empirical science in Tokugawa Japan, see, Maeda, "Keiken kagaku no tanjō."

and rivers are unknown in that region[45]. Behind Chihaku's arguments there lies the author's concern at the high economic cost of maintaining too large a number of priests and the fear of undue influence by priests on domain officials[a]. Chihaku expresses these feelings unequivocally by saying:

> "Anyway, it does not matter so much if you peasants indulge in such practices, but when high officials are coaxed by some mercenary monk into having these various ceremonies performed, it is a matter of grave concern"[46].

The viewpoint as regards religion expressed by Chihaku is that of the domain school. While organized religion which operated in close affiliation with the domain administration was generally not only tolerated but even actively supported, the success of the Shinshū sect in rural areas aroused the antagonism of the government. With the person of Doctor Chihaku, the author of the TN presents his case against allowing the priesthood to carry on with what he considers to be a parasitic way of life. In addition to his arguments against the Shinshū sect, the author moreover demonstrates in his last chapter the failure of the Confucian scholars to bring about a change in the peasants' attitudes towards religion in general and the priesthood in particular. Chihaku, who fails to recognize the deep attachment of the peasants to the priest Dōmei, allows himself to be carried away by his temper to make incautious remarks about the integrity of the priesthood. To some extent at least, Chihaku realizes that the authority problem imposed limits to any attempt at enlightening the peasants; so, in a talk with the villagers, Chihaku concedes that he could well understand why they should believe in the efficacy of rain prayers, "since dignified and exalted persons have made you believe this..."[47]. He fails, however, to draw the right conclusions from his knowledge and thus fatally underestimates the weight of opinion of holders of sacred offices in rural

---

[a](See, 251-2.)

society. Peasants, far from feeling relieved of obligations to their priest Dōmei as a consequence of Chihaku's revelations about the licentiousness of the priesthood, actually feel an acute sense of danger at having a heretic in their midst. Rational criticism of the priesthood is shown to result in panic among the peasants as their unconscious fears impel them to consider dispensing forthwith with the good services of the village doctor rather than with the services of their priest.

With this episode, the author has shown convincingly how strong the position of the priesthood among the ordinary peasants in Higo was and that these ties could not be easily dissolved by government interference. Unlike the case of the annual tax, where he proposes the *jōmen* method of tax assessment to improve conditions, the author does not add his own thoughts as to how the influence of the priesthood on peasants could be countered by the domain authorities. As is suggested by the forceful presentation of the difficulties arising out of attempts to break into the sphere of influence of the rural priesthood, it is highly probable that the author's main concern was to point out to the domain administration that any measure intended to curb the activities of the sects would have to be implemented with the utmost prudence so as not to instil fears in wide sections of the peasantry. By plainly demonstrating that, in view of the tremendous fears of ordinary peasants, it was simply unrealistic to demand of them to withdraw their support from the priesthood, the author may have furthermore wanted to imply that any such control measure would have to be directed openly against the religious institutions, if they were to be suceessful.

*

From this analysis of the content, there emerges a rather clear picture of the TN as regards our various questions. Here, then, are my conclusions.

As I have stated above, the content of the TN can only be understood if seen against the background of the economic difficulties of the Higo domain and the countermeasures already enforced or about to be implemented. The immediate cause for writing the TN was the widespread opposition among officials in key positions in local administration against the proposed introduction of the jōmen method of tax assessment on which the domain authorities were setting great hopes, which found its culmination in the district headmen's petition in 1803. The exceptionally bad harvest of 1802 and the bank crash in the same year had brought the weakness of domain finances into the open and had made it obvious that times called for a determined effort to increase revenue. Since radical reform proposals based on a thorough analysis of the economic difficulties were ruled out by the political dictate to uphold the *status quo*, the only course of action open to the authorities was to find temporary measures to put government finances on a sounder basis, and second to find scapegoats to take the blame for present conditions. It is fair to assume that our author, by writing the TN, had attempted to participate in this process of finding the best solutions to the most pressing problems of the domain. That he did this in the form of writing a memorial may well have been because he knew this to be the most effective way to make himself heard with those officials who decisively influenced the shaping of government policy. Although the author casts several groups of men as scapegoats to take the blame for present conditions, such as, for instance, the district headmen, village officials, money-lenders, and the priests, his writing consists of considerably more than polemics. By advocating the jōmen method of tax assessment, he endeavoured to bring the taxation policy of Higo in line with that

of the economically advanced domains. In doing so, he advocated a method of tax assessment which was to profit not only the authorities, but also the industrious peasants. That he was aware of the double effect of this method emerges from a remark in the TN where the profit motive as an incentive to increase productivity is adduced in support of the jōmen method[a]. Besides this central concern of the TN, the advocation of land reclamation is equally far-sighted. Although a rise in agricultural production could be achieved only several years after the land had been reclaimed, riparian projects were a relatively safe means of raising production in the long run. Moreover, land reclamation created new opportunities for poor and landless peasants and thus contributed considerably to relieve poverty in rural areas.

Before we go on to consider the question of authorship, let us see whether 1803 can indeed be verified as the date of writing. Here, we must consider above all the fact that the general content of the TN makes most sense if seen in the historical situation of 1802/03, especially if we think of the proposal to introduce the jōmen method and the attack on district headmen. Two further clues tend to confirm the above date. For one, the TN contains an important clue when in one passage a peasant remarks that "...there were no pine trees around here at all until about fifty years ago..."[48]. As we have seen, the first efforts at large-scale afforestation of the mountainous hinterland of Higo date back to the thirties of the 18th century; it was, however, only during the Hōreki reforms in the 1750's and 1760's that forestry became an integral part of government policy with projects large enough to be suspected of having the sort of long-range impact on the environment as alleged in the TN. This would bring the date of writing definitely to some time around 1800. A further remark in the TN allows us to pinpoint the date even more exactly, namely that "years of harvest as bad as last year's are the

[a] (See, TN: 381-2.)

exception"[49]. The diary of a village official of the Oguni district, which I have already quoted[a], suggests that the year 1802 produced an extremely poor crop, the first time since the year 1797. The 6th and 7th month of 1802 were plagued by drought, which explains the author's concern for expenses arising from rain prayers. Since the discussions in the TN are set in the first month of the year after the bad harvest, it follows that it must have been written during the first month of 1803.

Although the author's own views are expressed by Nisuke, Gisuke, and Chihaku, the protagonist is undoubtedly Nisuke, as is also suggested by the choice of the title. It is Nisuke who formulates the author's philosophy most clearly, pointing out dangerous developments, suggesting solutions, and correcting false opinions expressed by the other villagers. The fact that he can also point out a serious error of judgement to Chihaku, whom he cautions against making comments on the priesthood in the presence of ordinary peasants, establishes him in the eyes of the reader as the undisputed authority on how to convince the peasantry of the government viewpoint.

This bears the imprint of the thinking of a government official, and so we may ask ourselves whether this theory can stand closer scrutiny. As the basis of our search for the author we may rightly accept Reishōken's assumption that we must look among scholars or samurai for the author, since these are the only literate classes - with the exception of doctors - which are treated respectfully by the author. Having established 1803 as the most probable date of writing of the TN, the possibility of Reishōken himself having written the TN is precluded. We cannot altogether exclude the possibility that the author was in some way linked with the wealthy and industrious peasants who, together with the domain authorities, were bound to derive immediate profit from the reform of tax assessment advocated in the TN, although the attitudes of this segment of the peasantry

---

[a] (See, 229.)

as represented in the TN by Gisuke are strongly criticized by the author for leaving government interests unconsidered. The choice of a doctor as the author as proposed by Tamamuro makes sense only within his interpretation of the TN as a record of actual events in a real community somewhere in Higo. In my interpretation of the TN as an allegory, however, the person of Doctor Chihaku can be explained as fulfilling an allegorical function - an interpretation which is supported by the fact that none of the passages in the TN betray medical knowledge beyond what would popularly be known about the origin of disease. Furthermore, Doctor Chihaku's explanation of disease in no way represents the latest standard of medical knowledge at the turn of the 19th century; indeed, if his arguments exceed the level of general knowledge at all, they are, if anything, in the vein of the orthodox kosei school and not in the vein of the ko'i school of medicine as would be the case with a physician educated at the Saishunkan medical school with its heavy leanings towards the Ancient School of Confucian philosophy[a]. This would tend to support my interpretation of the passages on medicine in the TN as belonging to the numerous allegories employed by the author to lend force to his general argument.

Our hypothesis that the TN was written by an official is further supported by the fact that the keynote sounded throughout the text is primarily the welfare of the domain. It is within these boundaries that the author wants to see justice done to the peasants. The annual tax is termed "all-important," while local taxes like the "first ears of rice" are criticized as the domain authorities do not derive immediate profit from them[50]. When the discussion turns to the peasants having to pay interest to money-lenders, the author's greatest concern is that peasants are forced to toil day and night for years "not even in the service of the authorities but in that of money-lenders"[51]. Tying peasants to the pillory in front of the

---

[a] (See, 111.)

district headmen's offices in order to make them pay their annual tax is condemned by the author not solely because he is moved by human suffering, but because peasants who, in their misery, commit suicide are endangering the relationship between the peasantry and the domain authorities as "feelings of hatred follow in the wake of their deaths"[52].

The TN as a political essay appears to have been aimed at a restricted circle of educated men who, if not well-versed in the technical aspects of local administration, at least had to be sufficiently motivated to learn about conditions outside the castle town to engross themselves in a reading of this kind. Indicative of the readership aimed at are also the few allusions to Chinese literature and Confucian philosophy, which make fair demands on the literacy and general knowledge of the reader. The line of argument, kept veiled in the form of allegories, could only be grasped by those who were familiar with literate modes of expression, especially with Classical Chinese literature where allegories are regularly used to emphasize the point of a story.

On the basis of the evidence outlined above, I assume that the TN was written by some lower-ranking official who had had the opportunity to acquaint himself in detail with the workings of local administration, and who, at this time of crises, felt impelled to bring to the knowledge of the decision-making echelons of the domain administration certain abuses in local administration which, in his mind, significantly contributed to the economic difficulties encountered by the domain authorities and to propose concrete points of reform to improve the financial situation of the domain. The motive for writing the TN is clearly expressed in the phrase "...I am saying all this because wicked men who plot the ruin of the people are thriving"[53], while its function to prod the government into amending its policies finds its expression in the allegory of horse drivers who, incited by money presents offered by their master, exert their horses to the point of collapse and thus lose their livelihood[a] - an unmistakable hint at the inevitable consequences

[a] (See, TN: 372-3.)

of the government policy to urge local officials to speed up their tax collection without much regard for the problems of the peasants.

When assessing the value of the TN as historical source material, we must take into account that the objectivity of its description of peasant distress is limited by the fact that it was conceived as a memorial to the domain authorities. Memorials and works meant to spur reform certainly have a very long tradition in China and Japan of resorting to extravagant over-statement to make their points - a qualifying remark which should firmly be borne in mind when reading the TN. Rhetorical exaggerations to impress the authorities with the need for reform may have coloured the descriptions of the behaviour of local officials towards the peasants. While allegations in the TN of arbitrary handling of the tax assessment procedure may well have been inspired by events observed by the author himself, they imply in the context of the whole tale that such practices were rather more frequent than critical scholarship might be able to confirm. Moreover, the harshness of tax payment under the old kemi method was probably overemphasized in order to underline the advantages of the new jōmen method of tax assessment. Nevertheless, as the inclusion of the TN in a government collection of works relating to the Higo domain suggests, the content of the TN cannot have been regarded as altogether slanderous by contemporary government officials, although this again may have had to do with the fact that their literary training put them in a position to distinguish rhetorical flourish from historical fact.

As to the description of the living conditions of the peasantry in Higo, we must not forget that the TN was written in a year following an exceptionally bad harvest - a time when rather more peasants were suffering from the scarcity of food than in normal years. Nevertheless, we have seen that in Higo around 1800 the number of those peasants who had been able to

profit substantially from agriculture was comparatively lower than in the economically advanced areas, above all in the Kantō and Kansai regions, and that wealth was in consequence relatively little widespread among the peasantry of Higo. For this reason, the picture of peasant life in Higo around 1800 as it emerges from the TN and other sources may be said to represent peasant life on a stage of economic development which a large majority of peasants in the central areas had already outgrown. Generally speaking, we can say that, as far as the quality of living of the peasantry is concerned, peasant life in Higo around 1800 cannot be regarded as representative of peasant life in all of late 18th century Japan.

Neither can descriptions of living conditions of the peasantry in the TN be accepted as applying to all of the Higo peasantry. Just as there were differences in the quality of living between the wealthy and the poor or marginal peasants, there were bound to be differences between life in the productive counties on the fertile littoral, where a certain degree of commercialization owing to the proximity of the castle town had enabled peasants to realize some increase in productivity and to accumulate modest wealth in a number of cases, and the mountainous regions of Higo, including the river valleys, where the low degree of commercialization was limiting the spread of modern fertilizing techniques and was thus imposing a check on the possible productivity increase.

In the light of this evidence, the validity of Reishōken's motive to copy the TN - to soften his son's heart to the fate of the peasants - is only acceptable provided his statement is limited to the poor or marginal peasants in the most productive regions of Higo, admitting that at least in the less prosperous regions, this will have applied to a relatively wide section of the peasantry. Although the likelihood of distortions intruding into a work of this kind is not to be underestimated, the fact that Reishōken, who was writing less than a decade after the event accepted the emotional appeal contained in the TN without adding any qualifying remark, suggests that phenomena of peasant

life taken up in the TN were common enough in at least some regions of Higo. As to inter-regional comparison of peasant life during the late Tokugawa period, further research might well show similarities in the experience of everyday life of the peasantry in Higo and in other relatively little developed domains at that time. However, to verify the validity of such comparisons as we have tentatively made in the third chapter on the basis of Western and Japanese eye-witness accounts, further research would be required. At this stage, however, we must beware of extrapolating unduly from conditions in Higo to conditions in other domains, except perhaps within the rough framework which I have used in this thesis of distinguishing between economically advanced and backward areas.

Summing up the value of the TN to the modern student of the Tokugawa period, we might say that, provided we do not lose sight of the limitations imposed on its objectivity, the TN may be appreciated as a readable literary document bearing testimony to economic, social, and administrative problems of the relatively backward Higo domain around 1800 in their repercussion on a relatively wide section of the peasantry.

Notes to Chapter 4.

1. Sugiura, Bungaku, 169.
2. Hall, Tanuma, 59.
3. (Preface to TN: 337.)
4. Morita, "Hosokawa Shigekata," 118.
5. Sansom, History of Japan, vol. 1, 148.
6. Sugiura, Bungaku, 4.
7. Ofuji, Shizen shineidō, 569.
8. Sheldon, Merchant Class, 143.
9. Katō, Tominaga, 3.
10. Norman, "Andō Shōeki," 319.
11. de Bary, Sources, vol. 1, 481.
12. Matsumoto, Motoori Norinaga, 137.
13. ibid., 136.
14. ibid., 142.
15. ibid., 143.
16. Katō, Okina no fumi, 23.
17. (Preface to TN: 336.)
18. (ibid., 336-7.)
19. (ibid., 336.)
20. (TN: 338.)
21. quoted in, Morita, Nisuke Banashi, 82.
22. ibid.
23. (TN: 368-9.)
24. (TN: 385.)
25. (TN: 376.)
26. (TN: 348.)
27. (TN: 354.)
28. (TN: 338.)
29. (TN: 374.)
30. (TN: 388.)
31. (TN: 391.)
32. (TN: 410-11.)
33. Nivison, Confucianism, 57.

34. (TN: 398-9.)
35. (TN: 357.)
36. (TN: 391.)
37. (TN: 395.)
38. (TN: 432.)
39. (TN: 411.)
40. (TN: 411-2.)
41. (TN: 404.)
42. (TN: 399-400.)
43. Weber, Religion, 155.
44. (TN: 402.)
45. (TN: 406.)
46. (TN: 393.)
47. (TN: 398.)
48. (TN: 409.)
49. (TN: 380.)
50. (TN: 368.)
51. (TN: 364.)
52. (TN: 340.)
53. (TN: 429.)

PART TWO

The Tale of Nisuke,

An Account of the Distress Suffered by the Peasants

BIBL.
LONDIN.
UNIV

Preface

"To be well-informed of conditions below is of the utmost importance in benevolent rule"[a].

People of old said that among the tales circulating in the streets there are always some worth preserving; here is one called "The Tale of Nisuke", which tells us about the condition of the peasants by piecing together conversations among grass and woodcutters. This text was hidden in a basket at the home of a certain person who did not allow it to be taken away, but recently I received permission to borrow it for closer scrutiny. I suspect that hiding behind the unrefined literary style there is either a scholar or a warrior who is well-acquainted with the sweet and bitter in the life of the common people. It is already difficult enough for someone in local government to know about the afflictions of the people and the drudgery of agriculture in such minute detail; how much more difficult would it be for someone like my own son or those of my friends who were born in a town and brought up with sufficient food and warm clothes! As I was reading this unofficial history with its descriptions of the condition of the people, the drudgery of their work, exacerbated by the cruelty of the petty officials and the village headmen's wavering between right and wrong, it was as clear as day to me that I would have to hand this tale on to my unworthy son, so that, if he were appointed to a government post after his years of service are over, he could get an idea of the common people's condition by perusing it and comparing it with his own observations. Hoping that this tale would be of benefit to

[a] This epithet in classical Chinese is an allusion to a passage in the Kuan Tzu, a Chinese eclectic philosophical text written around 300 B.C. The chapter "On clarifying the laws" (Ming fa, XV, 46.) lists four causes for the ruin of a state, among them "if information regarding conditions below is sought by the ruler yet does not reach him," and "if information regarding conditions below is sought by the ruler but is not forwarded to him by his ministers"[1]. The author of the preface probably paraphrased the conclusion he drew from this passage.

him by helping him to avoid extremes and thereby ensure a peaceful life for the people, I copied it in what little spare time my pressing duties left me, and added the sub-heading "An Account of the Distress Suffered by the Peasants". It is my wish that after a day's work of teaching martial skills, their remaining strength be spent on reading this text in the evening, and that it be not dismissed on account of its humble subject matter, but be kept as a secret in the book basket.

Bunka 9[a], 10th month, 18th day.

Master Reishōken

(Seal)

---

[a] 1812.

1.

In a mountain village located in a certain district of a certain province there lived a peasant called Nisuke. He was poor and unmarried and barely managed to eke out a living day by day. Among the many villagers he was friendly with, there were a few with whom he was on especially close terms and with whom he used to discuss things frankly. One day, it was at the beginning of the first month when the severe cold of winter was still lingering on, they came to visit him. Each one of them wore only a thin garment, and so they kept putting brushwood into the fire-place to keep warm. They talked about how forlorn they felt at having neither rice-cakes nor _sake_ this New Year. Dohei and Sakusuke sighed: "This is indeed not at all like passing into the new year!" Gisuke said: "We are not worried about having neither cakes nor _sake_, but we are in trouble because we have no provisions left at all. I wonder what we shall eat until the barley[a] is ripe." Nisuke said: "Yes, neither I nor anyone else for that matter has any food left, so even if I tried to borrow some, nobody would be in a position to spare any. How sad this all is! I suppose that after the Ground Breaking Festival on the 11th day of this month people in this region will be able to sustain their livelihood somehow by eating arrowroot as well as by cutting firewood and selling it. Judging from all the rumours I have heard, it seems that the peasants in the villages down in the plain met with a cruel fate when they could not pay their annual tax last month."

Gisuke said: "That is true. At the beginning of the 12th month I went down to the plain on some business together with some other peasants, and there I witnessed a scene which one

[a] _Mugi_, a type of barley known as naked barley (_hadakamugi_). Wheat (_komugi_) was cultivated on a large scale only after the Meiji Restoration.

could hardly bear to see. None of the small peasants[a] had enough to pay the annual tax. To make up the balance they had sold their oxen and horses, their family possessions and, needless to say, all of their provisions down to the last grain as well. But even then they had not enough to pay the tax. When they tried to have the payment of the tax deferred in some way or other, they were summoned to the district office one by one where they were tied up and tortured. But there was nothing they could do about it; what was expected of them was totally impossible to fulfil. Being thus tied up, they became unconscious in their agony. As the days gradually wore on, the ropes around their arms caused them more and more pain. When they had reached the point where they were unable to bear the torture any longer, they lied and said that they would pay up without fail within a couple of days. Upon this promise they were set free. Some of them died on their way home by flinging themselves into a deep part of the river, some hanged themselves, others again returned to their homes only to die there by slashing their bellies; indeed, it was a scene which defies description. But even for those who stayed alive it was a gruelling experience. I hear that the turmoil had not calmed down even by the evening of the 29th day. I wonder what went on later?" Sakusuke and Dohei exclaimed: "How heartless of them! It must have been dreadful, for in this day and age when even eighty and ninety year old people cling to life so fervently that they take medicine or apply moxa whenever they fell a little indisposed, it takes a lot for a hale and hearty peasant to forget his family ties and die by his own hand." Gisuke said: "Exactly. On the whole, enduring the intolerable without giving so much as a thought to justice or humiliation lies in the peasant's nature. They must have had a most bitter experience that they hid themselves away to die a lonely death." Dohei asked: "What is done about the tax de-

[a] Small peasants (kobyakushō), or "petty farmers", ranked at the bottom of the landowning peasants, tilling at the most between two to four tan.

ficiency of the peasants who died like that?" Gisuke answered: "All their possessions down to the last item are sold; their draught animals, their household goods, their houses, their rice fields and dry fields. The remaining debt is then equally divided among the members of the five-family group and the villagers. Since this is a matter which is in the end settled somehow or other, it is cruel that people should die because of it. The fact that they throw away their lives, although not a single gō of rice comes of it, deserves our attention, because once the incident is over, it is not even mentioned anymore. In this merciful day and age, when the authorities even spare the lives of criminals guilty of lesser offences, how sorry one feels for those peasants who are still tied up by order of the district headman when they cannot pay their tax and then die at their own hand as they are unable to endure the pain." Nisuke agreed with him: "How right you are! The peasants who died in this way would still be alive had they not been painfully aware that their personal misfortunes affected their families as well. It is natural for feelings of hatred to follow in the wake of their deaths. The peasant who has killed himself may have solved the problem as far as he is concerned, but for his old mother, his wife, and his little children, the problems are just beginning. When the head of the family dies there are no more provisions from the next day onwards and they can no longer be proud of their own house and of their fields. Thus, it is natural that they should bear a grudge. This is one of the things which someone about to hang himself does not consider."

Thereupon, Dohei and Gisuke asked: "Nisuke, why is it that there is such a shortage of crops to pay the annual tax? It is true that last year the crop in the fields did not ripen properly, but if the annual tax means having to pay a due percentage of the crop yield of all the cultivated fields, then it would seem to us that we should generally be able to pay the tax." Nisuke answered: "Anyone would think so after having given the matter passing consideration. First of all, how is the percentage

arrived at? An estimate is made of the expected yield of all the rice fields in each village. This estimate is then invariably split into three parts, two of which constitute the annual tax and one the peasant's share. This is what is known as "giving fifty percent to the peasant"[a]. Dohei and Sakusuke asked: "With this method of tax assessment we just cannot understand why, as you said, there should not be enough to pay the tax." "If this method were followed," Nisuke retorted, "there would be enough to pay the tax, but I do not think that things are done this way." Dohei and Sakusuke asked: "What do you mean by that?"

Nisuke said: "Well, with the assessment of the percentage being as important as it is, the village headman, the village officials, and the scribe assemble for the valuation of each plot of rice land in every village. They put up a notice on each piece of land which states its size in tan and se as well as its assessed crop yield in koku and to per tan. The results are entered into the register and presented to the tax inspector. This is done in every village and after they have submitted the registers to the authorities, the county official, the examiner, and, needless to say, the tax inspector himself set off, guided by the district headman, to assess the tax. In every village there is an extraordinary hustle and bustle. When the time has come, the village headman and the village officials wait on the outskirts of the village to greet the officials and act as their guides. When they arrive, they inspect the village lands closely. They carefully compare the actual yield of every rice field with the amount given on the notices put up by the village headman and the village officials[b]. Then, they tell the village headman and his officials that this year each field would yield between five to as much as nine tenths more than its official assessed yield and order them to pay tax accordingly. Whereupon the village headman and his officials deliberate together and, as it would be impossible

---

[a] gowari no sakutoku, the procedure followed in years of harvest failure. (See, 157.)

[b] They do this by examining the rice ears for the size of their grains, from which they can deduce the total yield of the forthcoming harvest.

to grow that much rice in any case, they beg for a reduction, pleading that great hardship would be caused among all peasants. The district headman hands this request on to the tax officials, only to be told that of the fifty percent previously decided upon by the tax inspector not a grain could possibly be remitted. 'Just do as you are told!,' is their answer. If the peasants will, at long last, not give assurances, the officials say that one field should be harvested, the rice threshed and the yield determined. In order to do this they set out to investigate the fields of that village. They pick out a senobi field of which no more than one or two can be found among a hundred fields and say that they must measure the yield of that field. When this happens, the village officials turn again to the district headman asking him to tell the officials that the field they had picked was a senobi field and to beg them to sample another field. The tax inspector turns a deaf ear to their request, and when they are just about to start measuring this very field in spite of the villagers' protest, the district headman finally intervenes. Upon this, the tax officials continue their round through the village fields and when they spot another senobi field, they say that this one would have to be harvested. To this the village officials object again in the same way as before. The tax inspector then says that wherever they went objections were raised on the ground that the field was a senobi field. 'Are all the fields in this village senobi fields?,' he asks and goes on to say that they would certainly take a sample of that field. He has it harvested and the rice plants threshed to determine its yield of unhulled rice per tan. The resulting amount is used as base for calculating the total crop yield of all fields in the village. When I say senobi field, I mean a field which has, for example, a registered area of 1 tan, whereas it is in reality as much as 1 tan 2 se. As I said before, there are not many of these in any given village. Among the other fields of 1 tan there are those which just fit the description entered in the register, those which are a little larger than 1 tan, and others which measure a little

less than 1 tan. When they harvest one of the senobi fields and then proceed to assess the total crop yield of all village fields based on this one sample, claiming that its yield was that of 1 tan, it is natural that all those who do not till senobi fields should be short of rice corresponding to the yield of 2 se of land. Furthermore, the tax inspector's calculations are based on the assumption that one can produce 3 to 5 shō[a] of hulled rice out of 7 to of unhulled rice. However, it is impossible to hull rice as long as it is not dry, and by the time one has finished drying it so that it no longer resists attempts at hulling it, 1 shō has been reduced to 8 gō. If the grain has ripened extremely well, or when there has been a long spell of fine weather and conditions are very good, 1 shō may yield as much as 9 gō. This differs widely depending on the location. Loss in weight due to drying is considerable with rice grown on irrigated fields situated along a mountainside[b]; the villages in the plain are a case in point. Well, if we accept that on the average 1 gō 5 shaku are lost owing to drying in every shō of unhulled rice, then there will be a loss of 1 to 5 gō in 7 to of unhulled rice. In that case, the initial 7 to of unhulled rice have been reduced to 5 to 9 shō 5 gō after drying. If we further accept that 1 shō of dried, unhulled rice can be turned into 5 gō 5 shaku of superior quality rice, then the above amount of 5 to 9 shō will yield 3 to 2 shō 7 gō 2 shaku 5 sai of superior quality rice. There-

[a] The dry measure units to, shō, gō, shaku, and sai are decimal fractions of 1 koku. Therefore, the figure of 3 to 2 shō 7 gō 2 shaku 5 sai may also be written 0. 32725 koku (See also, Appendix II for list of Japanese measures.)

[b] Owing to the relatively low temperature of spring water, rice fields along a mountainside yield as much as 20% less crop than other fields of the same size. According to peasants in the Yabe district, this holds true even today with modern agricultural technology, but, so they say, the small-grained rice grown on such cold water fields is very tasty. Today, disputes between agricultural co-operative unions and electrical companies frequently occur as the peasants put the blame for diminished harvest yields on the low temperature of water from reservoirs which is used for irrigation after generating electricity[2].

fore, if the peasant does not make up the amount of 2 shō 2 gō 7 shaku, the required amount of 3 to 5 shō will never be arrived at. Furthermore, when the tax rice is brought to the official storehouse and is weighed there, it is accorded the lowest possible weight. Declared to weigh less than 3 to 5 shō, the rice is then poured into a straw bag which can hold 3 to 7 shō. Therefore, before the bag is handed over to the tax officials, the peasant has to supplement another 2 shō; the official receipt he is given upon this confirms, however, the payment of 3 to 5 shō only. Together with the previous supplement for weight lost during drying, a total of 4 shō 2 gō 7 shaku 5 sai for each 3 to 5 shō have to be paid by the peasant in addition to the tax rice, otherwise the tax payment cannot be settled. Further, the total of the many expenses for having the exactions on a lean field reduced is very high, although officially is is supposed to be negligible. Besides these exactions which have to be paid with rice there are the salaries of the district headman and his officials in the district office as well as the salaries for the village headman, the village scribe, the headman's messenger and other village officials which have to be paid together with the annual tax. Since these salaries are included in the receipt obtained on payment of the tax rice at the official storehouse, the officials do not find it too difficult to pay their own tax as they can simply add together the receipts for their salaries and their various other takings. On the other hand, a deficit in the peasant's tax payment is all too obvious and is soon found out. All in all, when the time has come to pay the tax, the village officials pay it by the various devices I have mentioned, while at the same time they incessantly press the peasants to pay their taxes. It is really the small peasants who are to be pitied."

Dohei and Sakusuke clapped their hands in approval and exclaimed that with things being as they were it was inevitable that the peasants did not have enough to pay their annual tax:

"We were wondering why the peasants, who are supposed to receive half of a year's crop, are in distress because they do not have enough to fulfil their obligations even after they have paid all of their share as tax. We thought that this was strange, but hearing your story has helped us understand a little of what the problem is. Throughout the year, peasants are on their feet from early morning before the birds are singing until evening when the stars are shining, toiling beyond all reason in spite of the heat or cold. Yet, when winter comes they have to borrow to pay their taxes and are tortured; indeed, they are spoken of like criminals! How could there be anyone as wretched as a small peasant?" Gisuke said: "The headmen of the various districts bow to the methods of the tax inspectors which we have just heard about; on every plot of rice land they allow the tax rate imposed by the officials without raising the least objection. This is indeed undignified. When the peasants of a district are in distress for being unable to pay all of their annual tax, their district headman does not help them in the slightest." Dohei and Sakusuke sighed: "If only the village headman and the village officials tried harder at the time of the tax assessment to persuade the tax inspector to impose a realistic tax rate!"

Gisuke said: "No, no, how could the village headman and the village officials possibly say anything at all? When the tax inspectors and the examiners say something unreasonable and give them a scolding, they run around trembling and uttering nothing but 'yes, yes', ready to consent to anything." Nisuke added: "Among the village headmen and village officials, there have never been many who are able to discriminate between right and wrong." Gisuke agreed: "It is just as you say! It seems that there are many who can neither write nor do sums and who must therefore be deaf to all persuasion. You would be wrong, however, in assuming that they were careless in all things. I think they are quite clever when it comes to making a profit for themselves. They think of the great loss they would suffer

if dismissed from office, and since they are aware that as long as they do their duty they will receive both their salary and their various takings, regardless of whether the village tax was lowered or not, they agree to everything."

Nisuke said: "Quite. However, since there is nothing the village headman or the village officials can do about this, I think that the district headman should concern himself more with this matter." Gisuke agreed: "This is so. It is the district headman's duty to exercise fairness and see to it that the tax rates are imposed realistically. When the tax inspector, for example, picks a senobi field[a] and says that he will test its crop yield, he should intervene and beg him to test a rice field of average size. Conversely, he might ask him to have just 1 tan of a senobi field harvested. Again, he could propose to have the whole of the selected field harvested including the excessive se and impose an appropriate tax rate on it, and take the yield of 1 tan only as basis for computing the tax to be levied on the other rice land in the village. This is the district headman's duty. If, after the request based on a thorough investigation of the reasons has been made, the tax inspector does not comply and proceeds to have that field harvested in the face of opposition, the district headman should leave it at that and should approach government officials to raise this point with them. We peasants cannot accomplish anything if we go away muttering to ourselves that this was unreasonable and that reasonable; the district headman should plead for reason on our behalf and settle things realistically."

Dohei and Sakusuke said they did not know when the number of se per field had been fixed, but it appeared to them that if the size of all the fields had been fixed in the same way, then it would not matter which field was chosen for the purpose of tax assessment. They added: "Nowadays, there are few senobi fields left; after all, they only cause trouble." Nisuke said: "There is a reason for that, too. According to what old people

[a] (See, 342.)

say it appears that, at least as far as this village is concerned, the fields were almost identical in size when they were measured in bygone days. Since then, the peasants have gradually stepped up their efforts, widening their fields by filling up ditches along the ridges between them, levelling mounds and incorporating them into their rice fields. Fields thus became senobi fields, I am told. Today, fields measure 300 bu to 1 tan. It is said that many years ago, just when Lord Sassa[a], or so I think his name was, had arrived in this realm, there was some place where bamboo measuring rods were used in a land survey. At that time, so the legend goes, a man called Ikoma something had to hold the rod. In that survey there were 360 bu to 1 tan. Nowadays, this is still known as the 'Ikoma measuring rod'. According to the legend, these 60 bu were given to the peasants to grow on it the necessary amount of rice for such purposes as supplementing their tax as well as for paying all the expenses in silver which arose in the course of a year. This, however, is a thing of the past. As this took place in another realm, there is hardly anyone who knows about it in detail." Gisuke said: "We should not waste our time talking about something which happened such a long time ago and which is absolutely useless to people like us. The question is how the present-day method of tax assessment could be made fair". Nisuke replied: "We think that it would be fair if a field of average size were used for assessing the tax. We would like to have it done this way: If a field is harvested which was assumed to be of average size and then turns out to measure, say, as much as 1 tan 2 se in area although it is registered as measuring 1 tan, then its yield including that of the excess 2 se should be taken as the yield of 1 tan and taxed accordingly. For assessing the tax rate on all other fields, however, the

[a] Sassa Narimasa (?-1588) was installed as governor of Higo in 1587, shortly after Toyotomi Hideyoshi's Kyūshū campaign. A land survey which he ordered to be carried out in contravention of Hideyoshi's directives triggered off a revolt of the rich landed families. Upon this, he was recalled from his post and forced to commit suicide.

yield of a field of 1 tan should be taken as basis. Alternatively, we could settle the matter in an approximate way. In the case of the same field with 2 se in excess, we could add 1 se to the yield used as basis for assessing the tax, adding the other one to the taxable yield of all the other fields. This seems feasible enough." Gisuke said: "Supposing we did it that way, would that not mean that the tax for fields without excess se would be increased by the respective amount for 1 se?" Nisuke answered: "That, too, can be corrected. I think that there would be no objections if a field expected to yield around 3 koku per tan were valued at 3 koku 3 to and taxed accordingly. On the whole, if the district headman took heart and spoke up, presenting our demands more vigorously, this problem could be solved to our satisfaction." Gisuke said: "Surely, among the district headmen there must be some who are able to tell right from wrong. Why is it that they seem to do nothing spontaneously? They are always intent on carrying out their duties so as not to imperil their official position and just to go on enjoying their good life. They are mean-spirited ! No matter how one presents one's requests, one makes little headway; if this goes against their principles they should lay down their official position!" Nisuke said: "No, no, how could they possibly do that?" Gisuke retorted: "Why not?" Nisuke answered: "Because a district headman, too, has parents and relatives who depend on him."

"I agree with you on that point," said Gisuke, "but if he had any consideration for his parents he would surely have to try even harder to improve conditions for the peasants. If he is aware of what is just but does not speak up for it then he lacks courage. If he is in office without knowing what is right, and is not determined to speak up for justice he is a mere flatterer." Nisuke agreed: "It is just as you say. The various incidents which occurred in the district because everything is falling into disorder as well as the decaying of villages are the greatest disgrace for the district headman. This is because he has no consideration for the duties of his office

and never shows any interest in his district. the authorities have to meet the expenses for our lord's regular journeys to Edo and back and for official functions and duties of office while in his Edo residence[a]. In addition, they have to pay large amounts of stipends to the lord himself, his retainers, and his servants, from the samurai down to the lowest official. If, therefore, the annual tax were to decrease they would be unable to fulfil their obligations. Thus, the district headman should bear in mind the fairness of the Golden Mean and see to it that the peasants, who are wholeheartedly devoted to the authorities, are not left behind in great hardship." Gisuke exclaimed: "Exactly! The district headman should above all travel around the villages in his district whenever he can spare time during spring and summer to judge the sowing of seeds and the weeding of rice fields. He should encourage those who are behind with their work and praise those who have made great efforts. Again, in autumn, before the tax is assessed, a superintendent should tour the villages to consult with the village headmen and village officials and, among other things, discuss exhaustively with them what tax rate would enable the peasants to pay their annual tax without incurring hardship. If, on top of this, he were also to measure here and there a plot of village land and make a note of it in his mind and then use his knowledge at the time of the tax assessment, nothing unfair could happen." Dohei and Sakusuke said: "We hear that in the villages where the fields are to be re-assessed owing to a bad crop the district headman comes along before the official tax rate is imposed for an unofficial tax assessment." Gisuke said: "That is correct. The district headman or else a deputy chosen from his lesser officials turns up each year for an unofficial tax assessment, but, for some reason or other, this does not seem to influence the way in which the tax is assessed." Nisuke said: "This must be because they are aware of the penalty in advance. Generally speaking, the district headman ought to love his peasants as he would his own

---

[a] (For sankin kōtai, see, 17.)

children, and the peasants should look upon him as their father. That the peasants refer to their district headman as 'father' even in his absence is because they think of him as their parent. It must have been painful for the district headman to see his 'sons' being tied up and tortured down in the plain last month when they requested a respite and had to sell their family belongings, their house and cattle, not to mention those who were driven into death. Indeed, if the district headman had any compassion for human beings his appetite would have been ruined at the thought that his inadvertence and his failure to take the right measures at the time of the tax assessment had caused the death of several people and the suffering of countless others. He would have found it impossible to sleep and would in the end have been driven into committing suicide by disembowelling himself!"

Gisuke replied: "This sounds very likely. I think, if you were to say this to the district headman in the plain, he would agree with you, but if it were true that he felt compassion for the peasants he would surely have had to think about it beforehand! Generally speaking, it appears to me that those in control over a large number of people must have great self-restraint themselves. If, for example, all the district head-men are effeminate, wear beautiful clothes, and indulge in the various entertainments, then naturally his deputy, the super-visor of public works, and the courier all become effeminate as well and take up the manners of kabuki actors. When this has happened, their manners spread among the lower officials and even the village scribes begin to look like entertainers. When things reach this pass, the expenses for various things add up to a large sum. If you are wondering how these expenses are met, let me tell you that in the final analysis they are all put on the peasant's back. Now, there are rich fools living in this world who behave irresponsibly in many ways, squandering all their rice and money, and become laughing stocks for other people when they are finally ruined. One must not talk in the

same breath about these rich men and the officials, however. The former, spending their own money are merely destroying their own livelihood; they are but fools. There is nothing about them to cause problems."

Dohei and Sakusuke agreed with him: "It is exactly as you say. We are not concerned about how many rich men are ruined; that does not cost us anything in either rice or money. However, the total of all exactions in rice and money, high as it is nowadays, is more than we peasants can afford, regardless of how hard we try. Many years ago, before the accession of Lord Inazuma[a] things were exactly the same. It may have been due to his various inquiries that at that time exactions in rice and silver decreased to one third of the present level, as far as I remember, but nowadays they are greater than before his accession and are the cause of much hardship."

While they were talking, Doctor Chihaku came through the entrance gate. "A Happy New Year to you all!," he said and came over to join them where they were sitting. He was offered the seat of honour and after they had all exchanged the season's greetings, the discussion went on. Chihaku said: "When I came in I thought I heard you talking about things which are usually discussed in the district office!" Gisuke said that this was indeed so, and went on to tell him in detail what they had been talking about. Then, Chihaku said: "One can tell a district headman's sense of duty simply by observing the manners and dress of his subordinate officials. Generally, even when the latter are upright men, they are easily led astray by the district headmen who are prone to corruption. How could the district headmen we capable of good government? I have only been here for a few years and therefore do not know local conditions very well, but I have got the impression that the district headman has made the levy and collection of exorbitant taxes the only purpose of his office. What do you think about

[a] The two ordinary peasants, true to their role as ignorants, garble the name of this official which is in reality Inazu. Inazuma is the word for lightening - something with which peasants were no doubt more familiar than with the names of officials in the castle town. Inazu Ya'uemon Yorimasu (1705-86) was High Commissioner of County Administration during the Hōreki reform.

this?"

Gisuke said: "From what I know, levying tax and handing it over to the authorities is, in fact, only a minor duty of his. Originally, the main duty of his office was to exert control in all district matters." Chihaku said: "I see. So it follows that if all he knows is how to deliver the tax to the authorities but, not knowing how to rule well, does not concern himself with the people, he has failed to do his duty." Nisuke said: "That is so. But is it not a case of good government when the taxes are collected according to the rules and the settlement of tax dues is dealt with fairly and justly?" Chihaku replied: "Indeed, it is as you say!" Gisuke said: "However, when we look at the present state of many villages, we can see on the one hand those villages which are requesting respite for their annual tax payment in kind and all their payments in silver, although they have a headman who acts in accordance with the path of righteousness. These villages, consequently, become notorious for having a bad headman. On the other hand, there are those villages which pay even their silver tax well in advance. Their headman is in consequence appreciated as a good village headman, although he is known to be insatiable and selfish." Chihaku exclaimed: "That is a bad rule you have set down there! There are, no doubt, avaricious and selfish village headmen who are very strict in their levies in order to be successful in their office since they derive profit from it, and who pay all their silver dues to the authorities earlier than required. But, depending on the locality, there are places where crops ripen slowly; again, in times of distress and the like, things cannot be done quickly. At times when the peasants have repeatedly suffered hardship, there are certainly headmen who wait for some time until the crops are ripe before levying the tax in order to avoid distress. Among righteous men there must be those who allow respite for the levy. However, can there be an excuse for basing one's judgement of a man's character on the promptness

of his silver payments to the authorities?" Nisuke said: "The only measure of a man's goodness nowadays is whether or not he has met the deadline in his tax payment."

Gisuke said: "If one were to scrutinize people and decide whether they were good or bad by looking at their respective righteousness, one would first have to be honest oneself; the district headman's deputy and the other subordinate officials, too, would have to be upright men." Nisuke said: "That is so. If a father leads a debauched life and is a hard drinker, he is in no position to admonish his children. This is a frame of mind which later on easily spreads to his children, giving rise to ill-conduct." Gisuke said: "Indeed. If the district headmen were to exercise justice in all things, then the officials in the villages would naturally turn towards justice as well!" Chihaku said: "That's right! Both village headmen and scribes would naturally become honest and upright if the district headman were to take care to praise those among them who are just in the discharge of their duties - if any can be found, that is - and those imbued with filial piety, peasants who have served their master faithfully or who are exceptionally devoted to agriculture, and bestow on all of them one bag of rice as remuneration, even if he had to take this rice from his official salary. Even those who have hitherto not been fair in their dealings would, no doubt, amend their conduct. Again, the number of men who are filial and who exert themselves in their family business would increase naturally. Men who follow their occupation cheerfully are at length bound to devote all their energy to it. The names of such men should be reported to the authorities to receive a reward. When this is done in all the villages, the district is naturally bound to thrive. As the years go by, other districts will follow suit and later this practice will spread all over the domain It has always been easy to produce a crooked nature in man and difficult to produce one which is straight. If we do not tackle this problem willingly, we shall have to wait for a very

long time for this to come about of its own accord." Nisuke agreed: "Quite. If just men are sought after and encouraged, then any number of upright men can be created." Chihaku said: "You are right. Looking at the work you peasants do, one can see that it is backbreaking drudgery from early morning when it is still dark until dusk throughout the four seasons. But in spite of such hard work you never know in the morning whether you will have enough to live for another day. Someone who does not do such heavy labour ought to devote himself to these matters rather than you." Dohei and Sakusuke said: "There is no doubt that the present time calls for such men!" While they were talking, a man came through the gate.

The newcomer said: "I am a diviner[a] travelling through all the lands in the pursuit of truth. I perform the divination for the New Year, the divination at the Age of Sixty, I tell your fortune for your whole life, I can tell whether your lifelong wish will come true or not, I master the divination with black ink and red colour[b], I can find lost objects for you or find out the whereabouts of a loved person, just as you wish." And saying: "Escuse me, please..." he sat down on the <u>tatami</u>-covered floor. As it happened, he sat right opposite Chihaku and began talking about various topics. The diviner said: "As I was coming in, I heard what you were saying, namely that depending on the time there were virtuous or evil men. With all due respect to you, this is what I have to say: What is known as 'time' is a subdivision of the year; why should it have good or evil aspects? To begin with, five days equal one <u>kō</u>, three <u>kō</u> equal one <u>ki</u>, six <u>ki</u> equal one <u>ji</u>, and four <u>ji</u> make up one year. Again, three <u>ki</u> are called one <u>setsu</u>[c]. The eight <u>setsu</u> are the first day of spring, the vernal

[a] (On diviners, see 258.)

[b] In this kind of divination, a Chinese character has to be written with brush and ink. The diviner then interprets the varied shades of black which become visible as the ink dries.

[c] The term <u>setsu</u>, literally "joint", is used here not only in its usual sense of "the first day of a 45 day period," but also as a generic term for a whole period of 45 days. For another example of this uncommon usage, see, Ofuji, <u>Shizen shineidō</u>, 712, Note 14.

equinox, the first day of summer, the summer solstice, the first day of autumn, the autumnal equinox, the first day of winter, and the winter solstice. One year is made up of 3 ki times 8, equalling 24 ki or 72 kō. Again, the division of the year into the 6 ki, as they are known, divides the year into six equal parts of 60 days 87½ koku each, which, if multiplied by six, make up a total of 365 days 25 koku. This is what is known as the cycle of the Zodiac of 365 1/4 degrees. Every four years, a 'small cycle' is completed and we have to begin anew, starting this time with the first hour of the ox. Fifteen of these small cycles go into a great cycle which is completed after sixty years. I have now outlined what I call 'time'. Time itself does not in the least give rise to good or evil. Therefore, on any given day there are families who can celebrate an auspicious event while their neighbours sorrowfully lament a misfortune which has befallen them[a]. This is not because the time is good or bad; it is just that people are afflicted by the vicissitudes of life. If there are many malevolent men in the near future, times will be bad. In times of virtuous men outnumbering evil men, times are good. Neither good nor evil can be found in 'time', but in men!"

Everybody in the room was excited. They wholeheartedly agreed with the speaker. The diviner continued, saying: "Last year, was there a rumour in this region, too, about the summer doyō[b] being ten days different from the usual dates?" They had

---

[a] The diviner is here used by the author as mouthpiece of the rationalist position which he has then refuted by Chihaku. The statement made here by the diviner in fact contradicts the philosophical foundation of divination (For a similar argument, see, 257n.)

[b] According to the lore of the Japanese almanac, the doyō is the period of between 18 to 19 calendar days preceding the first day of each of the four seasons. Its length varies according to the hour of its onset on the first day. During this period, it is believed that the earth ether (doki) begins to work (yō) on all things and, by transforming them, brings about the change of season. During this period, the moving of earth or any other kind of construction work is ill-omened. To the authorities, tampering with the doyō dates therefore meant a potential danger to tax revenue as the peasants, in their fear of upsetting the balance of the forces of nature,

all heard it; they said that wherever one went one could hear this rumour. The diviner said: "People everywhere heard it and became apprehensive. I wonder who could have spread that story around!" The others said: "We cannot speak for other regions, but around here it was the priests of the various temples who started it." The diviner said: "It would be good if priests talked about things which they know about. They are the sort of people who talk a lot about things they do not understand and are prepared to lead everybody astray. If the dates of the doyō differed only by one day it would be impossible to set up a calendar. A doyō is placed at the end of each of the four seasons; the time between the first day of spring of one year[a] and the next is divided into four parts and a doyō is placed at the end of each part. It is just like placing an object in the corner of a wooden measure; it can neither be moved to the right nor to the left. If the doyō differed by one day from its usual date, the lunar eclipse, too, would be shifted by one day. This is very much a lie of priests and the like. Since they follow the logic of karma[b], how could they know about such things?" His listeners all agreed with what he had said. Whereupon the diviner excused himself for having disturbed them so long with his trivial talk, and, rising from his seat, he bade them farewell and departed.

The peasants, who had remained in the room, said to each other that what the diviner had said sounded quite reasonable. Chihaku said: "All he really told us was the mathematics of the calendar. I agree with what he said about the doyō, but I think one ought to distinguish between two different kinds of 'time': one for the year in Nature (nen) and the other for the

---

would be reluctcant to start work unless they could be absolutely certain as to the exact dates of the doyō period[3]. As is suggested by a legal provision of the Shinoyama domain of 1729, the doyō holiday often became a pretext for festivities during which the peasants would consume unreasonable amounts of food and drink, thus jeopardizing their tax payment[4].

[a] Spring is the first season in the Japanese calendar.

[b] inga; here, 'fate'.

year in a man's life (toshi). The heavenly time is naturally part of man. It is impossible to call it either good or evil. We may reasonably say that men prosper or are ruined according to the times." Gisuke asked: "Does this mean that Heaven has mind (shin) and, in order to create times, bestows the ether (ki)[a], which brings forth good and arouses evil, on men?" Chihaku answered: "No, it does not. Heaven does not have a mind capable of good or evil. Heaven is nothing but ether. I regard the principles (ri) of Nature as Heaven's will (ten'i) and the conformity of the four seasons to these principles as its spiritual substance (rei). Does man's ether influence Heaven or does Heaven's ether influence man? It is impossible to say which comes first and which second. There are, for example, times when prices of commodities are high and times when they are low. This, too, is ascribed to human endeavour, whereas in reality, it cannot be manipulated by human beings. It is, in fact, 'time' which gives rise to these changes. Again, although man's life is determined by Heaven, there are inequalities. There are, for example, honest men who, in spite of their untiring efforts in their family business, have a run of bad luck and starve in a year of bad harvest. Others lose their lives through some adversity although justice was on their side. Still others are killed by robbers. Although life is determined by Heaven, it would be impossible to deny that other factors are involved as well. Whether we call it fate or destiny, we have no way of knowing what this factor is."

As they had been talking for a long time about these various subjects, Chihaku got up and, excusing himself for having turned up so unexpectedly, said: "Let's call it a day." As he took his leave of everybody, the others got up too and, after having said good-bye, they departed together with Chihaku.

---

[a] Ether (ki; chin. ch'i) is, according to Chinese cosmogony, the primordial matter - or vital force - in the universe of which all things are made.

2.

Like everybody else, Nisuke usually had cakes and sake to celebrate the first ploughing of the year on the 11th day of the first month[a], but this year he had to go without even that and was forced to eat dumplings made of arrowroot starch to stave off the pangs of hunger. That day he was waiting for Gi-suke and Sakusuke to look in, thinking that they would surely do so after the ploughing ceremony was over. They came, one after the other, as he had anticipated. They sat around the fire-place once again and after they had lit the fire they began to talk. Sakusuke asked: "This year, the severe cold has lingered on for quite some time and so the various crops ought to turn out well. Shall we cultivate some additional land?" Gisuke answered: "That would be possible, but if we cultivate more land than required, there is the burden of having to pay tax. How un-fortunate!" Nisuke asked them: "Have you heard the story of the discussion between the headman of our neighbouring village and Naosuke, when the former was inspecting some rice land?" Neither of them had heard it yet. Nisuke said: "I just happened to pass by, so I heard everything in detail." Gisuke asked: "What sort of complications were there?" Nisuke began: "It was around the 10th day of the 9th month, I think, when the village headman Ri'uemon, the scribe Risuke, and other officials had gone to the fields to look into some claims for tax reduction for the expected bad harvest. They were inspecting the rice fields one by one, calculating how much each of them would yield. At this point, Naosuke, who had been going around his fields, met the party and greeted the village headman and the officials. Then he asked: "Mr. Headman! As you can see for yourself if you look into my fields, they, too, will yield little crop this year; I think that their yield will be nowhere near the officially de-termined amount. Will you grant me a concession in the tax rate?" To this the headman replied: "This rice field of yours and the

---

[a] The 11th day of the 1st month was designated by law as the first day of ploughing (Article 9 of the Keian Ofuregaki)[5].

one to the north are going to yield little crop and so there will not be enough to pay the tax rate imposed on them. However, since your fields situated in two places below the village are doing well, yielding probably a little more than the total of your tax payment, we cannot possibly grant you a tax concession!" Thereupon, Naosuke said: "I cannot understand this. My two fields below the village are doing well, and if you think they will yield as much as officially assessed, then I shall pay the fixed tax for those two fields. What I was asking for was that this field here and the one to the north, which probably will not yield enough to pay the tax, be considered for a tax concession." The village headman was annoyed: "No, no, that won't be possible. It's always the same with you peasants! You make such extraordinary claims because you don't know a thing! In the first place, there is no question about a tax concession. All land, both fertile and barren, belonging to one peasant is subject to the same tax rate. If you were to apply for a re-assessment of your fields, for example, the rate on the barren fields would be lowered, but that on the fertile fields would be increased. Therefore, I say that if among the fields in one peasant's possession the barren plots do not outnumber the fertile fields then there is no good in applying for a re-assessment." Naosuke said: "Since that is the law there is nothing I can do about it. However, considering that my tax was determined by assessing individually and fairly the yields of my field here, of the one to the north, and of both my fields below the village, I see no reason why I should use grain from one field to make up for a minus in the yield of another to pay my tax!" To this the headman replied: "Indeed, I see your point, but although I am sorry for you there is nothing I can do. All fields owned by one person, whoever he may be, count as one man's possession. The expected yield of each field is added up and, after deduction for hulling has been made, the total amount of hulled rice is then divided into three parts. If two parts taken together are not sufficient for

paying the tax, the peasant concerned may apply for his fields to be re-assessed. Those who know that they are able to pay their tax in full by adding two parts must not apply for tax reduction." At this, Naosuke said: "So this is how the fifty percent peasant's share works! However, even if we are left with a full share after the annual tax has been paid with two parts, how can we pay additional levies like the o-kakomai and kuchimai[a]?" The headman answered: "It is plain that they are taken from the peasant's share!" Naosuke said: "If we are supposed to pay that from our share as well, then we cannot hope to manage anymore! Together with the manifold dues imposed by both the district headman and by the village, the countless expenses, too, have to be borne by taking rice from our share. Then we shall end up having nothing at all. The fields around here are equally divided between dry fields and rice fields; how does one pay the annual tax for the former?" The headman answered: "That's obvious! You may pay with the products grown on the fields." Naosuke asked: "If we have to pay the tax imposed on a particular field with what has been grown on it, what are we supposed to eat to stay alive?" The headman replied: "Even if the tax on a field is to be paid with its products, some of what has been grown is bound to be left over." Naosuke asked: "If that is so, what are those peasants who till only rice land supposed to eat?" The headman replied: "How should I know?" Naosuke went on: "The annual tax on dry fields is light, but there are many local taxes imposed on the yield of both rice and dry fields, so that the whole of the tax burden on dry fields is anything but light. Mr. Headman, you and your officials pay your annual tax with either your salaries as officials or else by some means or other and since what you have grown on

---

[a] The o-kakomai was levied at the rate of 3 koku 6 shō 6 gō per 100 koku and was intended for the crews of the ships on which the tax rice was transported to the market in Ōsaka. The purpose of the kuchimai is less clear. In some regions it was used directly for the upkeep of the officials on the local level, in others it merely had the character of yet another additional tax. (On kuchimai, see also, 235, 236n.)

your land is most likely to be overlooked, you have no trouble paying your tax. That is good for you, but it makes the situation of the small peasants even worse. When the time has come to pay the tax, you say only 'pay up, pay up!', and when the peasants put it off they are arrested and tied up, thrown into prison and tortured. Really, there is no one as wretched as we are." The headman said: "You say many things which sound reasonable, but is it not because you have some source of income somewhere which provides you with a livelihood that you are still alive?" To this Naosuke replied: "Our life does not deserve that name! As you can see yourself, we work hard every day of the year, be it hot or cold, beginning in the morning when the stars are still shining and finishing in the evening when the stars appear again. In summer we are especially hard pressed by our work, at times even working at night without getting any sleep; during the day the intensity of our work can only be compared with that of the sun-rays which wither trees and plants. Grandfather, grandmother, wife, and children labour so hard day after day that their breath smells of blood and yet year after year, when the time has come to pay the tax,there is not even enough rice to pay it. When we have finished paying our tax dues little by little, either by taking up loans or by selling firewood, we are left in the cold winter nights without a single padded garment, not to speak of straw or rushmats to pull over our head. Just imagine our suffering! I am not the only one affected; there are many others in the village. Being young and vigorous I stand up to the cold very well, but to the old people and the children it is indeed so cruel that one cannot bear the sight of it. Getting up in a bitterly cold night to light a fire and warm oneself because one is unable to sleep in spite of all the rushmats and strawmats piled on top of one is something which you will know from your own experience. As you hold the post of headman of the village, you are father and mother to all the peasants. You must not take advantage of your official position to benefit only yourself. You must see to it that the villagers

do not have to suffer a cruel fate." At this the village headman said with an air of disapproval: 'I see, I see...' and walked away."

Everybody in the room was moved by what Naosuke had said and they agreed with every point he had made. Then, Sakusuke observed: "Naosuke, too, is a man who has been working all his life, and yet I hear that he borrows heavily year after year to pay his tax." Nisuke asked: "Does he borrow from the village or from the district headman?" Sakusuke answered: "It appears that he borrows from both the district office and villagers by the system of debt transfer. At those rates of interest it seems that, irrespective of how much one works year after year, one is still unable to produce the amount necessary to pay back a loan."

Gisuke said: "Well, debt transfer from the district office means that when the peasants in the district are unable to pay the deficit in their tax payment, large amounts of money and grain are borrowed by the district headman from rich people to be used for loans to peasants to enable them to pay their tax in full. There are also those who make up for the deficiency by borrowing from the village headman or the village officials by mutual agreement. But should the district headman on principle lend any money or rice at all to peasants who are unable to pay their tax?" Nisuke answered: "Indeed, this seems to happen everywhere nowadays. But one would be greatly mistaken to assume that compassion was in the least responsible for the district headman's helpfulness, although it might appear to be so. The annual tax was originally not collected on the assumption that what had been grown on a field was not sufficient. When the peasants receive a fifty percent share of the crop it is inconceivable that they should still be unable to pay their tax, regardless of whether the crop was fairly good or, as happened last year, did not ripen properly. However, the peasants in the district borrow large amounts of grain and money, saying that they do not have enough to pay their tax. By borrowing from the rich to lend to the peasants, the district headman provides

the basic reason for destroying peasants. Nobody lends them money or grain for nothing. If these loans are paid back with the interest added then there is yet another minus in the tax payment that year, so that the peasant has to take up a further loan. To give you an example, someone who has borrowed five bags of rice in one year has to borrow as many as seven bags the following year. The amounts borrowed grow larger with each passing year, and become enormous within five or six years if the rate of interest is excessive. When the peasant can no longer pay the interest, let alone the original debt, he is declared to be an offender and thrown into prison since, as they say, he has become a nuisance to the authorities because of his huge tax debts. His family is ruined as, in addition to the sale of his family possessions, he himself and then his wife and children, not to mention his house and draught animals, are sold for precious money as pawns. His relatives, the five-family group and the rest of the villagers are then made to make up the remaining debt. Those who have been ruined thus cannot become peasants of ten koku for ten or fifteen years. This is indeed just like preventing someone from stumbling into a small ditch only to throw him into a bottomless pit. In the case of the villages in the plain, well-to-do villagers, among others the village headman and the village officials, lend rice by mutual agreement to those with a deficit in their tax payment at a rate of interest of forty to fifty percent, so that they can pay their taxes. But when, in due course toward the end of the following year, the tax has to be paid, the officials subtract the borrowed amount of rice plus interest from the storehouse receipt of their debtors. Now, all they have to do to pay their own tax is to add up all these amounts. For this reason, those who lend enough rice can get away without paying even a single bag of rice themselves and gain plenty of surplus rice at that. Since the peasants who have borrowed rice from the officials have yet another deficit in their tax payment after this deduction, they have to borrow a greater amount than in the

previous year. Those peasants who devote themselves zealously to their work manage to pay the interest rates for five or seven years, even if the borrowed amount of rice is large, but in their later years they are no longer up to the task, and when the only plot of newly reclaimed land they own is taken away from them to pay for the interest rates[a], they end up in a deep part of the river. Since the village officials can generally be sure of repayment of a loan made under the terms of a tax payment loan, it appears that they are eager to lend rice or money under these terms even if the loan is to be used for purposes other than tax payment. The peasants who were crushed in the way I mentioned[b], of whom there are many everywhere, are not all victims of the annual tax but in fact of these tax payment loans." Gisuke agreed: "Indeed, that is so. It is pitiful that one should be ruined in spite of the great efforts one has put into farming day and night for years, and all this not even in the service of the authorities but in that of money-lenders. I have heard that harshness in connection with the payment of the annual tax can be found everywhere. Even in the puppet play "The Treasury of Loyal Retainers"[c], there is a scene in which Yo'ichibei tells a mountain bandit that he was on his way to visit all members of his family to ask them for help as he was hard pressed to pay the previous year's annual tax[d]. So, we are hardly the only ones to be faced with

[a] Newly reclaimed land was tax-free for a period of between three to five years. (See, TN: 388.)

[b] (See, TN: 338-9.)

[c] Kanadehon Chūshingura (1748) is the story of 47 samurai who pledged to avenge the injustice inflicted upon their lord and who, after having fulfilled their vow, committed ritual suicide. This play, which is based on an incident which occurred in 1701, glorifies the precedence taken by loyalty to one's lord over all other human ties. This play enjoyed tremendous popularity during the Tokugawa period and was widely performed throughout Japan. See, Keene, Treasury.

[d] The story about being in arrears with his tax payment is, in fact, only an excuse made by Yo'ichibei when he finds his life threatened by Sadakurō, the highwayman. Chūshingura, as storehouse of samurai ethic, is indeed unlikely to be concerned with the worries of peasants in connection with the annual tax. The

this problem; but still, if travellers on their way through our region had happened to witness this scene without knowing what had gone on before and what was to follow, they would no doubt have thought that with the unjustifiable and brutal acts being committed, tax paying was indeed a harsh business. As I have outlined before, people who have accumulated enormous tax debts are called offenders, but it is those who have arranged things in such a way as to allow debts to become enormous who are responsible for men turning into offenders. It is indeed unpardonable. If the prices of the various grains remain high for one or two years, those who lend money for taxes rise considerably in status; they even seem to be able to make small payments to the authorities towards receiving a family name and a sword. In fact, if we look at the origin of the capital for these contributions, we see that it comes from peasants with their heavy tax burden. On the whole, it is a custom everywhere for peasants to lend and borrow among themselves in times of food shortage and general privation, a custom which is indeed indispensable. But as far as the tax payment loans are concerned, it would be better if they were regulated by law. But because of them, some peasants are ruined and the others treated harshly. Moreover, the annual tax, which is so important, falls into disorder."

Nisuke said: "Indeed as we said before, there is no reason whatsoever why one should have a deficit in one's annual tax payment. However, since the many miscellaneous expenses have to be defrayed from the peasant's own share of rice, there are villages where a short respite is granted until the barley or the rape seeds have been harvested. There are also villages where respites are granted little by little until the 7th month. The peasants in those villages know the year before how much of the total crop yield may be paid later. Therefore, when peasants in our region are forced to take up loans to make good the deficit in their tax payment and are consequently ruined,

gold carried by Yo'ichibei was an advance payment from a brothel-keeper to whom he had sold his own daughter to enable his son-in-law to atone for his disloyalty to his former lord[6]. (See also, 244-5.)

it is only because the district headman is not devoted to the tasks of his office. If he were devoted he would, as we said the other day, study the actual conditions when the tax rate is determined, making sure that we really receive a fifty percent share. Furthermore, he would instruct the villages not to force peasants to spend their rice on various matters before all their annual tax dues are paid, giving them to understand that the village headman and his officials would be held responsible if a peasant, having spent rice in that way, were unable to pay his tax. He should, furthermore, suggest to the authorities that they should not allow dealings in rice in any given village as long as the peasants have not honoured their tax commitments fully. The rice given by the authorities in support of those in need would be an exception to this rule. If, in spite of this, rice has been bought by someone, it should be returned without delay, either with or without compensation, should the peasant who sold his own rice incur a deficit in his tax payment. If someone puts off his tax payment, the district headman should carry out an investigation and thereupon visit both the man concerned and the members of the five-family group. Besides collecting the tax forthwith, he should call for an official notice finding fault with both parties. If he does all this, then there will be no shortage of rice for the tax payment. The shortage of tax rice would no longer be a topic for discussion in all the villages. If there should still be someone unable to pay, the officials ought to look into the matter to find out where that peasant's rice has ended up, keeping in mind the officially estimated yield of his fields. The rice could then be returned in the same way, thus enabling the peasant to pay his tax. I believe that non-payment of tax would cease if reason were applied, even without tying up peasants like criminals and inflicting suffering on them. Delay in the collection of the important annual tax causes distress on both sides. If the tax were collected quickly each year, few peasants would be ruined." Gisuke agreed: "You are right. If things were done that way we would hardly have to bring up tax shortages in our discussions.

What is more, the sentries posted everywhere would no longer be needed. If a peasant wanted to sell rice, the village officials would not allow the grain to be moved. Even if a peasant managed to bring some rice into town, he would be unlikely to find a buyer, unless he were in possession of an authentic official document proving beyond doubt that he had paid all of his tax." Nisuke said: "Generally speaking, if the problem were tackled at its roots it would seem to be unnecessary to post guards on the roads, but as this is not done, guards have to be set up, resulting in high expenses. The whole system of sentries posted on the roads leading to the town is irksome if the sentries, whose expenses and upkeep are, after all, paid for by the peasants in each district, waste a lot of our time by inspecting us every-time we pass their post with some rice which we have grown on a field in some neighbouring village (dezukurimai)." Gisuke asked: "If things were done as you propose, would peasants who cultivate unfavourably located dry land be allowed to buy and sell the different cereals as they please?" Nisuke answered: "I see what you mean, but since this would only mean that grain could be sold to pay the tax in silver or that rice could be bought from stipendiaries and the like to pay the full amount of one's tax in kind, I cannot see the good of this sort of buying and selling." Dohei and Sakusuke said: "Some of what you have been speaking about may turn out as you have said, but in autumn, when the tax rate is determined, the officials cannot impose a tax rate which will guarantee us a full fifty percent share of the crop!" Dohei went on: "I think that even tax inspectors are human beings, but why is it that they only do brutal things?" Nisuke said: "The method of the tax inspectors is based on the annual assessment, and so, whatever we may say, it is necessarily always the same. At present, it seems that they have made it their principle to collect as much tax as possible, regardless of how many villages will be ruined in coming years and how many difficult problems are created." Whereupon Dohei

asked: "Could it not be their endeavour to get ahead in the world which makes them collect that much tax?" Nisuke denied this emphatically: "No, no, that is hardly their motive. It must be that they are eager to please the authorities in whatever they do."

Sakusuke said: "During the past few years a strange practice has been started which troubles us. After we have at last managed to pay our tax, we are told that it is not sufficient. But when we have paid the rest as well, yet another tax, known as 'the first ears of rice'[a], is levied by the village headman on top of the total tax payment. Refusing to comply with this request is out of question, but if we take from the rice seeds, which have been laid aside for sowing, there will not be enough for that purpose. A vexing practice indeed!" Dohei said: "They take away so much that one might think the 'first ears of rice' to be the annual tax itself!" Sakusuke answered: "Exactly. It is grievous that for the past two or three years excessive amounts of the 'first ears of rice' have been levied. If the village headman cannot do away with this tax for some reason or other, he should at least levy it before the annual tax has been paid, otherwise the tax would more appropriately be called 'the last ears of rice'." Nisuke said: "I agree with what you say. But whatever you call it, it is still the peasants who have to pay it and whichever way it is done, the authorities do not profit by it. Each year, this tax should be collected and stored at the district headman's office and when we peasants are about to starve, as we are this spring, it should be distributed to relieve distress. In such times as these, the authorities should feel compassion for the peasants rather than for anyone else." Sakusuke said: "That would be most welcome! However, if relief is given only every twenty or thirty years, the rice accumulated would be rather more than is necessary!" Nisuke said: "Don't say things like that! To think frivolously of our authorities' kindness is criminal! Even in our wretched lives

---

[a] Ostensibly for presentation to a Shintō shrine, but in reality often pocketed by the local officials (See, 262.).

there is not a thing which we do not owe to the authorities. Down to the rice bran and straw there is nothing which is essentially ours. Even if we were ordered to cut off our hands and feet and offer them to the authorities we should not refuse."

While Nisuke was speaking, someone had walked through the gate. After entering the house, the newcomer asked politely whether they could give him some information on a small matter. Asked what he wanted to know, he said: "I have heard that a doctor called Yamamura Chihaku[a], I think, lives in this village. Does he live somewhere near here?" Nisuke answered: "Yes, indeed, he lives just a bit further along, but where do you come from?" The man said: "I come from the plain." Nisuke asked: "What is the purpose of your visit to Doctor Chihaku?" The man answered: "I have come to ask him to treat the bruise you can see here. I have heard that Doctor Chihaku, or whatever his name is, was extremely skilful in treating wounds. Is that really so?" Nisuke said: "Elder Chihaku is indeed an expert for any kind of ailment. But how did you get this bruise?" The man answered: "Ever since I was thrown to the ground by a strong wind last year, something has gone wrong with my blood and, as a consequence, this bruise has appeared." Gisuke said: "But this does not look at all like a bruise caused by something as harmless as a fall during a storm! Your ailment looks rather as if it had been caused by frequent beating! Have you not committed some crime or other?" The man said: "As I find myself being suspected in this way, I can no longer hide the truth. I serve in the household of a local warrior in the plain. My master makes me work much harder than someone else would do, but as you know yourself, even in agriculture there is a limit to the amount of work a man can do. I work quite hard, like everybody else in the neighbourhood, but my master, realizing that it is very common for people to be taken ill, ordered me to go out every night to work for wages and to return with 3 <u>bu</u>, so that I would

[a] literally, "Mountain-village" Chihaku.

have silver to pay for medical care in case I fell ill. As I was ordered to do so by my master, I was unable to refuse and so I worked myself to the bone every night and paid him my earnings of 3 bu. This continued throughout the year and so I got extremely tired. As I usually worked harder than others, I thought I would take a little rest in between and have a smoke before taking up my work again. But as I was thus having a rest, my master hit me with a cane, shouting why was I lying around? Since then, I have been going out to work every night and bringing back the wages to my master. As I frequently incurred my master's wrath, my wound got worse and my blood was upset. Last year, I was thrown to the ground by a strong gust and I fell onto the part of my body which was already slightly bruised. That this wound has come out into the open has caused me a lot of pain. A harmless fall in a storm would hardly have caused such a bruise, but being incessantly hit made it worse, I think. Well, I was then given the sickness money and ordered to have my wound healed[a]. I should not be so outspoken about matters which concern my master to whom I am greatly devoted, but as you have suspected me of being a thief or even a criminal of some kind, I have no scruples about telling you everything as it happened." When he had ended, the others clapped their hands in astonishment, remarking to one another that there were indeed people who resorted to peculiar methods. Then, Nisuke said: "Well, in that case I will show you where Elder Chihaku lives." He went out into the road with him to point out the way to the doctor's house.

After Nisuke had returned to his seat and sat down, the village headman's messenger, Matahachi, came through the gate and, showing him a slip of paper, said: "Nisuke, this is how much you owe for last month's rice contribution[b]. The village headman has ordered me to make you pay today." Nisuke said: "I see. The village headman paid my rice contribution which I was supposed to pay last month and has given me respite until today. Please tell him that I shall pay later on." Upon this, Matahachi

---

[a] The author is here alluding to the fact that peasants have to save up cereals themselves to have provisions in times of famine as relief rice is only rarely dispensed by the authorities.

[b] Forced contribution; an additional tax levied sporadically.

went away in the direction of the village headman's house. Nisuke turned to the others and said: "There is nothing I can do, is there? I shall pay, even if I have to take from the rice seed. How grievous this is!" Gisuke said: "The village headman's orders must always be obeyed, regardless of what they are." Sakusuke said: "Giving peasants like us orders to hand over all we have is like burdening a fully-packed horse with an additional load. The horse will not protest, even if one packs load upon load; it will carry the burden until it collapses. A heavily laden horse will get tired if just a little more weight is added. If on top of that, various things are added to the load without consideration of weight, the horse will fall down flat. For this reason, the man who packs a horse must know the exact weight of the load." While he was speaking, three outcastes[a] had come through the gate, asking for food. Nisuke got up to give them the leftovers of their arrowroot cakes and saw them out.

Dohei said: "They looked healthy; they did not strike me as men who were born as outcastes. How did they become outcastes being able-bodied?"[b] Gisuke said: "'Invoke a Buddha and one is sure to appear'; this saying of the priests is indeed true. If you will listen to me, I will tell you how this came about. Until autumn of last year, these outcastes served as horse drivers for Rokubei's firm in Umakata[c]." The others interrupted him: "Horse drivers? But how could horse drivers have become outcastes?"

---

[a] The term hinin (lit. "non-person"), here translated as outcaste, is still today the commonly used word for "beggar" in Kumamoto dialect.

[b] The authorities could degrade commoners who had fallen foul of the law to the outcaste status of hinin, thus depriving them of all possibilities to scrape a living except by begging. Going from door to door, they begged for food, especially on festival days when plenty of leftovers were almost certain to await them. Although of even lower status than the eta outcaste, those hinin who had been degraded by way of punishment could, theoretically at least, revert to their former status of commoner within a period of ten years, given the help of their relatives[7].

[c] The fictitious place name Umakata-machi ("Horse-driver-quarter") may well stand for Bashaku-machi ("Horse-renting-quarter"), the name of a section of Kumamoto which was the home of firms dealing with horse transport during the Tokugawa period.

Gisuke went on: "Well, Rokubei of Umakata employed four servants and kept four horses, making a living from pack-horse charges. Yokozō[a], the fat one among the beggars who were here a moment ago, worked very hard and returned every day with more takings than any other of his comrades. Rokubei was pleased and made Yokozō the headman of the four. He praised him, served him _sake_ every day, and moreover gave him more clothes and the like than the contract provided for. Yokozō, consequently, tried even harder and came home with still larger takings. Rokubei was even more pleased and gave him rather more than his usual wages. When the other servants discussed this together, they concluded that if they were to emulate Yokozō, they would all be praised by their master, and so Sanpachi and Sukesaku, too, worked very hard. Every day, they brought back no less than Yokozō and handed it over to Rokubei, Rokubei was again extremely pleased and praised them as highly as Yokozō. Only Chūzō[b], apprehending something, went on collecting charges as he had always done. As he did not show any signs of change day after day, Rokubei considered him inefficient and did not offer him a single cup of _sake_ more than he was forced to by the contract. Chūzō did not take this to heart and went on working as before. His three comrades vied with each other, trying to collect extra charges, but before one year had passed, three of the horses suddenly lost vigour, and within a short time they could no longer be used for carrying even the lightest of loads. As no money could be earned with them they were useless. Rokubei was greatly alarmed and, wondering how they could have become like that, he did all he could to cure them, but to no avail. Because of all this he lost a large amount of money and rice. The horse which had been entrusted to Chūzō, however, was still as vigorous as ever, earning money day after day. Rokubei mentioned to Chūzō how strange it was that the horses entrusted to the other three should have lost their vigour all at once and were no longer useful, whereas his horse was still in the best of health and covered long distances every day. Chūzō re-

[a] This name literally means "the arrogant".
[b] literally, "the loyal".

especially mendicant priests, over the past few years.

Gisuke said: "I have recently thought of a scheme in this connection." His friends asked him what sort of a scheme he meant. He explained: "Hoping to be of some help to the authorities by acting myself as a tax collector, I have gradually perfected my scheme. As of this year, I undertake to pay the authorities an annual sum of 10 kanme which I shall collect from the headmen of the outcastes in the countryside[a]." The others asked him: "How will you do that?" Gisuke went on: "Well, I shall levy a transport tax of seven coins (mon) on each outcaste in the countryside, regardless of age or sex, and one of thirty coins on each mendicant priest." The others said: "That is a grave miscalculation! Although there are many outcastes and mendicant priests in the countryside at present, you would hardly get three kanme, not to speak of ten." Gisuke explained: "At this point, my calculation comes in. For one or two years I shall probably suffer a loss, but if times are then what they are now, the greater part of people living in the countryside will be outcastes and beggars. From then on, my profit will increase with every year that passes." Nisuke said: "You should not say things like that, not even as a joke! You invite punishment!" Gisuke replied: "I have not said anything bad at all. All I have talked about was how the authorities can profit by tax payment." Dohei and Sakusuke said: "In that case, Gisuke will some day be our headman!" They had spoken in the same friendly tone as ever, and when one of them added ceremoniously: "Please avail yourself of my humble services...", they all burst into laughter. Then, Gisuke said: "Today we have again spent half a day in this house. Should we not take our leave now?" Dohei and Sakusuke retorted ceremoniously: "As it pleases our headman...", and after thanking Nisuke they left together.

---

[a] Outcastes to whom employment by the authorities for such tasks as executioner was open (kakaehinin) were registered on a separate census register (hinin ninbetsuchō) and placed under the nominal supervision of an outcaste headman (hnintō). Besides these registered outcastes who lived in separate settlements, there were also the "wild" outcastes (nohinin), homeless beggars, supervised only by their boss (oyabun) to whom they had to deliver part of their takings.

plied that the three horses had been ruined and brought to the verge of death by Rokubei's ambition. When he heard this, Rokubei turned pale and said angrily: "Why should I want my horses, the mainstay of my family business, made useless?" Chūzō answered: "By serving sake to my comrades, giving them clothes and increasing their wages whenever they returned with more takings, you made them pack excessive weight onto the horses day after day. They packed an additional burden onto the horses' load and charged money for that as well. This is the reason why your horses have ended up like this. It was not for the good of your family that those three increased their takings, but merely to receive praise, more clothes, and higher wages." At this point, Rokubei began to understand and he saw that his servants had brought the horses to harm for selfish reasons. Bursting into anger, he dismissed the three on the spot. Then, he bought another three horses at great expense, took three other men into his service and made Chūzō his headman. I hear that he has taken great care of his horses ever since, The three dismissed men looked for employment everywhere, even if it were only as ordinary horse drivers, but being the sort of men they were, nobody would take them. Needless to say, they were unable to do anything else and thus they finally sank as low as outcastes. The three of them have always been going around together, perhaps because they are good comrades." When Gisuke had finished telling his story, the others agreed among themselves that in such circumstances it was impossible for the three not to have become outcastes. They laughed at Rokubei who lost his valuable horse and made a great loss for having been misguided by his greed. Chūzō, they said, was an example to all servants[a]. While they were carrying on their discussion, outcastes and mendicant priests (komusō)[b] kept coming and going without interruption. This prompted them to discuss the marked increase in beggars,

---

[a] This allegory is of pivotal importance to the interpretation of the TN. (See, 329-30.)

[b] (See, 261.)

3.

On the fifteenth day of the first month, even the peasants cut bamboo tubes for the celebration of the first rice gruel. They write the names of the five cereals on these tubes and then put them into a pot together with boiling rice gruel. The cereals represented by those tubes which are later found to be brimming with gruel are thought to do well that year. Conversely, the crops represented by tubes which do not contain any gruel at all are expected to do badly that year. By means of this oracle they foresee the future. It is called tōhōsaku after the Chinese Tung Fang Shuo[a] who lived to the ripe age of ninety years. He devoted himself to all sorts of things, but best of all he could tell which crops would yield the greatest harvest in a given year. Even he, a wizard, could not tell this without divination. Legend says that as he performed this divination year after year it was named after him. This is the popular explanation in the countryside. Nisuke, too, performed this divination with great hope, and intended to break the tubes open to find out the result after the meal. But then he remembered that this was the morning when the whips were cut to be used this year to drive the draught animals when tilling the fields, and so he was sure that his friends would visit him after the Ceremony of the Whip-Cutting. He put the tubes away, thinking that he would wait until the others had arrived so that they could comfort each other about the results of their divinations. Presently, they turned up, one after the other, as expected. They talked about the outcome of the divination in the various families and congratulated Nisuke on the favourable outcome of his. Sakusuke said: "Regardless of how favourable the result of the tube oracle is, being subjected to the tax officials'

[a] Tung Fang Shuo was born in the state of Ch'i in the former Han period. A minister in the service of Emperor Wu, he was well-versed in the writings of the philosophers and is also said to have excelled in speech and composition. According to the legend, he was a wizard who attained immortality by eating a peach which he had stolen from the goddess Shi Wang Mu. His biography may be found in the Shih Chi, 126, and in the Chien Han Shu, 65.

oracle is merciless!" Gisuke and Dohei agreed: "Indeed, you are right. The more we work, the more is taken from us. Is there no way at all for us to catch our breath?" Gisuke said: "A slight decrease in the annual tax would be a great relief to us!" Nisuke retorted: "Nothing could be easier than putting the onus on the authorities. But by another method our tax would be slightly decreased, whereas the authorities would profit slightly more." The others exclaimed: "There's a good method! What would have to be done to achieve that?"

Nisuke said: "Well, recently I thought to myself that the peasants would not have the least difficulties in paying that part of their tax which is due to the authorities. Nowadays, taxes are such a crushing burden for the small peasants because there are so many miscellaneous dues which have to be paid together with the annual tax; to the officials, the district office, and the village headman. Naturally, there is nothing we can do about the essential miscellaneous dues. But if an end were put to those among them which are only wasteful expenses, the peasants' burden would be somewhat lighter and the authorities would also profit a little by it." The other peasants said: "That is a good method. How could that be achieved?" Nisuke answered: "First of all, the re-assessment of tax in years of bad harvest, together with all the expenses which go with it, has to be abolished!" The others protested: "Whatever else is done, the re-assessment of tax must on no account be abolished!" Nisuke insisted: "Abolishing this is the first step." The others asked: "How could we get along without that?" Nisuke explained: "Well, the total of the annual tax payments of the last ten years up to last year should be added up and then divided by ten[a]. The result would be the amount corresponding to the average annual tax. If the authorities gave orders for the tax rate to be fixed in this way and the tax to be paid annually regardless of the quality and quantity of the harvests, there would be no need for either tax inspectors or the various officials. Abolishing these mis-

---

[a] This method of tax assessment is known under the technical term of jōmenhō or narashimen. (see, 141 ff.)

cellaneous dues would be like providing the peasants with an additional arm. The dues arising in connection with the re-assessment of tax are extraordinary. This is what all small peasants say. Every year, the examiners carry out an investigation, but these investigations are based on land registers which were compiled haphazardly. To give you an example, even though the village over there with an estimated yield of a thousand koku has been granted a reduction of 300 bags of rice, the dues for the re-assessment will be deducted from this reduction. Furthermore, the village headman as well as the village officials, deduct a commission from the tax reduction which they share among themselves; five or ten bags per head as recompense for their trouble in autumn. Sometimes, on the pretext of the above precedent, this custom is extended even to the scribes who then take it each year on top of their official salaries." Gisuke said: "Indeed, that is correct. There is, however, a reason why the village officials take it. Their good offices in autumn must on no account be belittled." Nisuke answered: "That is so. They receive the same official salaries every year, regardless of whether they have to carry out a re-assessment or whether all peasants have accepted the rate of tax as imposed, and so I would do nothing to prevent them from receiving a modest remuneration, but there are just too many instances of grabbing on various pretexts. When, on top of this, the rice which is used to cover the expenses for which no explanation is ever given has been subtracted from the 300 bags of rice, as few as 200 may be left, if that. There is no point in granting a reduction of the tax rate on application to those whose land will not yield sufficient crop, if afterwards most of what has been gained has to be spent in the way I have described. If, therefore, the past ten years' average was used to fix a permanent tax rate, then there would be neither miscellaneous dues for the re-assessment to be paid at the time of tax payment, nor would there be a need to offer a commission to the village headman and the village officials. Doing away with this expenditure would be to us like a gift of rice from the

authorities." The others agreed: "Indeed, if things were done as you say, the small peasants would be in far better circumstances. It is pitiful to see that with things being done as they are at present, the small peasants are still suffering hardships although the authorities do not profit by it at all, as more rice is being lost on its way up through the channels of bureaucracy than is necessary." Nisuke said: "If the method I have outlined before were to be adopted, the village officials would be all for it, even though they would no longer receive commission. With the re-assessment abolished, the amount of work of the village scribes everywhere is reduced by half! A scribe who can at present hardly manage to deal with one village would easily be able to deal with two. If that is the case he will receive a large salary in rice even if he has to go without commission." Gisuke said: "Village officials, too, have nothing to do when there is no re-assessment, so they should be greatly pleased." Sakusuke said: "This is an extremely good method. However, there would surely be villages unwilling to endorse this method, arguing that their peasants would suffer hardships in years of crop failure." Nisuke replied: "Except for those tilling only irrigated fields, or those who for some other reason have a strong case against it, they would hardly argue like this! It is indeed the wild annual fluctuations of the tax rate which cause many expenses and make various tricks possible. If the tax rate were fixed in the way I described before, there would be no place for any tricks." Gisuke asked: "Are you referring to what you said before about striking an average of the past ten years' tax percentages?" Nisuke answered: "Yes, I am. But there is yet another method. The method I have described so far brings with it slight irregularities as each field is assessed in its turn." Gisuke said: "But how could there be irregularities?" Nisuke said: "There seem to be villages where the officials do not take commission in the way I told you. In those places, when they draw up an estimate for the re-assessment, they decrease the total yield estimate on their own land and increase that on the land owned by the peasants.

They then determine the average yield of all village fields in _koku_ and _to_ per _tan_. When, after the new tax rate has been imposed, the amount of rice which was granted as reduction on each field has been shared out, you will find that the small peasant gets less than his due share of reduction, whereas the officials are allowed more reduction for their fields than they are entitled to. If this is true, one cannot deny that there are villages whose officials make previous arrangements among themselves to this effect. Therefore, by reducing the tax burden on their own land they achieve nothing apart from depriving the small peasants of the rice which was granted to them by way of tax reduction, even though they may not take any commission." Gisuke said: "I see. I am sure that they do this even in places where they collect commission openly!" Nisuke said: "Well, with the new method this would be difficult to do, even if the fields were assessed individually." Gisuke said: "What could be done, then, to prevent irregularities?" Nisuke answered: "There would be no irregularities if, for example, a village with a single tax rate on all of its land were to add up the amounts of rice granted by the authorities as tax reduction during the past ten years on all the fields which were re-assessed. This sum should then be divided by ten and the result divided first proportionately to the total estimated yield of the fields entered for re-assessment, and second, proportionately to the number of _se_. If an average is struck with the help of these two measures, then there should be no inequalities. Again, there are those villages which have large batches of former stipend land[a]. As the total yield of each batch has been underestimated, all such land should be dealt with in the way I have outlined. Again, plots of extremely poor quality which have been owned by no one as far back as one can remember can be found in every batch of former stipend land. Such fields should be taken together into one holding to be cultivated by someone from another village[b]. Registered under somebody's name,

[a] (See, 93-4.)

[b] This was known as _dezukuri_. (See also, 367.)

these fields should be submitted for re-assessment each year to have the tax rate determined. The authorities should retain the old method of tax assessment for these fields only, and adopt the method I have outlined before for the remaining fields to rule out irregularities." Dohei and Sakusuke said: "Indeed, if things were settled in this way and the miscellaneous dues were abolished, we peasants would be greatly relieved! But would we not suffer hardships to some degree in years when the crop fails as it did last year?" To this, Gisuke answered: "Years of harvest as bad as last year's are the exception!" Nisuke said: "That is so. Since I talked about taking the average of ten years, this would include, by and large, bad harvests as well as bumper crops. The peasants would not suffer any hard-ship in years of a bad crop on a normal scale. In years when it is obvious that the harvest is even worse than that, the district headman should carefully select superintendents at his own dis-cretion and collect as much of the annual tax as can reasonably be expected that year." Sakusuke asked: "But if the office of tax inspector is going to be abolished, who is going to decide on the tax rate, who is going to investigate the damage done to fields by floods, and who is going to stick the bamboo tags with the estimated yield written on them into each rice field?" Nisuke answered: "The yield of a field will always be known, even without investigation. Anyway, I would have thought that these were the district headman's duties." Gisuke said: "You are right, the same holds true for fixing the amount of tax to be paid. What is unreasonable about it is the fact that the tax rate is not imposed by those who collect the annual tax after-wards, but instead by others who are not in the least concerned about the consequences of their decisions." Nisuke said: "If the taxation were done on the basis of an average in the way I proposed, there would be no expense whatsoever. First, as re-gards the authorities, they would no longer have to support all the officials year after year, and, most important, there would be none of the expenses for the re-assessments. Second, if the tax were collected only after the rice was fully ripe, there

would be no loss due to harvesting unripe rice. Third, collecting the tax for the autumn harvest should then take only three days whereas now it takes five days. Fourth, drying the rice under the strong autumn sun should be completed within three days, rather than the present seven days. Fifth, if this is done then the tax could be paid earlier. Sixth, if the tax rice is paid earlier and has been dried well, there ought to be less damage done by insects in the total of the hulled rice. It should therefore be easy to pay tax rice which is in perfect condition. Seventh, if things were done this way, the work for the second crop in rice fields where this is possible could begin earlier. The earlier one starts working on the second crop, the greater the yield. Eighth, those rice fields which are not cropped twice a year would suffer less damage by wild geese and ducks, too. Ninth, it would be possible to gather straw. Tenth, if the vari ous officials come to the countryside less often, the business of the district office will be reduced correspondingly and they will be able to make do with fewer of the petty officials usually employed there." The others said: "We peasants would be greatly strengthened if things came to pass this way. We would really like to do away with all the additional expenses by some means or other!" Nisuke went on: "With things being as they are now, there is no point fertilizing our rice fields. We have used fertilizers which we bought by borrowing money or by pawning seed, clothes, and tools, but as long as we have to pay tax proportionate to the yield, fertilizing means a loss to us. If the tax were fixed in the way I have proposed, there would be peasants who would not sleep at night when the seeds are striking roots and during the weeding, who would pawn their belongings to buy fertilizer and use it on their fields, who would cut the weeds and carry soil on their backs, thus producing bumper crops every year!" Sakusuke said: "Indeed, they would not need exhortation to devote their whole attention to the seedlings striking roots and to the weeding! Rice fields which have so far yielded five bags of rice should then yield as much as six bags." Gisuke said: "I agree with you.

In the past I have often noticed here and there some pieces of land which looked as if someone did all he could to make them barren." Sakusuke said: "Your observation may be true since there are indeed people who call for a re-assessment for a single piece of land. This, however, is a wicked thing to do to the authorities. Naturally, such people invite punishment by their action. But the worst thing is that it is the tax inspectors who seem to teach the peasants these wicked things!" The others in the room nodded. Then, Dohei and Sakusuke asked: "Nisuke, there are villages nowadays which have lain in a neglected state for several generations. A few of them have frequently received help from the authorities, but even when they were given sufficient aid to enable them to make a living for a time, it did not take even three or four years for them to revert to their former condition. Why is this so?" Nisuke answered: "Well, such villages will always be in a decayed state, even with generous aid being made available every four or five years as is the present custom. There are good reasons why this should be so. I would like to tell you a little about it, but it is already midday. I think that a long story would no doubt be tiresome to all of you. Come back on the 20th of this month. I shall then tell you about it in detail." The others said: "In that case we shall not fail to come on the 20th." They took their leave and returned to their homes.

4.

On the 20th day of the first month, the peasants like eating heartily, as there is a belief in the countryside that if one has to go hungry that one day, one will often suffer from hunger during the rest of the year as well. In normal years, Nisuke would have been eating millet dough to his heart's content like all the other peasants, but this year he could only eat about as much as would make the sensation of hunger bearable even on a diet of arrowroot cakes, and he felt resentful thinking that he would have to eat many more arrowroot cakes in the days to come. But as it was already past mealtime, all his friends arrived one after the other and began to discuss various problems. Gisuke asked Nisuke: "Would you please go into the question which you left unanswered the other day and tell us now about the decaying villages. What is it all about?" Nisuke answered: "Well, all things are subject to rise and fall, and so there are those villages which are decaying somehow or other although they are favourably located; again, there are decaying villages which begin to flourish again. This is the way of the world. There is, however, good reason why there are one or two villages in any given district which can be defined as "decayed for generations", As of late, decaying villages have been given large amounts of rice and money on request, or else they have been granted such favours as the halving of their tax rate or a reduction in the size of their fields for the purpose of tax assessment in intervals of five or seven years at the most. For some time, the peasants appear to be making a living, but within one or two years after the aid has been given, they revert to their former state. The reason for this is that in former times there lived in this realm, just as in other realms, too, only very few lords here and there. Generally, the borders of their lands were demarcated by rivers and small streams and although they guarded these borders against encroachments by others, they did not build embankments on either side. If some ruler tried to build dikes

he was in some places prevented from doing so by mutual agreement or, in other cases, the task of building dikes along a big stream was too great for insignificant rulers. Those times were full of strife and there was no time for putting one's mind at ease. It is said that they had no wish to bring land under cultivation. They made rivers their border because the water current afforded protection. At times of a flood, the water left the river bed and flooded the river bank and the fields; but it appears that it also withdrew again very quickly. After a flood, there were places which had suffered damage, but on the other hand there were also places where ado[a] was washed up and deposited each year, making these places extremely fertile for growing rice."

Dohei asked: "What does ado mean?" Nisuke said: "Well, well, how can you be ignorant about something as important as the peasant's ado! Maybe it's because you live here in these mountains and do not visit the villages in the plain that you do not know about it. What is known as ado is the sap of decomposed miscanthus and grass which has collected on the mountains during autumn and winter and is then washed away by the heavy summer rains. Together with top soil here and there and sewage from the villages it flows into the rivers, acting as fertilizer where rice fields are flooded completely. It is called ado because the sewage, akashiru, has settled in a new place in the form of a layer of earth, do. Now then, in mediaeval times, lords everywhere perished and each realm came to be ruled by one lord only[b]. From that time onwards, the ruler toured his realm for inspection. He climbed high mountains, and looking down from a lofty height on his fields he surveyed the land far and wide. He changed the course of rivers by having new riverbeds dug, he had dikes built along rivers and streams, he even had the river beach turned into rice fields in some places and into dry fields

[a] Decomposed organic matter.

[b] The following paragraph refers to Katō Kiyomasa (1562-1611), the first ruler of Higo with sufficient power to initiate large-scale land reclamation and river correction projects in several districts of Higo. (See, 159.)

in others. Even fields which had no water supply were irrigated by building dams across rivers and sluices on all sides. This is why this realm has been a major rice producing area for generations. Indeed, the man who achieved all this is justly called "the God of Rice Land Enlargement"[a]. Dohei and Sakusuke said: "With nothing but incessant corvée as you described the peasants must have suffered a great deal." Nisuke answered: "No, no, it appears that the peasants were not called up often enough to cause them hardship; they performed their duties whenever they could spare time in the course of spring and winter. I hear that in those times, unlike nowadays, people were not conscripted for gruelling corvée with utter disregard for the busy seasons in agriculture. Elder Chihaku once told us that in former times, corvée was always postponed until the peasants could spare the time." Dohei and Sakusuke said: "Those were indeed favourable conditions. But if the authorities only conscripted the peasants when they had time to spare, then projects like the construction of buildings must surely have been extremely lengthy affairs." Nisuke answered: "No, not in the least. The reason for that lies in the fact that on all important occasions the lord himself went to give orders concerning all matters; therefore, everyone from the common soldier to the samurai worked as hard as he could and did not rest while building dikes along the rivers and digging new canals. In connection with the construction of a new building, the lord had a temporary residence erected where he wanted to stay, or else had the village headman's house patched up, its surrounding walls strengthened, and its main gate widened in order to conduct his daily business from there. On completion of the work, he would present the village headman with his house just as it was, or again he would give away his temporary residence as a gift to some local peasant who had distinguished himself. There

[a] After his death, Katō Kiyomasa was enshrined as Kiyomasa gongen, i.e. a Buddha who had assumed human shape and descended to earth to help suffering mankind. In a contemporary appreciation of the veneration of Katō, Furukawa states that Katō Kiyomasa was regarded as the most exalted among all the gods of Higo and was worshipped for his achievements in laying the foundation to the domain's prosperity. That the Katō cult was confined to the Higo domain is borne out by Furukawa's own outspoken comment on the person of Katō, who, he says, compared very unfavourably with Tokugawa Ieyasu[8].

are people who have made the lord's residence their dwelling and are even today in possession of it. At that time, the number of rice fields gradually increased, the yield of both irrigated and dry fields was officially determined, and tax was imposed each year. At that point, there appeared increasingly men who took care of these matters. They crushed earth taken from the fields in every village and judged the samples. Based on this survey, they assigned each field a rank, according to the quality of its soil, and thereupon fixed a tax rate in accordance with the yield which could be expected from that field. This is what we still know as land tax (domen). As the tax rate was then more or less in accordance with the quality of the soil there were no hardships for the peasants. There were also floods every three to five years which destroyed all river dikes. They caused damage to some rice fields but at the same time enriched the soil by depositing ado. But later, all dikes were strengthened and so there have been no cases of flooding in recent times, with the consequence that the ado is no longer deposited on the fields where, previously, this used to be the case. It seems that for fifty or seventy years the quality of the soil did not change very much. However, as the ado which had collected on the fields was gradually washed away by the rain, the notoriously barren fields of recent times came into existence. Consequently, the tax rate was no longer in accordance with the quality of the soil, and this is how these villages came to decay for generations. The peasants, being unable to eke out a living whatever they did, had their tax assessed each year by estimating the crop yield, but as I said the other day, the officials based their calculations anyhow on an estimate taken from a senobi field[a]. Even when this is not the case, when the amount of the tax due is not commensurate with the quality of the soil, the peasants suffer distress and the villages are doomed to decay for generations." Gisuke said: "Officials everywhere base their calcu-

[a] (See, TN: 342.)

lations on an estimate taken from a senobi field." Nisuke replied: "This is true, but there is a vital difference in comparison with other villages inasmuch as a high tax rate is imposed on poor land; the fact that the tax is assessed annually does not make any difference. Generally speaking, a tax rate is imposed on the basis of the soil quality, and so I think that it is inconceivable that it would range below half the present tax rate, even if it were assessed annually. Moreover, since the yield has been overestimated in proportion to the quality of the soil, the additional dues as well as labour duties imposed are accordingly too high. If, in spite of the fact that the quality of the soil has deteriorated, the estimate of the yield remains unchanged and, consequently, a high tax rate is imposed, the peasants are ruined without fail. For these reasons, the villages situated along a river are those which are decaying for generations. There is also a reason why now and then such villages can be found among those situated along the mountain slopes as well. When the construction of dikes began, floods were drained off differently and with dams being built in the rivers, sand was washed through the sluice gates with every flood. Thus, the soil got worse with every year that passed and the tax rate was less and less fair. What happened when the peasants applied for a reduction of their tax I have described before; for this and yet other reasons it is inevitable that villages should be decaying for generations. For the same reasons, such decayed villages are practically non-existent in the depth of the countryside[a]." The other men all agreed with what he had said and asked him what could be done to help these villages to become just like any other village again. Even with the generous financial aid made available to them every five or seven years, they remained in their desolate state, perhaps forever.

Nisuke answered: "Indeed, that is so. The people in these

---

[a] The use of the terms inaka and nokata in this sentence is far from clear; judging from the context, however, we may assume that they are used here to indicate fields in the hills and mountains of Higo as opposed to those on the alluvial plain.

decayed villages are peasants like us, but they suffer even more than we do!" Gisuke said: "It would be easy to turn these villages into perfectly normal ones. A petition should be made to the authorities saying that if the tax rate were assessed in proportion to the quality of the soil, these ruined villages would quickly recover again!" Nisuke said reprovingly: "That is indeed a common-place remark! Nevertheless, it seems that the tax rate is very difficult to adjust once it has been fixed. For this reason the villages with a tax rate which is out of all proportion have their fields assessed annually. However, keeping in mind what I said before, our task would be an easy one if the authorities were to lower the tax rate proportionately." Gisuke asked: "Is there not a solution to this problem which does not involve a loss of revenue to the authorities, even if it took a little longer?" Nisuke answered: "The problem could be solved if there was a way of handing out almost at once the full amount of official aid in rice and money which is now given every five or seven years." Gisuke asked: "What would you do with it?" Nisuke explained: "Well, long tide barriers should be constructed in every bay. Some of the land which is thus reclaimed should be turned into rice land, some of it into dry fields. The initial five year period would be tax-free, as is usual with newly opened land. If afterwards one quarter of the annual tax of those decayed villages which are afflicted worst could be raised from these newly reclaimed fields, even those villages would come to prosper quite naturally. If things were arranged in such a way as to make it possible for the amount equivalent to one quarter of the annual tax of the decayed villages to be paid collectively from all the newly reclaimed fields everywhere, those villages would be back to normal within less than twenty years." The others said that they agreed with him about this, but, they objected, even if land were reclaimed everywhere on a massive scale, there would hardly be enough peasants to cultivate it. Nisuke explained: "Along the seashore, rice land is in short supply, and so there are peasants who go

out fishing or even engage in trade since they do not have enough land to cultivate. If land were given to them for cultivation, they would gladly accept. Where it is impossible for the peasants to work on the reclaimed land while living in the nearest village, a new settlement should be built. If the peasants could cultivate their fields from there, any number of peasants would come!" His companions had their doubts about this: "Finding people willing to become peasants will not be as easy as building a new village on reclaimed land!"

Nisuke said: "In recent years, the number of people has increased, and now some places here and there are overpopulated. Some people have become craftsmen, blacksmiths or something of the sort, and travel around the country. This, too, is due to overpopulation. In the castle town there are any number of men who are neither peasants nor craftsmen living a wretched life in a rented tenement or backroom. In normal times, they are the sort of people who do not find it difficult to make a living, but when they meet with a calamity like the one this spring, there must be many among them who would, in spite of everything, feel earnestly tempted to become peasants in the countryside. If, in fulfilment of their wish, these people were trained as peasants for cultivating reclaimed land, any number of new settlements could be populated." The others said: "Some new villages were built here and there on official orders, but for some reason none of them seem to be particularly prosperous!" Nisuke answered: "This is true. The reason for this is the eccessively stringent fiscal terms on which those villages were handed over to the peasants. If they were handed over on conditions which would give these men time to become peasants and somewhat ease their task of making a living, these settlements would certainly grow into villages. If the authorities were to impose fair taxes, as in the story about the Ikoma rod which I told you a few days ago[a], then it would be impossible for the villages not to prosper." Gisuke said: "I agree with you entirely. But is it not a punishable offence to open up new land along the

[a] (See, TN: 347.)

seashore and on the mountain heaths?" Nisuke answered: "Indeed, I hear that those who open up land without permission are punished like criminals. But that must apply to people who do it for their own profit. Doing it in order to save the peasants in decayed villages would not fall into this category. Reclaiming land which is not used at present has a direct bearing upon the face of the decayed villages. As I explained to you just now, when embankments were built along all rivers and strengthened afterwards, the ado was no longer washed onto the rice fields where this used to happen before. The ado was now carried straight into the sea where it was turned back by the incoming tide and deposited along the shores of the bays. Where this was the case, tidal land has been growing in many places since mediaeval times." Dohei and Sakusuke said: "If such tide barriers were to be constructed with conscripted labour, all peasants would suffer a cruel fate!" Nisuke replied: "This would not be done with conscripted labour; the money which is now used as aid for the decayed villages would, as I said before, be used for this purpose. But I think that there would be many miscellaneous costs. Therefore, orders should be given throughout the domain to have all peasants, artisans, and merchants, excluding women-folk, between the age of fifteen and sixty-five pay an annual contribution for five years, amounting to half the sum usually required for exemption from corvée, a sum which would not be unreasonable." Gisuke said: "Indeed, if it is a matter of only paying that much, no suffering at all would be caused. But I have never heard that such a charge has been levied on artisans and merchants!" Nisuke replied: "I see your point, but whatever one might say against this, if it were levied wholly on the peasants' share of the crop, the peasants would suffer hardship. Whatever the other objections might be, it would not be unreasonable to levy this exemption charge on artisans and merchants. It may be unbecoming of me to say something of the sort, but looking broadly at the thousands of people in the various occupations, one cannot find anyone who is not fed by the peasants, although none of these occupations have to feel ashamed on that

account. If new villages were built, the deserted villages would prosper as a matter of course, business would pick up for all kinds of craftsmen, and the volume of trade by merchants would also increase. If things turned out this way, the compassion of the authorities would be plain to the eye, and all men throughout the domain would quite naturally join forces to save the villages which have suffered for such a long time." Dohei and Sakusuke said: "Well, well, we agree with you, but if the sea were made smaller by building tide barriers, would not the Dragon God[a] be angered and cause long rainfalls?" Nisuke said: "That is an old wives' tale which one often hears. There are long rainfalls in spring even when no barriers are being built. These barriers are mostly built in the spring season, and since rain tends to bore people, there is good reason why some discontented fellows should be saying this. Of course, if it were our plan to build barriers for no other reason than simply to harvest rice from the reclaimed land, then extensive rain would be sure to fall; not because of the Dragon God, but because we would have acted against Heaven. Some time ago, Elder Chihaku mentioned that the rain which causes the crop to rot is called "rain of licentiousness" (<u>in'u</u>). But if behind our plan to reclaim land by building a barrier there were a benevolent heart wishing to help the people in the decayed villages, then any rain which happened to fall would stop since the undertaking would be in harmony with Heaven." Gisuke said: "If it were true that rain falls when a tide barrier is constructed, it would be a trifle expensive to have the whole of the peasantry pray for rain in times of drought as in these past three or four years. At such times, peasants should be made to construct tide barriers, reclaim land, and harvest rice from it. This would mean a double gain; we would have both rain and reclaimed land!"

He had hardly finished speaking when Chihaku greeted the assembly as he came through the gate. When he entered the room, they all reverentially vacated their seats and greeted him. Then, they resumed their discussion.

---

[a] (See, 263.)

Chihaku said: "I think, I heard you talking about praying for rain just now. Please, do continue without hesitation!" Dohei and Sakusuke said: "You are quite right. We were talking about how the Dragon God causes long rainfalls when he is angry. Doctor Chihaku, can this be true?" Chihaku answered: "No, no, such a thing does not exist. When the sun-rays scorch the earth in summer, you peasants spend money to have such fellows as Shintō priests and Yamabushi[a] pray for rain. There are various methods, called "Begging for Rain" and "Rain Prayer"[b], but as rain is the result of a transformation in Nature, it cannot be made to fall at the pleasure of some Shintō priest or Yamabushi. None of the ceremonials of any of those men are in the least effective. In their craving for rice and money they deceive everyone by reciting various incantations. It is a great loss to offer them money and ask them for their services." Dohei and Sakusuke protested: "There you are absolutely wrong! There has been a case recently of rain ending a long period of sunshine which had caused the peasants much distress, immediately after prayers for long rain had been recited. If these rituals are as effective as that, then they are a relief for the whole domain." Chihaku replied: "In that case, those who prayed had a stroke of good luck; their prayers coincided with rainfall. Usually, such prayers are said towards the end of a dry period. The priests stay in their shrines for five or seven days to recite their formulae, but as the drought is well past its peak, rain would, of course, fall in any case within these few days, regardless of whether prayers are offered or not. It is naive to think of rain falling on the day the prayers are said as miraculous, since during certain months rainfall can normally be expected. When they pray for rain they set their hopes on this. Rain is produced naturally by the cycle of the five elements. It is unreasonable enough if you peasants pray for changes in the weather, but it is even a greater mistake for you to ask Shintō priests, Yamabushi, and Buddhist monks to offer the prayers in your stead. Since its very beginning, the Universe has always been merciful by virtue of the reason of Nature. It

[a] (See, 259-60.)

[b] (See, 263-5.)

is said that there were cases of rain falling immediately after a ruler had offered such prayers with the utmost humility, motivated by the sincerity of his kind heart and a deep concern for the people of his realm. That indeed is rain sent by Heaven in response to the prayers. It is most welcome!" Nisuke and Gisuke said: "This agrees with what you have always been telling us." Dohei and Sakusuke said: "Listen, regardless of what Doctor Chihaku says, it is most convenient to be able to summon rain instantly by having prayers said at the Kimyō temple[a] in times of drought when the sun scorches all plants and withers them away." Chihaku answered: "This is exactly a case of coincidence as I explained before. To be sure, there seem to be methods for causing rainfalls other than those of Buddhist provenance, but such methods are extremely harmful to the state as a whole, since they only help those who perform the ritual to satisfy their greed for rice and money by deceiving everyone." Dohei and Sakusuke protested: "We cannot think of these rituals as other than completely harmless in every respect." Chihaku replied: "You say that because you yourselves have been deluded. If there is an immediate sign of success, everybody reveres the master of incantation and believes in his powers. This is achieved with the help of non-Buddhist magic, with utter disregard for the disasters which will follow in their wake. I hear that rain may indeed fall immediately afterwards. Sometime later, however, disaster strikes, be it in the form of a raging storm, of extensive rainfalls, or of frost setting in early. When this occurs before the five grains have had time to ripen, a twofold gain turns into a tenfold loss. This causes the country untold harm. Since success is obvious on the day the incantations are recited, everybody thinks highly of him, but men are not aware of the consequences since disaster will strike later. Anyway, it does not matter so much if you peasants indulge in such practices, but when high officials are coaxed by some mercenary monk into having these various ceremonies performed, it is a matter of grave concern." Dohei and Sakusuke said: "As you were speaking, something crossed our minds. There

[a] literally, "Strange Temple".

were cases of rain falling and moistening the soil after prayers had been said. But the rain was followed by raging storms and early frost. No crop bore fruit and we suffered great hardships. Well, Doctor Chihaku, what do you say to that? They say that non-Buddhist methods were used to bring down rain which Heaven did not want to release. Could it be that Heaven, in his indignation, caused the raging storms and early frosts?" Chihaku answered: "No, no, certainly not! Heaven is not a being which makes decisions one way or another. The disaster you mentioned happened because the rain was made to fall not by Buddhist practices which produce rain by activating the ether of the Universe, but instead by non-Buddhist methods which temporarily blind the ether of the Universe. As this obstructs the flow of ether generation (kika) in the Universe, there is non-generation which upsets the proper order of the seasons." The others said: "Indeed, we can see what you mean. Even short solar eclipses have been known to decrease at times the amount of crop harvested." Chihaku agreed: "That appears to be so. Solar eclipses are a normal occurrence, but since they interrupt the circulation of the fire element for a short time, there is only a scanty harvest. It stands to reason that irregularities are even more likely to occur when magic is used to conceal the natural circular motion of ether. Formerly, it seems, the art of making rain and wind was not known either in Shintō or Buddhism. Generally speaking, rain is produced by the interaction of the ether of Heaven and the ether of earth. It is said that as the heavenly ether sinks down it turns into clouds, while the earthly ether rises and turns into rain. But although the earthly ether is said to be rising constantly, it is in reality quiescent; it is the heavenly ether which moves and then suddenly generates rain. For this reason, there are times of continuing sunshine, as well as periods of incessant rainfall. How could people like Shintō priests and Yamabushi command this process as they please? If we want the weather to be regular, then all things should be done in the proper sequence. If all things are done in the right order, then it is logical

that the benefits of the weather will also be in the right order[a]. Remember the saying 'If society is in good order, the seasons, too, will be in good order'!" Gisuke said: "In my opinion that makes sense. But let me return to something you said before. You said that in times long past, the age of the sage kings or something of the sort, there were famines and droughts, too. How do you account for those?" Chihaku answered: "Those were either what we know as visitations (tensai)[b], or else they occurred before the realm became peaceful. I hear that when a sage king ruled a country all things were in good order. One speaks of a visitation when, at a given time, men are in good order but the sequence of the weather is upset. The weather is likely to be upset when people are out of order. From now on, you should consult together and do all things in their proper sequence, as I have said!"

Dohei and Sakusuke said: "Indeed, we agree with you on that point. However, the livelihood of samurai and men like you is hardly ever threatened, whereas all other people have an extremely hard time when they have to go without their usual food. They discard their normal ways of thinking and suddenly begin to entertain bad thoughts! We find it difficult to say this, but the people living in the plain who were honest before are now beginning to do wrong in their misery. Even honest men, when subjected to the actions of self-seeking men like officials, village headmen, and village officials, who only think of ruthlessly pursuing their own profit, devise their own selfish ways to contend with their superiors for the profit. They resort to such evil tricks as plucking out rice-ears stealthily before the re-assessment, or again they slip heavy objects, stones for example, into the rice bags at the time of the annual tax payment. Man's mentality being prone to changes is a fearful thing. It seems that itcan be either good or bad, depending on how those above go about their duties - and I am sure that this does not only apply to those who are below."

---

[a] (See, 32.)

[b] The Confucian scholar Tung Chung Shu (179?-104? B.C.), one of the main exponents of the ideology of the Former Han dynasty, explained visitations as "reprimands of Heaven", with which

As they were speaking, a peasant carrying an old man on his shoulder could be seen walking past on the mountain path below the house. Chihaku asked: "Who are those men?" Nisuke answered: "That old man is from the upper village, his name is Zen'uemon. The young peasant is his son, Zensuke." Chihaku said: "I thought that they were father and son when I saw them. Where are they going like that?" Nisuke replied: "They are going to visit the family grave. Every four or five days they go past my house in the same way. Zen'uemon has four or five children. All of them are kind-hearted and take turns carrying their father along this path." Chihaku said: "It is splendid that all his sons should be like that." Gisuke said: "They could not be any different. Their father, Zen'uemon, is an extremely fine man. He has never in the least been dishonest or unfaithful to his duties; therefore, his children did not know that there were such vices and grew up seeing good things only[a]." Chihaku said: "You are quite right. They say that it is the elders who teach the young to be sensitive to what is good. Furthermore, we can say that unless a father is merciful, his children will not be imbued with filial piety. The parents are like a bowl and the children like water, if I may use a metaphor. If the bowl is square, then the water, too, assumes a square shape. If the bowl has a round shape, the water, too is round. If the source is clear, the stream, too, is clear; in this way, the parents are the source of their children. Indeed,

---

Heaven, in its reluctance to bring ruin upon men, brought existing faults within the nation to the attention of men, thus allowing them to make amends before punishing them with misfortune and calamities[9].

[a] Many similar pious stories, in which the virtues of filial piety, humility, and self-effacement are extolled, may be found in, Nakamura, Higo Kōshiden (The Lives of Filial Sons of Higo). Compiled in 1782 on special orders of Hosokawa Shigekata, the carrying of mother or father on visits to shrines or temples plays an important part in many of these stories. Here, it is used as an allegory to point out that the good example of government officials is of decisive importance to instil the wish to support the government in the peasantry. (See, 108-9.)

we may get to know the mind of parents by looking at the filial affection of their children!" Dohei and Sakusuke said: "Doctor Chihaku, our children and grand-children must on no account ever be told what you have just said!" Chihaku allayed their fears: "Of course, I have told you this since all three of you are parents. For the children, there are other, more suitable, stories."

Nisuke said: "It will be midday shortly; if we go hungry today we shall suffer from hunger throughout the year, and so I would like to offer you something to eat, even though it is only rice, arrowroot cakes, and tea." When he served the food, he said to Chihaku: "It is only a very plain meal, but please do stay and eat with us!" They all enjoyed their meal thoroughly. Nisuke said: "Doctor Chihaku, as you can see for yourself, we have had no food since last month and so we have been living since then on a diet consisting of various things like nuts and roots of plants. In particular, we are eating these cakes made of arrowroot starch, but will this not be harmful in the long run?" Chihaku answered: "The arrowroot is a plant with good qualities. We doctors even use it as medicine. It brings out a healthy complexcon, reduces fever, and is also used to put spleen and stomach in order. No matter how much of it you eat, I would never tell you to stop." Nisuke said: "If it is a medicinal plant, eating it during spring will not do us any harm, but among the various nuts and plant leaves there may be some which are harmful." Chihaku answered: "No, no, among the ordinary nuts and plant leaves there are not many harmful ones. But if someone who, in normal times, is used to eating the five cereals can no longer eat those, and is, moreover, unable to eat his fill even on a diet of nuts and plant leaves, it goes without saying that his whole constitution will be weakened. With an empty stomach he is an easy prey to disease. Therefore, in years of famine as this year, seasonal fever (shōkan) and epidemics (oneki)[a] are prevalent in the world."

[a] There are only minor differences between shōkan and oneki; their exact definition varies in the different medical traditions. Generally speaking, shōkan is used as a generic for all diseases accompanied by fever and includes all symptoms of influenza, together with ague, pneumonia, and diarrhea. Some

Sakusuke said: "That is true. Our fathers have told us the same thing. Formerly, in years of unrelieved starvation, a great many people succumbed to fever which ravaged the land." Dohei asked: "Why would such diseases prevail in periods of starvation? Is it because this disease is associated with poverty that the God of Disease plagues us when he sees that we are starving?" Chihaku said: "Not at all. If disease strikes this spring and summer, several things will happen when the suffering is widespread. For one thing, the Shintō priests and Yamabushi, who prayed for rain, among other things, last year, will, in their greed for rice and money, delude the ignorant in many ways with their prayers for recovery from fever. You will be able to see that for yourself. It's deplorable!" Dohei and Sakusuke protested: "Whatever you may say, against disease nothing but prayers will help!" Chihaku replied: "It stands to reason that you should say that. Since dignified and exalted persons have made you believe this I can understand your reaction, but this idea is nevertheless grossly mistaken." Dohei and Sakusuke said: "If that is true, what should then be done to appease the God of Disease?" Chihaku explained: "Neither a God of Fever nor a God of Epidemic have ever existed. The reason why disease prevails during times of starvation is, as was the case last year, that the peasants and the poor in the towns cannot even take their warm clothes out of pawn and so have to suffer from the cold during winter[a]. The cold allows noxious vapours to enter the body; if these vapours are sufficiently potent, they cause illness before the end of the year or at the beginning of spring, but even the weak vapours affect the good health of people. Among those who meet with the yang ether of spring and summer while they are hungry and feel dizzy, there are many who are attacked by a high fever, because these noxious vapours take a sudden effect. If one person in a household develops this disease,

medical texts describe oneki as a contagious variety of shōkan, hence my translation as "epidemic"[10].

[a] The following explanation matches exactly that of traditional Chinese medicine as quoted in the Ishinhō, the oldest Japanese medical text, dating back to 984[11].

the rest of the family come down with it as well since everyone in a given house is infected with these vapours. This is what we call typhoid fever and I agree with what people say about this disease being contagious. Now, famine occurs when the heavenly and earthly ether are insufficiently produced, causing first irregularities and then upsetting the order of the seasons altogether, and, with storms raging and frost and snow descending on the fields, the five cereals cannot ripen. Noxious vapours arise as a consequence of the lack of heavenly and earthly ether and the irregularity of the seasons. Those exposed to these vapours fall ill on the spot as their stomachs and spleens have no energy. The sick person, if he is at home, passes the infection on to all the others with empty stomachs just as quickly as dry wood catches fire. This is what we call an epidemic. There is nothing to suggest that spirits are responsible for this disease. This is why villages in the countryside which go through hardships are attacked by this disease. It is absolutely ridiculous that Shintō priests, Yamabushi, and Buddhist priests offer prayers to fight the disease. To us doctors it is clear from our medical books that only the ignorant can blame spirits for the disease and try to cure the sick by exposing them to the wind or bedding them in a damp place. A book entitled "Explanation of the Names of Disease" (Byōmeikai)[a] describes how the spirits of epidemic crossed the Yangtze river to the south, carrying countless coffins, but since in this case, too, the story goes that it was a priest who saved the situation, we must not take any notice of it. As always, we must not accept everything in

[a] The correct title of this medical text is Byōmei ikai (A Collection of Names of Diseases and their Explanation). Compiled by Katsura Shūshi, it was published in 8 volumes in 1686. Besides exact descriptions of all known diseases, it contains numerous quotations from Chinese sources. The gist of the story alluded to here is that someone in a monk's garb, "presumably a supernatural being", warned a ferryman of five men who would follow a little later and handed him a piece of paper with magical characters written on it. In the event, the charm worked and the five men, all spirits of epidemic in disguise, fled, leaving their baskets filled with 300 tiny coffins behind[12].

print. We ought to ignore that which is bad and make use of that alone which is good." Dohei and Sakusuke said: "There we agree entirely with you. What is the best way to avert infection with this disease?" Chihaku answered: "If you always see to it that your stomach is not completely empty, you will hardly catch the disease. For the Shintō priest and the Yamabushi, an epidemic or a similar disease is a windfall. Deep down in my heart, I cannot but admire parents who pray for the recovery of their children, and children who pray to save their parents from death, although they are mistaken as to the real cause of the disease. The bad thing about all this is that Shintō priests and Yamabushi take advantage of the peasants' weakness and deceive them in their greed for rice and money. Nowadays, there are people who indulge in dubious practices under the name of Primal Shintō (yuitsu sōgen no shintō)[a], but originally, such rituals were unknown to that sect. Unlike Dual Shintō (ryōbu shintō)[b], it did not adopt

[a] The Primal Shintō school, founded in the 15th century by Yoshida Kanetomo (1435-1511), is based on a radical re-interpretation of the earlier honji suijaku doctrine (see, note b, below). Buddhist deities were now considered to be manifestations (skt. avatār) of Japanese native gods, from which followed that all foreign teachings were offshoots of Shintō - an idea which was to be of great importance as stepping stone to the development of introverted ethnocentrism and nationalism in later centuries. Otherwise, the teachings of this school lack originality; they are little more than regurgitations of Buddhist philosophy, mainly Shingon esotericism, with Shintō terminology substituted for the original Buddhist terms.

[b] Dual Shintō is a form of union between Shintō and Buddhism which attempts to explain Shintō in terms of the Diamond and Womb mandala (paintings which explain the position of each Buddha in the cosmos) of Shingon Buddhism, equating them with the Inner and Outer shrines of Ise. Its doctrine of honji suijaku declared the native gods to be manifestations of Buddhist deities, mostly from the pantheon of the Shingon sect. This rapprochement between Shintō and Shingon introduced a variety of magic practices into Shintō, e.g. incantations, ritual fire ceremonies, charms, signs, and methods of instruction, all of which by the middle ages had come to be accepted as integral part of Shintō even by purist scholars[13]. For our author, this is yet another example of the corrupting influence of Buddhist thought on native institutions.

any magic practices, but instead devoted itself exclusively to the straightforward and plain Way of the Gods. For this reason, it was called Primal Shintō. Such magic practices were first adopted by the Buddha in India when he practiced asceticism. At that time, many of the other religions were intent on destroying the Way of the Buddha by means of magic. Therefore, the Buddha, too, practiced magic in order to escape misfortune. Although this was incompatible with his teachings, he made use of magic in order to counter magic. Later, when Buddhism gradually began to flourish, magic was still used to repel heresy and to spread Buddhism. This is called 'esoteric Buddhism'. When Buddhism was brought to T'ang[a], esoteric Buddhism, too, was transmitted along with it. And then, Buddhism was, at last, brought to our country. Later, Kūkai and other monks[b] went to T'ang to receive the teachings of both exoteric and esoteric Buddhism in order to transmit them, but when they spread these teachings upon their return to these shores, nobody would believe them. Therefore, they practiced esoteric Buddhism to show the people miracles, making the mysterious an expedient for spreading the Way. As Buddhism came to flourish, many ignorant priests believed that the esoteric teachings represented the mysteries of Buddhism. But, in fact, such miracles and wonders as the ones we were talking about are of minor importance in Buddhism. Although Kōbō Daishi[c], who is held in high esteem as the founder of esoteric Buddhism, received the adulation of the masses for performing various

---

[a] Chinese dynasty, 618-907 A.D.

[b] Kūkai (774-835) was the founder of the Shingon sect with its headquarters on Mt. Kōya. Kūkai had joined a Japanese embassy to China in 804, where he became a disciple of Hui-Kuo at the capital of Ch'ang-an. Shortly before his death in 805, Hui-kuo divulged the mysteries of esoteric Buddhism to Kūkai, who after his return to Japan in 806 formulated them into a doctrine and established the Shingon sect. Among the "other monks" mentioned here, the most famous was Saichō (767-822), who travelled to China on the same mission and who was to establish the Tendai sect on Mt. Hiei upon his return to Japan.

[c] Posthumous name of Kūkai.

magical feats, like causing water to pour forth where there was none before by making magical signs with his fingers, he made it clear to all men in his writings that in the final analysis there is no place for miracles in true Buddhism. This should be sufficient to convince you. Well, back in mediaeval times, the relatives of the founder of the Primal Shintō sect included a monk who had mastered the practices of esoteric Buddhism. He practiced the art of working miracles. The founder of the Primal Shintō sect studied these methods secretly. After he had mastered them thoroughly, he replaced their names by those of various Shintō functions and, adding them to the main body of Primal Shintō rituals, kept them as secrets to be handed down in his family. Those who nowadays perform various magical ceremonies calling them Primal Shintō rituals belong to this school." The listeners said that with this detailed account they had, for the first time, a chance to hear how complicated this problem was, and that one could not understand it unless one heard how it had come about. Chihaku went on: "You have understood what I have been talking about just now, and it would be good for you to be sceptical about supernatural phenomena at all times. Since Buddhist temples have special places set aside for reciting esoteric prayers we may assume that there are effective prayers in true Buddhism, but let me say that at any rate no prayer is as effective as showing restraint in one's behaviour and observing the rules of conduct in one's station in life. If one believes in the supernatural, many supernatural things are bound to happen, and the need for prayers will arise, be it for one thing or another. That is plain to see. It is like scholars being visited by other scholars at all times, non-stop talkers calling at the homes of people who like to talk, and gamblers assembling at the home of someone fond of gambling." Nisuke said: "It is just as you say!"

Dohei asked: "It is a well-known fact that chatter-boxes and gamblers are like that, but why should scholars be that

way?" Gisuke answered: "It appears that this is a kind of practice aimed at throwing light on the nature of all things by reading all sorts of writings. I have also heard that scholars concern themselves with the writing of poems and discourses. Is that really so?" Dohei added: "And does that serve any useful purpose at all?" Chihaku answered: "There is not much point in talking to you about the pursuit of learning, but since you have asked me about it, I shall roughly outline for you what you want to know. Well, the writing of poems and discourses by scholars is of minor importance in scholarship; I think, they call it something like 'liberal arts'. The main branch of scholarship, in fact, seems to be concerned with rectifying the mind and leading a virtuous life, and with learning how to go about ruling the empire and the individual domain peacefully." Dohei said: "Well, well, studying that may be a good thing. But I wonder whether this has not become unnecessary now that we have both a Shogun and a local ruler in each domain. Even a scholar would be hard put to find somewhere to rule peacefully!" Chihaku replied: "It is quite natural that you peasants should entertain such doubts. The pursuit of learning is something which companions of ignorant practitioners like myself cannot know about. However, during my recent visit to the castle town, I was called to the home of a samurai who requested treatment. While I was staying there for a while as his guest, many of his friends arrived to inquire after his health. During one such visit, the samurai's son addressed one of the visitors, a scholar, and said that he was approaching the marriageable age and that he, too, was thinking of devoting himself to learning. Upon this, he asked the scholar what the essence of learning was. The scholar began by congratulating the young man on his formidable decision, of which he highly approved. Then, he went on and said that he, too, was ignorant about the path of learning and that he therefore found it difficult to answer his question. However, he said, he still remembered what an older scholar had once told him, and so he would sum up what he had heard to answer his question. Learning, according to that scholar, was a vast and boundless subject, but,in short, it meant discovering the principle (ri) in all things in the Universe and extending

one's virtue to the whole empire to free the people from anxiety. Apparently, learning meant assiduously studying the path of righteousness as taught by the sages of ancient times in their writings which describe, with all due respect, how the Shogun should rule the empire and how the lord should rule his domain, besides defining the function of the lord's ministers and other things of the sort and laying down the regulations concerning each official. Regardless of how clever and talented one was born, one still had to learn, otherwise all one's efforts were like shooting birds in the dark when all one could go by were their voices. One would miss them, but even if one chanced to score a hit, it would be but a lucky shot, a happy coincidence in timing, and not the result of deliberate action. The actions of a man who had reached the stage where he could understand human nature in every place, at any time, and in every station in life, could be compared to someone who sets up a target in bright daylight and, sitting up straight, shoots an arrow at it with superb skill. It was like never failing to choose the quiver with the arrows which will hit the target unfailingly. Therefore, every man should devote himself to learning like the samurai. If a time came when learning was no longer popular, he said, the bad effects would be obvious in no time at all. Loyalty and filial piety among the four classes would be weakened; above all, luxuries would increasingly be indulged in, and public morals would degenerate. One could not name even one positive aspect. For this reason, the authorities were making various efforts to revive the people's interest in learning, erecting buildings for studying both the literary and military arts in every domain[a] for this purpose. I overheard the scholar's explanation through the wall as I was sitting in the adjoining room. It impressed me so deeply that I can remember it even today." While Chihaku was speaking, all

---

[a] These were the domain schools (hangaku, hankō). Although the first domain school was founded as early as 1634, it was not until the Hōreki period (1751-63) that these institutions became increasingly common throughout Japan. About half the total number of domain schools which existed at the end of the Tokugawa period were founded after the Kansei reform. (See, 109 ff.)

the others were silent, only yawning quietly now and then.

Gisuke said: "It's midday again. Shouldn't we all go home?" Chihaku said: "Today, I, too, have been talking for a long time and have surely tired you, Nisuke. Well, with all these various topics, there is something I forgot to tell you. On the 25th of this month, I would like to invite you to a cup of new sake, as I did last year. It is nothing special, but please do join me on that day at my house after breakfast!" And looking at the other three peasants, he extended his invitation to them as well, saying: "I should really have come to your homes to invite you personally, but please accept all the same!" The others accepted his invitation: "We shall come together as usual!" Chihaku said: "In that case, I expect to see all of you." They all bade Nisuke farewell and left together with Chihaku.

5.

On the 25th day of the first month, Chihaku visited all the peasants in his neighbourhood to invite them to his house, waving a jug of new _sake_ which he had brewed himself. He apologized to them: "I should have prepared a clear soup of sardines, but you all know how difficult it was at the end of last year to make preparations for the New Year celebrations, and so nothing has come of it. It is all very improvised. But let us enjoy our _sake_, even if that is all we have!" The peasants said: "We are much obliged to you for this. New _sake_ is the most precious thing this New Year. We received orders from our village headman not to brew _sake_ at all, nor to make any rice cakes, and so we do not feel at all as if we are celebrating the New Year." Nisuke added: "In a year like this, how could we brew _sake_ anyway, even if we got the usual orders to do so? This year, it is thanks to Doctor Chihaku that we can all get together to celebrate the New Year." Upon this, they all empties their cups and, after having thanked Chihaku, they took their leave. Only Nisuke, Gisuke, Sakusuke, and Dohei remained behind and talked together. Sakusuke said: "Doctor Chihaku, during the past few years, less and less water has been coming down the rivers everywhere. That is quite strange." Chihaku agreed: "Indeed, people everywhere are saying this, but, like everybody else, I have no clue as to why the rivers should have become so shallow. I do not know about the early period of Japanese history, but I have never heard of festivals to worship the gods of mountains and rivers in recent times. Perhaps that explains it. Again, we are already past the peak of one 'Heaven's Cycle' (_genki_)[a]. Therefore, we cannot know whether

[a] A Heaven's Cycle, according to the Neo-Confucian philosopher Shao Yung (1011-77), lasted 129'600 years; it was the space of time needed by the physical Universe to complete one full revolution of growth and decay. This idea of a finite Universe undergoing a cycle of growth and decay, ending in ultimate destruction and birth of a new Universe, was a Chinese interpretation of the Buddhist theory of world periods (_kalpa_) in terms of the growth and decay of the _yin_ and _yang_ as represented by the sixty-four hexagrams. According to Shao, the apogee of the present cycle was marked by the rule of the legendary Emperor Yao in the middle of the third millenium B.C. For a full account of this theory, see, Fung, _Chinese Philosophy_, vol. 2, 469-74.

the amount of water is decreasing together with the gradual decline of the whole creation, or whether it increases or decreases depending on how things go in this world." Nisuke said: "What you say makes sense, but if the ancient times were no different in that they had no such festivals either, there is no reason why the water should have begun to decrease only during the past few years. Anyway, what do you mean when you say 'Heaven's Cycle'? Chihaku answered: "One 'Heaven's Cycle' means one full world cycle." Nisuke said: "If we were approaching the end of the world, should not the whole of creation be affected by the decline? Why should it affect the water alone? If man, too, declined together with the world around him, he would not notice that the amount of water was decreasing. Furthermore, if water really increased and decreased with the ups and downs of the world, then the water in the wells would have to be affected in the same way, but nowhere does one hear of great changes in the amounts of water in the wells. In my opinion, the reason for the decrease in water in recent years lies in the fact that the area of untouched remote mountains has been greatly reduced owing to afforestation, in the course of which miscanthus had to give way to pine trees on many plateaus and mountains during the past few years. It seems that the decrease of the amount of water paralleled the growth of these trees." Chihaku said: "You are quite right. As more and more mountains are put to use, it goes without saying that the yin ether is weakened and the strength of the river water below is sapped[a]. Whenever pine trees, which belong to yang, are planted on empty plateaus, it is no wonder that the soil dries out and the yin disappears. Both these points are quite reasonable. It appears that this is why in recent years, summers have seen insufficient rainfall as evening showers occur less often." Dohei and Sakusuke asked: "What exactly do you mean by that?" Chihaku went on to explain:

---

[a] In the Neo-Confucian cosmogony, the five elements (water, fire, wood, metal, and earth)are explained as the result of the transformation of the yang and the congealings of the yin[14].

"Roughly speaking, evening showers result from the moisture which rises on hot days from the deep parts of the rivers and mixes with the cool mountain air which has come from the mist-enshrouded recesses of the mountains. When this happens, rain and thunder follow immediately." Everybody in the room expressed astonishment.

Gisuke went on: "Well, even though remote mountains were formerly untouched, recent afforestation of large areas with pine trees could hardly have hindered the cool mountain air from rising, or could it?" Chihaku replied: "One would not expect any changes to arise from afforestation, but if pine or another kind of tree is planted near a village on a mountain-side which has lain waste since ancient times, the mountain, being deprived of yin, can no longer produce the yin ether. These trees belong to yang, as I said before, and so the soil dries up and the cool mountain air disappears. Mountains covered with miscanthus are by far superior because they produce cool mountain air. There is the saying 'Pile up earth to make a mountain, and wind and rain will rise up from it. Pile up water to make a river, and the flood dragon[a] will appear.' I think that, as a rule, both mountains and rivers must retain their original form." The others agreed with him: "In these days, when more and more pine trees are planted on the mountains above here, the water has stopped flowing on the rice fields up there. What is more, it causes us sorrow to see how both dry fields and irrigated fields turn into extremely poor land in the vicinity of pine trees." Chihaku said: "The soil becomes infertile because the pine trees dry up the soil completely."

---

[a] Read 蛟 instead of 蚊[15]. This phrase is an almost verbatim quotation from Hsün Tzu where it is used as an allegory to illustrate that brilliant achievements were founded on piling up little steps and determined effort[16]. Here, it is used in different meaning as one of the allegories in the TN. In the lore of Chinese tradition, the flood dragon, as the "one among the water creatures that is divine"[17], stands for the ruler of men. Like the flood dragon, who can maintain its divinity only as long as it rides on water, the ruler of men can only maintain his position of authority as long as he is supported by the people and Nature.

The peasants confirmed what he had said: "That is true. Their sap is poison for the soil and extremely harmful to cultivation. The crop does not turn out well, regardless of how much fertilizer one applies to the soil. According to what old people are saying, there were no pine trees around here at all until about fifty years ago, only miscanthus fields and other trees. But during these last few years, the authorities have rooted out the miscanthus on fields and mountains everywhere and have replaced it by pine trees. Now, there are only few places left where we peasants are allowed to cut grass. Places to cut firewood are, of course, disappearing as well. This, in particular, causes a lot of trouble and distress. Each year the wooded area is enlarged. We wonder what this will lead to in the future. This year, they had pines and other trees planted on a plot of open land where, until last year, we would cut grass without hindrance. Now that it has become a domain forest, lined with stakes on all four sides displaying notices which strictly prohibit man or beast from entering the ground, we are on no account allowed in. Those who ignore these notices and cause damage to the woods are treated as criminals." Chihaku said: "I can see what you mean. But when a certain hill is turned into a domain forest, say in the case of that hill in our village, is it not so that the officials in charge of the woodland should carry out an investigation and thereupon have the authorities issue an official notice granting the peasants in this village free access to the forest, although it is now state-controlled?" Nisuke answered: "That is how it should be, but neither the village headman nor the village forest keeper can bring themselves to tell the officials in charge of the woodland where they may bar peasants from entering and where not. This is because they think that protesting is incompatible with their standing as officials. All peasants depend on the village officials; if the latter agree with everything without protesting then the peasants stand an even smaller chance of making themselves heard. It is really a sad state of affairs. The way things are at present, peasants living in villages in the deep country-

side like ours do not fare too badly, but peasants living near the larger villages in the plain lose the places where they used to cut grass as well as miscanthus and brushwood to be used as fuel, and so, naturally enough, they turn to stealing their supplies of these materials from other domain forests which were established earlier on. For every newly afforested mountain, one mountain which has existed for some time already is devastated. After all, no peasant is likely to respect government property at times when one after another of the places where until recently he had been allowed to cut grass are turned into domain forests!" Gisuke agreed with him: "If there were enough places for the peasants to cut grass and miscanthus or brushwood for fuel, and if, moreover, there were only a limited number of domain forests, then the peasants would, no doubt, regard these forests as highly precious and would be careful not to pick up even a single leaf of brushwood." The others all agreed. Then, Sakusuke said: "These pine forests spreading everywhere are a real nuisance. Neither ox nor horse will eat any grass cut in the vicinity of pine trees, and even if they do, their manure makes very poor fertilizer with the consequence that the fields become infertile. However, when we tell our servants or our children to go out and cut grass, adding that it won't matter where they cut it as long as they bring some home, they invariably cut some along the pine tree mountains. It is really pitiful!" Nisuke asked: "Is it not the case that the crops have fared poorly in recent years because all the mountain plateaus have become densely covered with pine trees?" Chihaku doubted this: "Can one really generalize and say that the growth of pine trees on some distant mountain plain has any influence on the rice fields near the villages?" Nisuke answered: "Indeed one can. The summer rain washes the drops of pine tree sap from the mountains into the rivers and then through the sluice gates on the rice fields. All fields which are irrigated with such water are bound gradually to become less and less fertile. As you know, Doctor Chihaku, we peasants

cannot tell causes from results; we talk only about things which we can see with our own eyes. The officials in charge of the woodland keep on saying that these forests are for the good of the authorities, but when it comes to fields being ruined and river water decreasing to such an extent, then, leaving the authorities' good aside for once, it amounts to nothing else but the gradual reduction in size of productive land." Chihaku said: "Indeed, each realm with much land under cultivation is likely to include, on the whole, mountain areas as well, much in the same way that limbs are attached to man's body. Generally speaking, it is the ruler of a realm who provides for the nourishment of the people, with mountains and rivers providing for his needs. People should not therefore be indifferent to mountains and rivers. They provide the nourishment for all fields, and for this reason they are worshipped in China. If there are mountains there are rivers; if there are rivers there are rice fields; if there are rice fields there are people; if there are people there is a ruler. Therefore, it follows that it is the mountains and rivers which nourish the people." The others agreed: "That is indeed so. Miscanthus plateaus and miscanthus mountains may appear to be of no use except for the peasants to cut grass and miscanthus, but they do have one beneficial effect which is not generally known. Miscanthus sap is washed away and deposited on the rice fields where it enriches the soil." Chihaku said: "Indeed, that is likely. But on the other hand, trees like cedar and cypress would hardly cause any damage even when newly planted." Nisuke said: "Those trees do not decrease the amount of water, so they would not cause too much harm to the villages. But the best thing is still to have no trees at all. It is only bamboo that the land cannot do without. It may be for this reason that since ancient times, bamboo has always grown wild, untended by human hands, clustering on mountains where it could be felled to satisfy the needs of the land. These were the original domain forests." Chihaku said: "I agree with what you say. Just like hair and eyebrows growing on man by nature, mountains, too,

are subject to the Heavenly Principle (tenri) of Nature." Nisuke said: "That is so. If, nowadays, various trees are newly planted here and there in places where they could not be found before, they cannot thrive, although for some time they might seem to grow well." Chihaku said: "That is the Heavenly Principle. Again, mountainous realms with little arable land are forced to raise revenue from sources other than land, and so they plant all sorts of trees on their territory which would not grow in realms with extensive rice land but which fit in with the local vegetation; they also cultivate plants whose seeds are used for oil production. Therefore, timber and oil have been the local products of such regions since ancient times. Other regions with large areas of fields produce cereals on a large scale; so, cereals are their local product. There is no use in planting various trees on mountain plateaus even if they return revenue, if, at the same time, large areas of rice land are ruined. That is just like planting all things under the sun on one's fields when one can earn plenty of money by concentrating on the production of cereals."

The others all said: "That is so. For this reason we think that the officials in charge of the woodland had, as a rule, better treat those mountains afforested up to the present day with the utmost care, and see to it that they are preserved in good condition so that new projects become unnecessary. Here, too, much depends on the location. All factors having been considered thoroughly, it would be best to plant trees where they do not become a hindrance to peasants or on a mountain which is already owned by the authorities. Above all, one cannot know the countryside by just looking at it unfeelingly. That is something which we peasants just cannot understand at all. We think that the district headman and the officials in charge of the woodland should above all else know how to make the best use of land." Dohei asked: "What do you mean by that?" Chihaku answered: "By this I mean generally the knowledge of

the natural features of other regions, their mountains and rivers without having gone there oneself. It appears that this knowledge can also be put to use for military purposes, but that does not mean that someone in office should not know anything about it. If the officials in the countryside knew about it and had a thorough knowledge of the mountains, rivers, and rice fields in their district, they would know beforehand that in our case rice fields over a distance of three to five ri will turn barren if they go ahead and plant pine trees on the mountains above which supply the fields with water. An official can be said to have a knowledge of how to make the best use of land when he knows all this and more about mountains and rice fields." While he was speaking, a man had come in, making apologies for disturbing them. Chihaku asked him which village he had come from. The man answered: "I live in the Kamiyama village. I am sorry to inconvenience you, but a friend of mine has injured himself and has asked me to come to you and beg you to visit him by all means." Chihaku said: "No trouble at all. I shall go at once to look after him. What sort of an injury is it?" The man answered: "My friend deals in wooden planks which he carries around all day long. With these planks on his back he can only see just a little ahead of him but not sideways, and so he fell from a path which runs along the top of a dike, breaking his back. Until now, he had even saved up a little from his earnings, but that will be the end of it now; he will be crippled for the rest of his days[a]." Chihaku said: "That is a serious case. Let us go quickly then!" Saying this, he got up from his seat. The others said good-bye and thanked Chihaku for his hospitality. Then, the four peasants left together. Sakusuke came back once more and said: "Doctor Chihaku, on the 28th day of this month, the first commemoration of Shinran's[b] death this year, we come together at my house to hold a memorial

---

[a] (For the interpretation of this allegory, see, 301.)

[b] Shinran (1173-1262) was the founder of the Jōdo shinshū (True Pure Land) sect, the most important of the Pure Land sects.

service. It is nothing special, but please do join us on that day!" Chihaku accepted the invitation: "I shall come by all means." Then he went to see his patient.

6.

On the 28th day of the first month, it was Sakusuke's duty to organize the memorial service. All of his friends had assembled at his house. The officiating priest was a monk called Dōmei[a] who lived in a small temple in the village below. When he sat upright in the correct sitting posture on his seat in front of an image of the Buddha to perform the ritual, the peasants waited for Chihaku to take his seat and then sat down themselves. After the service was over and they had finished their midday meal, they all sat together and talked about various things. Gisuke said: "What do all of you think about this? This month nobody has failed to turn up since it was the first memorial service of the year. But by next month, I think, most people will not come anymore." Nisuke said: "Indeed, even this month we could only just manage to come, to say nothing of the other peasants! Although it does not cost more than about six gō of polished rice, we find ourselves unable to pay even that little in a spring like this. It would be better to put off the memorial services for a while until the barley and rape seeds are ready to be harvested." Dōmei cut in before anyone else could utter a word: "Well, well, what a sacrilegious thing to say! Someone who proposes suspending the important memorial services for

[a] literally, "Strayed-from-the-right-Path".

even one month is a wicked sinner! One must repay the blessing of the Buddha's immense compassion even if it means having to grind one's body to dust. It is impossible to repay the blessings of the founder of our religion[a] and the exalted priests who followed him even if we were to break our bones. With this in mind, I shall not allow you to suspend the memorial services for even one day as long as you have one gō or one shaku of food left and as long as there is some life in you! Those who keep away from the temples and the priests are the servants of Hell. They are doomed to countless world periods[b] in Hell without hope for salvation!" As he was speaking, everybody in the room broke into a cold sweat, and, taking it all very seriously, they invoked the name of the Buddha over and over with trembling tongues. Dōmei continued: "All of you listen well to what I say. For many years now, it has been my greatest ambition to have a temple of my own, but nowadays, as you well know, it is not possible to build temples at one's pleasure. With the famine this spring, the authorities will surely hand out relief supplies of rice, so I thought I would take advantage of this happy circumstance to make a donation to the authorities to make my lifelong wish come true[c]. As you can see, I have no savings at all; so will all of you please make a generous donation!" The peasants said: "This is an excellent plan of yours. As to the donations you mentioned, about how much would you need?" Dōmei answered: "Well, three kanme would be quite enough." The peasants said: "That is rather a large amount, but we shall get it together somehow or other with the help of the kōjū[d] in the neighbouring villages.

[a] (See, TN: 413n.)

[b] skt. kalpa, jap. gō

[c] (See, 269-70.)

[d] Kōjū, or kō, were groups of followers of the Shinshū sect. From their practice of mutual aid this term later came to be used in the more general sense of a "co-operative credit club", sometimes in the form of a lottery, with the purpose of collecting money for a pilgrimage to one of the major temples.

We cannot hope, however, to collect all of it at once from the kōjū in the vicinity this spring. We shall raise one kan and 500 monme from the kōjū in our two or three villages and borrow the other half for you at the brewer's in the town of Yamashita." Dōmei said: "Will you do that for me?" The peasants said: "Yes, that is what we are going to do. If we hand over a deed complete with the seals of each one of us, stating that we shall all be responsible for repaying the loan, we can get one or two kanme anywhere. Well, it would be most imprudent of us not to take care of the wishes of a priest who is so dear to us, even if we have to go without food and clothing. We might even be doomed to Hell, mightn't we?" Chihaku said: "Dōmei, in recent years Buddhism has been flourishing, the sect to which you belong in particular, and so the priests and monks everywhere are indeed comfortable." Dōmei answered: "That is true, it is just as you say. In these degenerate days, everybody embraces Buddhism and becomes a follower of my own or some other sect. This has been brought about wholly by what we call the manifestation of the boundless compassion of Mida[a]. There is good reason why my sect should do extremely well in this degenerate age. Unlike all others, my own sect is not primarily concerned with helping those who are virtuous, but those who have sinned to attain Buddhahood. He who brings donations to the temple and utters just once 'Praised be the name of Amida Buddha' can be sure to be reborn in the Pure Land, regardless of how many sins he has committed and without any vows or ascetic exercises. The moment he dies, a lotus flower will grow in Paradise which will be his to sit on, his skin will turn into the purest gold and he will attain the same enlightenment as Mida. This is the destiny of everyone who practices the invocation of the Buddha's name according to the teachings of the Shinshū sect." Chihaku said: "That is indeed a splendid doctrine! Wherever one goes in the country the people are followers of the Shinshū sect, and so the Shinshū

[a] Amida, skt. Amitābhā, is the Buddha of the Boundless Light.

temple buildings have grown bigger in recent years in the countryside, too; with decorations more magnificent than ever and the priests living a life of comfort." Dōmei answered: "That is so. Since my sect is flourishing everywhere, all its temples have become impressive, but those temples which receive large amounts of stipends are particularly well-off." Chihaku asked: "Are stipends also granted to priests in the countryside?" Dōmei replied: "No, those are not stipends given to us by the authorities. What we call stipends are amounts given to us by the followers of our temples." Chihaku said: "I see what you mean. At present, priests are generally more influential than those who govern the realm. They live a life of luxury; whenever one looks at a temple in the countryside, the air is full of song, recitals of ballad-dramas to the accompaniment of _shamisen_[a], folk-songs, or _shamisen_ music. It is a prosperous scene indeed!" Dōmei added: "You are quite right. Nowadays _sȧke_ banquets are all the rage. Regardless of how deep one's knowledge of Buddhism is, if one does not excel in the art of drinking and dancing, one is abused by one's fellow priests and called a fool."[b]

Chihaku said: "It is no doubt as you say. Since priests everywhere are kept busy at _sȧke_ banquets, how could there be one among them who does not excel in these arts? I sometimes visit patients who live near temples. In recent years, when walking past these temples, I often see priests of different sects assembled there without discrimination. They attach a small target to the main hall of the temple and then take turns shooting small arrows at it with light bows, right in front of the Buddha's image. Something which looks to me like money keeps changing hands. Other people who are also engaged in all these activities appear to have gone there to offer prayers; there are doctors, country samurai, as well as Shintō priests, horse-doctors and others, also some who look like village scribes. I suppose they are all worshippers but what sort of

[a] A three-stringed banjo-like instrument.

[b] The five precepts of Buddhism strictly prohibit believers, priests as well as laymen, from drinking intoxicating beverages.

a religious ceremony could that be. Is it one of the rituals described in the "Three Sutras"[a], like all the other ceremonies are?" Dōmei answered: "No, no, that is not a religious ceremony. That is an archery game which has become very popular during the past few years. One bets money against one's opponents and then takes turns to shoot arrows at a target. Since it is such an amusing pastime, there is no priest who does not indulge in it nowadays. I also belong to those who are active in this game and I attend meetings regularly." Chihaku said: Well, then it was a misunderstanding on my part. I thought that, since it took place in front of the altar, it was a religious ceremony, but now, after having heard your explanation, I understand its real significance." Dōmei said: "Today, too, such a gathering is to take place at the temple in Yamashita. I was also supposed to go there as soon as the meal was over. Do come with me and amuse yourself! I would like to accompany you by all means." Chihaku declined the invitation: "As I told you before, I did not even know what the game was called, and so I fear that if I went I would not be good at it." Dōmei said: "Well, nobody is born into this world as a skilful archer. You won't need money to learn it." But Chihaku remained adamant: "I am really a non-drinker, so will you please accept my apologies for not joining you." Dōmei gave up: "If that is so, there is nothing more I can do. I shall invite you some other time. But I, for one, shall in any case stop at the temple in Yamashita today. Well then, I'm on my way. I beg you, do not forget to collect the donation we were talking about immediately." The peasants said: "There is no need for you to worry at all." Dōmei said: "Well, good-bye then. I am much obliged to you, Sakusuke, as always. But now I shall no longer disturb your conversation." With these words he left, mumbling 'Praised be the name of Amida Buddha' four or five times in a carefully studied tone, and hurried away towards Yamashita.

---

[a] Sanbukyō, the three basic scriptures of the Pure Land sects.

Chihaku said: "Well, priests really are in an enviable position. Whereas peasants never know whether they are going to survive the day or not, priests, whatever the season, do nothing but indulge incessantly in sake banquets and games, and, to top it all, they coax peasants into giving them donations; they are just grabbing on any pretext. If there really were a Hell, the priests would no doubt be the first to be doomed!" The others all said: "Doctor Chihaku, that you should say something like that! If one speaks or thinks ill of an esteemed priest, one is doomed to Hell. How irreverent!" Looking at the expression on their faces, Chihaku understood: "You are right, the priests are just like Buddhas. It was irreverent of me to have refused to go where the Saint Dōmei went. Shall I follow in his footsteps to Yamashita at once to offer him my apologies? But I am expecting some patients this afternoon, so I shall leave it at that. Thank you very much, Sakusuke, I have to leave now, but please do carry on with you conversation." With these word, Chihaku returned home.

The peasants who had remained behind, followed him with their eyes and said: "That rascal Chihaku has been living here for more than two years, but it does not look as if he ever went to a temple to worship." One of them said: "It is true, as you have just seen, he doesn't go even when he is invited by a priest, and he also says many things about priests which smack of slander. He is utterly wicked! If believers gather in the company of such an evil person, they, too, will be tainted and be doomed to Hell!" Another said: "Doctor Chihaku is widely popular, skilful in treating illness and unselfish as a person. It is a shame that he never visits temples to worship and spreads various slanders about priests which makes him a wicked sinner." Yet another said: "It would be better to have nobody like Chihaku in the village at all who speaks and thinks ill of the priests in whom we place all our confidence!" The peasants all agreed: "That is a good idea." But Nisuke said: "No, no, Doctor Chihaku came to this village only the year before last. How could he know about life in the countryside? And although

he does not make visits to temples, we must not call him a wicked person as long as he does not do wicked things. A person like that is a precious treasure to a village. Even if he wished to move somewhere else, we should stop him from going away!" The other peasants said: "It is true that whatever you ask him, he always knows the answers, but as he does not attend sermons and says all these things about priests, he is hardly a respectable person." One peasant said: "That is right. Dōmei told us some time ago that those who neither visit temples to worship nor attend sermons, who do not offer donations to the priests and slander everything to do with the Buddha are evil sinners who incur the wrath of Nyorai[a] and are doomed to the Hell of Incessant Torture, regardless of their fame or their good character. It would be best for us if he left this village altogether!" Nisuke and Gisuke intervened: "Now wait a moment! Men like him are extremely hard to come by. Therefore, we have to take good care of him and see to it that he settles down for good, if it is at all possible." The peasants said: "Well, in that case all the talking leads nowhere. We had better ask Dōmei of Shimomura village and the superior of the temple in Yamashita for advice. If they say that he is, by and large, a good man and that we should keep him we shall take good care of him, but if we are told that he is no good, we should not keep him for even another hour." Everyone in the room said that this agreement had been reached very quickly indeed, and, since it was quite late already, they all thanked the master of the house and scattered in all directions on the way back to their homes.

[a] Nyorai, skt. Tathāgata ("He who comes thus"), is one of the ten names of the Buddha.

7.

On their way home, Nisuke and Gisuke stopped at Chihaku's house to talk with him. Nisuke said: "As you yourself heard a little while ago, here in the countryside one must on no account protest against something a priest says, otherwise nobody will think of one as a respectable person. Regardless of how good a character one may have, they call one a wicked sinner if one does not go to listen to the sermons. If one does attend the sermons, however, people will praise one's superbly good character and spread the word around, regardless of how wicked the things one does may be. They tell others how pious one is and that one belongs to those who are concerned about life after death. They will then always trust one, and, regardless of how many wrongs one commits, they will always justify one's actions. For this reason, the most important thing to remember is that you, too, should talk very respectfully about priests when you are together with other people." Chihaku answered: "When I observed how the others reacted at Sakusuke's home before, I, too, understood that this was the case. It seems that I shall have to adapt myself to their frame of mind. From now on, I shall always remember this." Gisuke said: "Well, let me tell you this story! Some years ago, there used to live in this village a rōnin[a] who had come from the castle town. He stayed in our village for quite some time working as a doctor. He was known to be comfortably off and was trusted by everybody. He, as well as all members of his family, were of blameless character. One day, thieves broke into the temple in Yamashita. They got away with all the altar fittings,disappearing without leaving any traces behind. After that incident, the priest of the Yamashita temple visited all the kōjū[b] of his followers around here to collect donations to replace the stolen altar fittings. He got large amounts of rice and money; in fact, the donations he received amounted to as much as three times the actual value of the stolen fittings. Some time later, the rōnin

[a] masterless samurai.

[b] (See, TN: 415n.)

who lived in our village went to stay with relatives of his in the castle town for a while. For several days he looked up various people, among them a pawnbroker from whom it had always been easy to get cash on the spot during his days in the castle town. While they were talking together about various topics, the rōnin happened to cast a glance at the back of the room. There he saw various altar fittings, and when he asked where they had come from, the pawnbroker said that they had been brought in by someone called Magosuke who lived in a neighbourhood backstreet. He had accepted these objects as pawn and had lent Magosuke money, but since the repayment of the money debt was now overdue, he was thinking of putting the objects up for sale, one at a time. The rōnin said he knew these altar fittings and asked the pawnbroker whether he could call Magosuke to his office for a moment. Nothing would be easier than that, said the pawnbroker, and sent someone to fetch Magosuke. When Magosuke arrived, the rōnin told him that he knew it was he who had pawned those altar fittings, and then went on to ask him how they had come into his possession. Magosuke answered that he had put them into pawn on someone else's request. The rōnin pursued the matter further and asked him what that man's name was and where he had come from, but Magosuke replied that he knew neither the man's identity nor where he had come from. He had only done it because he had been hard pressed by that man. Upon this, the rōnin said that in that case he did not need him any longer and allowed him to return home. Then, the rōnin went straight to the guards on duty and told them what had happened. After the two guards had agreed on what action had to be taken, they hurried to Magosuke's house, tied him up with a rope and tortured him in a way which defies description. But Magosuke made excuses and did not give away any information. But when the guards continued torturing him, his wife confessed, being unable to bear the sight of it any longer. Since his wife had confessed, Magosuke no longer kept back any secrets and told them everything just as it had happened without hiding anything. He said that he had taken

the altar fittings to the pawnbroker's at the request of a man called Zokumaru[a], who was the second son of the priest in the Daitō temple[b] in Yamashita in the county to the east. In the course of further investigations, the guards took Magosuke to the temple in Yamashita where a confrontation between him and Zokumaru resulted in the case being solved. The original scheme thought up by the superior and his second son, Zokumaru, was to put all the altar fittings into pawn and to make people believe that they had been stolen by thieves. Large amounts of money and rice should then have to be collected to buy new implements. The circumstances of this story are somewhat peculiar, but the point about it is that the people around here were saying afterwards that the rōnin in the mountain village was not a respectable person because he had put a much esteemed Buddha-like priest to shame by making enquiries into the whereabouts of the altar fittings and had spread absurd rumours. In our village, too, there are many different people, and since some of them said that the rōnin was an evil man, Nisuke and I protested that this was not the case. We tried to calm them by saying that the rōnin could not be blamed in the least for having found out about the altar fittings, and that it was the priest's behaviour which was to be severely condemned, but like everyone else in the nearby villages, they insisted on blaming the rōnin for having wilfully exposed the priest's secret. Thereafter, it was decided that nobody should go to see him anymore, and so people stopped going to him to receive treatment, and in the end he was forced to leave the village." Chihaku was dumbfounded as he listened to Gisuke's story. Then, Nisuke and Gisuke said: "Since things like this do happen, remember by all means never to find fault with a priest! Even if he is guilty of having stolen someone's possessions and his guilt is all too obvious, it is you who will be the rascal in the eyes of the peasants. And if, in the end, he turns out to be innocent, you will find yourself in an even worse situation!"

---

[a] literally, "thief".

[b] literally, "Temple-of-the-great-Theft".

Chihaku was absolutely speechless.

He said: "Now I see just how strongly the people in the countryside feel attached to the Shinshū priests; I have no doubt whatsoever that what you have just told me is true." Nisuke said: "We have no way of checking the prosperity of the priests in Shinshū temples in the countryside. As you have seen yourself, at a time when the peasants suffer distress and endure the severest privation, that priest bewitches the peasants with words to get more and more rice and money. Priding himself on his glory and splendour, he dresses beautifully and eats fancy food; he gives himself up to *sake* and women, and idles away all his time at recitations of songs and ballad-dramas, performances of *shamisen* music, at archery games and at gambling. As you have heard, his sermons induce the peasants to visit the temples for worship, regardless of how busy they may be at that very moment, and for the sake of the temple he makes them lay aside their work and donate money. Even though they might have no food left the following morning, they will still offer donations, simply because it benefits a temple. On the whole, the peasants harbour no ill-feelings when they raise money for donations at times when they have nothing to eat themselves; quite the contrary, they rejoice in doing so. The greater the suffering of the people in the countryside, the more donations they give. Saying that the afflictions of the present cannot last longer than the lifespan of fifty years, they believe that it is far more important to think about future hardships of eternity, and so they give even larger donations to the priests. Even if they grudge such large donations in their hearts, they must on no account ever give vent to their feelings. I have good reason why I should have told you this story. Speaking ill of a priest in the countryside has the immediate effect of changing the colour of the eyes of the person one is talking to." Chihaku said: "These days when one looks at temples both in the towns and in the country, one sees the front rooms beautifully adorned with altar fittings and the like, even with statues of the Buddha, but the other

rooms are no different from those of a warrior's house. One would, however, look in vain for the warrior's integrity in such a temple, for the priests are insatiable and debauched; there is nothing commendable about them at all. They deceive the people and cause them distress. They take pride in enjoying themselves and excel in amusements, quite in keeping with what, in fact, they always preach in their sermons. There they not only assure sinners of salvation but tell them about Mida's 'Original Vow', as if he had pledged to save sinners only. By stressing the point that all who do not make it a habit to worship at temples or listen to sermons are wicked sinners, regardless of their integrity, the priests make everybody comply with their wishes. Indeed, people like us must be a nuisance. When I heard that sermon, I thought all he did was to encourage people to do evil. He said that unless one was a sinner, rebirth was impossible[a]. Is it not true that he loathes people going to worship at temples of other sects or at Shintō shrines?" Gisuke answered: "That is so. Shinshū priests feel the utmost repugnance at what they call 'Miscellaneous Observances and Disciplines'. They say that not one out of ten thousand among those who practise the latter will attain Buddhahood." Chihaku asked: "Does that mean that those who worship at a temple of some Buddha other than Mida or at a Shintō shrine have sinned more than those who are guilty of the Five Crimes and the Ten Vices?[b]" Gisuke repeated: "They are strictly against 'Miscellaneous Observances and Disciplines'!"

---

[a] Shinran expressed his belief that wicked men stood a much better chance of salvation than good men in the paradox: "If even a good man can be reborn in the Pure Land, how much more so a wicked man!" This, he thought, was because good men were relying on themselves to achieve salvation by doing good deeds, and who, therefore, did not trust Amida's Original Vow. Sinners, on the other hand, threw themselves completely at the mercy of Amida[18].

[b] The Five Crimes which, according to the Kanmuryōjukyō, entailed damnation to Hell, were patricide, matricide, killing a monk, destroying the harmony among monks, and slandering the Buddha. The Ten Vices were destruction of life, stealing, licentiousness, lying, slander, deceitfulness, flowery language, avarice, heresy, and indignation.

Chihaku said: "Yes, I heard you very well. In that case, I shall never again give even a single mon to other temples." Nisuke said: "That is undoubtedly the right thing to do. But is it at all possible for sinners to attain Buddhahood?"

Chihaku answered: "I have never studied the Buddhist religion and so I do not know anything about matters related to it such as this one. However, I know that the Buddha always adapted his sermons to his audience. Basically, his doctrine consisted in encouraging people to do good and cautioning them against evil. Accordingly, he preached to ordinary men that a good deed contained the seeds of Buddhahood, and that an evil act contained the seeds of Hell. To men of learning he preached the doctrines of rebirth, that all is unreal, that man is able to attain Buddhahood in his present life, and the state of Nirvana, in which there is no birth and no death. I hear that he preached to the sinners that Mida will fulfil his vow of helping even those who are guilty of the Five Crimes and the Ten Vices to attain rebirth, provided there was a change of heart, that they repented their sins, renounced their vices forever and came to believe wholeheartedly in Mida. But the priest who was here today, in his ignorance, is greatly mistaken in preaching, among all the doctrines, only the one which promises rebirth to sinners, and, moreover, in preaching it to all without making any distinction between children, youths, or adults who have never sinned. I was quite pained to hear him refer to the donations of the supporters of his temple as 'stipends'; there are very few cases of temples receiving 'clerical stipends' (sōroku) from the authorities[a], be it in the form of temple land or, in special cases, of regular emoluments in rice. Among priests everywhere there are many who talk of their supporters' donations as 'stipends'. We may dismiss this with a smile, but to the authorities the use of this word is a matter of great concern. I got the impression that he considers his parishioners the property of his temple." Gisuke said: "That is true. These days, the Shinshū priests talk to

---

[a] (See, 262.)

us in a manner which is in no way different from that of a samurai or a stipendiary." Chihaku said: "If that is so, the priests will, in the future, take advantage of this, perhaps even demanding that the annual tax and tax rice be paid to the temple to which the taxpayer belongs." Nisuke agreed with him: "If the priests' influence continues to be so all-pervasive, this will be the natural consequence." Chihaku said: "Where have the Buddhist teachings gone, I wonder. Nowadays, a priest's life does not have anything at all in common with the Buddhist teachings. According to the Shaka's[a] original teachings, practicing the way of the Buddha meant rectifying one's mind and leading a detached life, appeasing one's hunger by begging for leftovers and protecting oneself from heat and cold by wearing a garment patched together from torn clothes picked out of a ditch. Danna is a Sanskrit word and is of Indian origin. Danna Haramitsu means 'giving something to somebody'. Here, as in India, this is abbreviated to Danharamitsu, leaving out the character 'na'. If we translate this term into our language it means 'almsgiving', that is, giving things to people in charity. There is an informal usage of the word, indicating someone who gives alms to temples. For this reason, the families of laymen who undertake to give alms are called dan families (danka)[b]. A layman is greatly mistaken if he refers to a temple as danna temple. Is it not stated that there must be danna for every temple? In fact, a layman is a danna of a temple. Therefore, priests are making a serious mistake if they treat the peasants in the countryside as if they were their serfs or their retainers. That nowadays men who undertake to serve one year in a samurai's household call their master danna-sama is natural, since he bestows his charity upon them by helping them in every way."

Nisuke said: "You are quite right. There are far too many temples nowadays, even in the countryside, and the numerous

---

[a] skt. Śakya, the historical Buddha.

[b] (See, 269.)

priests are a public nuisance. Moreover, those who have been accorded the status of priest solely for the duration of their own life (ichidai kyojū) settle down everywhere, and I fear that they will be the ruin of the peasants if they continue thriving in such a way. Even though they claim that they give to the needy, they live, in fact, off the peasants. Once they have settled down somewhere, all they do is to deprive peasants of their possessions, either for building houses as large as main halls of temples for their personal use, or else for buying a statue of some Buddha. As you could hear for yourself a moment ago, the peasants collect money blindly for donations if it is for the sake of a priest. It may be that in this case almsgiving to the priest is of some benefit to the authorities, but, in fact, it is the peasants who pay for it. The banquets which will follow as well as the upkeep of the priest year after year serve only to weaken the peasants. So, the present charity is, in the long run, to the disadvantage of the authorities, although it might hold slight advantages just now." Gisuke said: "How could the authorities suffer a loss? There is no possibility of refusing to pay the annual tax by claiming that one has made a donation to a temple." Nisuke said: "Indeed, that is true. But if the peasants are weakened, it is the authorities who will, in the final analysis, suffer a loss. Well, even nowadays when there are rather too many temples around, it is fair for priests who were accorded their status solely for the duration of their own life to be exempt from tax, but once a Shinshū priest has been exempt from tax his privilege is handed down to his descendants. Unlike the priests of other sects, the Shinshū priests have sons and grandsons; giving them donations and praying in their temples is no different from praying for eternal losses for the peasants." Chihaku said: "The prosperity of such men means the ruin of the people. The people are the treasure of the authorities. The property of the people will always be the property of the authorities. But even if we give the priest donations, the authorities will not grant us a tax reduction on that ground.

Even if all peasants were to petition for this, the officials would never lend an ear to their requests." Gisuke said: "That is so. Anyway, why should we be the only ones to make contributions towards the costs of building a new temple! Although a peasant should not concern himself with such matters, I am saying all this because wicked men who plot the ruin of the people are thriving. As you know, we have to follow the village headman's orders in all matters. He sees to it that we do not do things which involve unnecessary expenses; we must, for example, not wear garments which have crests on them, neither must our clothes be of any colour other than light blue. Month after month we have to acknowledge orders telling us to use plain cotton cloth for every purpose." Nisuee said: "That order befits peasants these days. We do not mind plain cotton cloth as long as we have sufficient of it so as not to freeze to death in winter, but as you can see, we don't even have white thread to mend our clothes with. This headman's order is well-suited to peasants." Gisuke said: "We often have trouble with our eyes, maybe because we are working so hard, but when we wipe them with a piece of plain cotton cloth it is so painful that we can hardly bear it." Chihaku said: "I agree with you. However, considering that peasants are second only to warriors among the four classes of warrior, peasant, artisan, and merchant, there is no reason why they should not be allowed to have the same way of life as the townspeople. Of course, lavishing money on all sorts of things is not for the benefit of the authorities, but what inspired these orders more than anything else was the concern of the authorities to avert misery from each of us." Nisuke and Gisuke said: "These orders, which were given by the village headman, are appropriate to peasants." Chihaku quipped: "But it is peculiar that peasants should be allowed to waste money on priests, something which causes many more 'unnecessary expenses'."

The two peasants said: "That is so. We think our headman can do nothing at all about that." As they were speaking, Gonsuke, the headman of their five-family group, came through the

gate. He greeted Chihaku, and then said to Nisuke and Gisuke: "You two have to report to corvée with your horses!" The two peasants asked him: "How far do we have to go?" Gonsuke answered: "To the river." When asked what sort of luggage they had to transport, Gonsuke explained: "It is the Yamabushi from the Smoky Peak[a]. He stayed in the plain during the winter[b], and his return was delayed until today because of deep snow. He is waiting at the village headman's house. Hurry up and go there quickly!" The two peasants said they would leave at once, whereupon Gonsuke bowed to Chihaku and left. Chihaku asked: "Is there no way of stopping Yamabushi from summoning peasants for labour service?" The two men answered: "No, there isn't. They hold an official pass which entitles them to call out man and horse, and so we must follow his order without delay. As always, it is the peasants who have to suffer. That Yamabushi is collecting donations for his temple; he visits the homes of peasants to sell them charms. Even on a journey of that kind he summons man and horse as if he were travelling on official business. Of course, he says he will pay us a certain amount of money for every ri we cover, but, in fact, that amount is a mere pittance." Chihaku said: "Someone like me just cannot understand why even Yamabushi should be allowed to hold a pass which enables them to call out man and horse as if they were travelling on official business." Nisuke said: "The Yamabushi probably thinks that he is entitled to it since he goes around reciting prayers for a good harvest of the five cereals." Chihaku said: "Indeed, he most probably asked for the official pass because he thought that as he looked after the interests of the authorities he was, so to speak, travelling on official business." The two peasants said:

[a] The volcano Mt. Aso. (See, 260.)

[b] This may well have been intended by the author as an irony, as the Yamabushi who prefers to spend a few winter months in the comfort of the castle town acts against the precepts of the Shūgendō sect which require two holy men (matsu hijiri) to retire into the mountains in the height of winter for meditation and ascetic exercise.

"That must have been his idea. However, that is a great misunderstanding. If he were to travel around all the villages to recite prayers for a good result when the five cereals are harvested without asking for goods in return, we would not mind so much, regardless of how many men he called out with their horses because that would mean that he really cared for the authorities and took pity on the people. Someone who goes around the houses to ask for offerings is a beggar, however exalted he may be. One grade lower and such a person would belong to the outcastes. The farm work we do is a very humble occupation, but since the authorities have entrusted the fields to us and have ordered us to devote all our energy to agriculture and paying the annual tax, even our private business is not private; it might, with all due respect, even be considered as something akin to official business. It is regrettable if even a single day is spent on labour service for a beggar instead of working on the fields. This does not matter to horse drivers and the like in town; they are in business to make money and as long as they earn some they do not care about anything else, but even they would be annoyed if they had to cover long distances for little money." Chihaku said: "You are right. The Yamabushi, too, should not travel like a government official, but should straightaway go to a horse driver to hire horses against payment of an adequate fee." The two peasants said: "Indeed, we think that he realizes that if he had to do so, nobody would work for him unless he paid them an appropriate fee for the work to be done, and so he decided to ask for an official pass right away and use peasant labour. We do not mind working for men like him now and then in spring, except for the time when we have to sow the seeds, but it is wretched to be called out on corvée for a Yamabushi, or someone of the sort, in summer, right in the middle of transplanting the young rice or harvesting the millet. Generally, one cannot exaggerate the difference it makes to

the harvest if one is only a single day late with sowing." Chihaku said: "Indeed, you are quite right. If, for example, on a certain day everybody is sowing and then someone comes along to call them out for corvée, it takes only a rainfall or a storm the following day to make sowing impossible with the consequence that the harvest will not yield the estimated amount of crop. Even if the sowing is then done a few days later, the eventual yield will amount to as little as half of that of other peasants. When things have gone that far, the prayers have not only been to no avail, but have actually made a good harvest impossible. Generally speaking, a good harvest is produced by observing the Way of Heaven, by following the cycle of the seasons, and by making the best use of the land. In other words, in spring you apply manure to the fields, in summer you weed, in autumn you harvest, and in winter you store the crop in the granary." The two peasants said: "Indeed, that is exactly what we do. This order has not changed since ancient times. How wicked it is, then, of Shintō priests and Yamabushi to make unreasonable demands on all peasants in their greed for rice and money. They also claim that the five cereals ripen only because of their prayers; we should like to see what would happen if we built a sturdy wall around a piece of rice land and then, without sowing any seeds, told the Shintō priests and the Yamabushi to produce a harvest of the five cereals by means of prayers! If they produce a bumper crop of the five cereals so that all the grain in the storehouses can be sold at very low prices, then we peasants should stop toiling every month of the year and give up tilling our fields to become disciples of Yamabushi to practise the art of praying. If a crop could really be produced on a rice field simply by praying, we would be the first to become disciples of a Yamabushi." Chihaku said: "There are also places where prayers for a successful harvest of the five cereals are being recited by order of the authorities[a]. It is called shoku or something like

[a] (See, 262.)

it; it seems that the worship of the five cereals is very similar." The two peasants said: "That may be so. We are very grateful for that..." They had not finished speaking when the village headman's messenger, Matahachi, came rushing in. He drew a long breath and then said to the two peasants: "You two are supposed to come out on corvée! Why are you late? Come along with your horses at once! This is by order of the headman! If you take such a long time, the Yamabushi will perhaps even complain to the authorities, and then you will certainly be punished in some way or other! Hurry up now! With these words he left and returned to his home. Chihaku said: "You told me things today which are not popular, but it is better to follow the rule of the day in everything than run the risk of being called a fool by all other people." The two peasants said: "Exactly, that is what we tried to tell you. Don't mention a word of our conversation to anyone! Well then, we shall take our leave..." And with these words they returned to their homes.

*

Notes to the translation of the *TN*

1. *Kuan tzu*, in, Kuo-hsüeh chêng-li shê, ed. *Chu-tzu chi-chêng*, vol. 5, 259.
2. Ishida, *Geography*, 72.
3. Takashima, *Koyomi*, 9 ff.
4. Kodama, *Nōmin seikatsushi*, 199.
5. Kodama, *Nōsei shiryōshū*, vol. 1, 36.
6. Keene, *Treasury*, 82 ff.
7. "Eta, hinin," in, *KSJ*, 47.
8. Furukawa, *Saiyū zakki*, 370.
9. Fung, *Chinese Philosophy*, vol. 2, 55.
10. Fujikawa, *Shippyōshi*, 3 ff.
11. ibid., 7.
12. *Byōmei ikai*, vol. 7, quoted in, ibid., 81 ff.
13. de Bary, Sources, vol. 1, 263 ff.
14. Fung, *Chinese Philosophy*, vol. 2, 547.
15. see, Fuji'i, *Hsün Tzu*, 28.
16. Watson, *Hsün Tzu*, 17 ff.
17. Rickett, *Kuan Tzu*, 125.
18. de Bary, *Sources*, vol. 1, 211.

APPENDIX I.

Peasant Unrest in Higo, 1603-1867

Borton puts the number of incidents of peasant uprisings in Higo (540'000 koku) between 1603 and 1867 at 25[a]. This figure, which includes only occurrences involving open violence such as rioting (sōdō, gōso) or the storming of warehouses (uchikowashi), is considerably higher than either the 12 incidents listed for the Hizen domain (357'000 koku) or the single incident of the Satsuma domain (770'000 koku).

These figures would place Higo in an average position among the domains of Kyūshū, with the geographical regions of Bungo and Hyūga, which were fragmented into numerous domains with low kokudaka, coming on top with as many as 34 and 32 incidents respectively. According to the list given by Borton, Higo occupies an average position also on the national scale.

The statistics used by Borton for Higo[b] are, however, distorted by the inclusion of Amakusa. This peninsula, though part of the geographical region of Higo, did not fall under Hosokawa suzerainty, but was under the jurisdiction of the shogunate (tenryō)[c]. In order to obtain an unbiased impression of peasant unrest in Higo, we must therefore list Amakusa separately. As we do so, the picture changes dramatically; in fact, no less than 16 incidents out of the 25 listed above took place on Amakusa, with only 9 remaining for Higo under Hosokawa rule. Moreover, these 9 incidents were spread over more than a century, from 1735 to 1841, with intervals between the individual incidents ranging from 3 to 40 years[d]. If we are

---

[a] Borton, "Peasant Uprisings," Appendix II, Chart I, 206.

[b] His chart is based on Numazaki Hidenosuke, Hyakushō Ikki Chōsa Hōkokusho. Kyōto, 1935.

[c] since 1641.

[d] The years in which riots occurred in Higo were 1735, 1743, 1746, twice in the famine year of 1786, and then again once in 1802, 1820, 1836, and 1841.

the authorities and the odd corporate land flight by groups of peasants, only 16 out of a total of 48 incidents between 1603 and 1867 fell on Higo under Hosokawa rule[a]. This evidence suggests that Higo, compared with the rest of Japan, had a fairly low incidence of peasant unrest - certainly lower than all of its neighbours, with the one exception of the Satsuma domain.

---

[a] The corresponding figures for the neighbouring regions are as follows: (Figures in brackets are inclusive of incidents on _tenryō_): Hizen, 18 (24); Chikugo, 12; Bungo 25 (29); Hyūga, 42 (47); Ōsumi 7; Satsuma, 3. According to _NSJ_, Appendix, _Hyakushō ikki-toshi sōjō nenpyō_, 1094 ff.

APPENDIX II.

List of Weights and Measures

Dry Measures:

1 *koku* 石	180.5	litres
1 *to* 斗	18.05	"
1 *shō* 升	1.805	"
1 *gō* 合	0.180	"
1 *shaku* 勺	0.018	"
1 *sai* 才	0.002	"

Linear Measures:

1 *ri* 里	3.924 kilometres
1 *chō* 町	109 metres
1 *shaku* 尺	0.303 metres
1 *sun* 寸	3.03 centimetres

Square Measures:

1 *chō* 町	99.15 ares	(10 *tan*)
1 *tan* 反	9.915 "	(10 *se*)
1 *se* 畝	99.15 m^2	(30 *tsubo*)
1 *bu* 歩 = 1 *tsubo* 坪	3.305 m^2	

Weight and Money:

1 *kanme* 貫目	= 1'000 *mon* 文		= 3.75 kg
1 *koban* 小判	= 1 *ryō* 両	= 4 *monme* 3 *bu*	= 16.164 g[a]
1 *monme* 匁	= 10 *bu* 分		= 3.759 g
1 *kin* 斤	= 0.601 kg		
1 *kan* 貫	= 1'000 *monme* 匁		= 3.75 kg

[a] In Higo, as in all domains west of Ōsaka, the monetary system was based on the silver standard.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

All published in Tōkyō, unless otherwise stated.

A. Texts of the TN

Morita Seiichi, ed. Nisuke Banashi. NSSSS[a], vol. 10, 81-116.

Ono Takeo, ed. Nisuke Banashi, in Ono, ed. Nihon nōmin shiryō shūsui, listed below, vol. 9.

Tamamuro Taijō, ed. Nisuke Banashi. (Kumamoto-ken shiryō shūsei, vol. 4) Kumamoto, 1952.

B. Material in Japanese and Chinese

Anonymous. Seji Kenbunroku, in NSSSS, vol. 8, 641-766.

Araki Moriyuki, ed. Higo no minwa. 1962.

Fujii Sen'ei, transl. Hsün tzu. 1966.

Fujikawa Yū. Nihon shippyōshi. 1969.

Fujitani Toshio. "O-kagemairi" to "eejanaika". 1968.

Furukawa Koshōken. Saiyū zakki, in NSSSS, vol. 2, 366-95.

Harada Toshiaki. "Kumamoto-ken no rekishi," in Hōbunkan, publ. Kyōdo no rekishi, Kyūshūhen. 1959. 177-228.

Horie Hideichi, ed. Hansei kaikaku no kenkyū. 1955.

Horie Hideichi. "Hansei kaikaku no ronri," in Horie, ed., listed above, 1-13.

Ikeda Masaru. "Higo-han no gōshi seido - Tamana-gun Oda-tenaga no ichirei," Nishinihon Shigaku, 14 (1953): 52-60.

Imai Jun. Kinsei Nihon shominshakai no rinri shisō. 1966.

Inoue Kiyoshi. Nihon no rekishi. 3 vols. 1965.

Itō Tasaburo. "Kinsei ni okeru seiji kenryoku to shūkyōteki ken'i," in Itō Tasaburo, ed. Kokumin seikatsushi kenkyū, vol. 4, 1960. 425-55.

Iwamoto Minoru. "Hantaiseika ni okeru chihō shinkan no sengyōka," KS, 27 (1964): 25-35.

---

[a] (For a list of abbreviations used in the bibliography, see, 6.)

Iwamoto Minoru. "Sunshi-sunkō. Kamimashiki-gun Yabe-tenaga ni tsuite," Rekishi to Kyōiku, 29 (1965): 3-10.

Jishūkan gakki (Regulations of the Higo domain school), in HBS, vol. 1, 356-8.

Kakizuka Fumibei, ed. Kanshiki seidokō, in HBS, vol. 1, 105-217.

Kawakami Tadashi. "Chūka, satsu oyobi tegata," in Toyota Takeshi and Kodama Kōta, eds. Ryūtsūshi I, (Taikei Nihonshi sōsho, 13) 1969. 308-324.

Kitamura Toshio. "Higo-han kantaku shinden no tokuisei - Tamana-gun Yokoshima shinden," KS, 3 (1952): 1-8.

Kodama Kōta. Kinsei nōmin seikatsushi. 1957.

Kodama Kōta, ed. Kinsei nōsei shiryō shū. 2 vols. 1968.

Kuan tzu. Kuo-hsüeh chêng-li shê, ed. Chu-tzu chi-ch'êng, vol. 5. Peking, 1954.

Kumamoto joshi daigaku rekishigaku kenkyūbu, ed. Higo-han no nōson kōzō. Kumamoto, 1956.

Kumamoto kenritsu Oguni kōtōgakkō kyōdoshi kenkyū kurabu, ed. Kyōnen konkyū no tekagami. Oguni, 1963.

Kumamoto kenritsu toshokan, ed. Kyōdo shiryō bunrui mokuroku. Kumamoto, 1943.

Kumazawa Banzan, Daigaku Wakumon, in NKT, vol. 3, 107-85.

Maeda Ichiryō. "Keiken kagaku no tanjō," in Iwanami kōza Nihon rekishi, Kinsei, 3. 1963. 171-214.

Maki Hidemasa. Jinshin baibai. 1971.

Matsudaira Sadamitsu, ed. Ame no shita no hitogoto. Shūgyōroku. 1970.

Matsumoto Jūsaburo. "Higo-han ni okeru murayoriai ni tsuite," in Kumamoto daigaku kokushika dōsōkai, ed. Kokushi ronsō. Kumamoto, 1965.

Matsumoto Jūsaburo, ed. "Kinsei Higo kankei bunken mokuroku," KS, 38 (1971): 58-60.

Matsumoto Jūsaburo, ed. "Kinsei Higo kankei zasshi ronbun mokuroku," KS, 32 (1967): 40-7.

Mieda Hironari, et.al., eds. Shūkyō to kagaku no rekishi. (Nihon bunkashi kōza, vol. 5) 1955.

Minoda Katsuhiko. "Higo-han no kantaku shinden," in Kokushi ronsō. Kumamoto, 1965. 58-63.

Minzokugaku kenkyūsho, ed. Minzokugaku jiten. 1966.

Miura Baien. Kagen, in NKT, vol. 17, 457-93.

Monoshiri jiten. Shūkyōhen. 1954.

Morishita Isao. "Kinsei no chihōseido," in Kumamoto-ken sōmubu chihōka, ed. *Kumamoto-ken shichōson gappeishi*. Kumamoto, 1969. 16-59.

Morisue Yoshiaki et.al., eds. *Seikatsushi*. 2 vols. 1969.

Morita Seiichi. "Bakumatsu/Ishinki ni okeru Higo Kumamoto-han," in Fukuoka Yunesuko Kyōkai, ed. *Meiji Ishin to Kyūshū. Kyūshū Bunkaron shū, III*. 1973. 207-75.

Morita Seiichi. "Higo-han rinsei no seikaku ni tsuite," *KS*, 5 (1953): 6-14.

Morita Seiichi. "Higo no engyō," in Chihōshi Kenkyū Kyōgikai, ed. *Nihon sangyōshi taikei*, vol. 8, 1970. 178-90.

Morita Seiichi. "Higo no ringyō," in Chihōshi kenkyū kyōgikai, ed. *Nihon sangyōshi taikei*, vol. 8, 1960. 106-22.

Morita Seiichi. "Hosokawa Shigekata to Hori Heitazaemon," in Hayashi Motoi, ed. *Nihon jinbutsushi taikei*, vol. 4, 1959. 89-120.

Morita Seiichi. "Kinsei ni okeru sonraku no seiritsu to sono keizaiteki kiban," *Nishinihon Shigaku*, 14 (1953): 67-71.

Morita Seiichi. "Kinsei no gōshi sei, toku ni kinnō gōshi no seikaku. Higo-han seishi to no kanren ni oite," *Hōbunronsō*, 20 (Kumamoto, 1966): 50-97.

Morita Seiichi. "Kinsei no kokudaka ni tsuite," *Hōbunronsō*, 10 (Kumamoto, 1958): 24-36.

Morita Seiichi, ed. *Kinsei nōsei goishū*. 1965.

Morita Seiichi, "Kumamoto-ken," in Nihon rekishi gakkai, ed. *Chihōshi kenkyū no genjō*, vol. 3, 1969. 167-84.

Morita Seiichi. *Kumamoto-ken no rekishi*. 1972.

Morita Seiichi. "Kumamoto ni okeru Meijiki sangyōshihon no shiteki seikaku," in *KS*, 11 (1957): 1-11.

Morita Seiichi. "Kyūshūji no rekishi to sono tokushoku," in Mainichi Shinbunsha, ed. *Kyūshūji*. 1972.

Morita Seiichi. "Wagakuni shakai - keizaishijō yori mita Kumamoto no shōkōgyō no seikaku to sono tenbō," in Kumamoto-shi kōgyō ritchi chōsakai, publ. *Kumamoto-shi kōgyō no genjō to hatten no kanōsei*. 1959. 3-20.

Morita Seiichi. "Zaimachi to sono shōgyō shihon tenkai no jisshōteki kenkyū," in Kumamoto Hōbungakubu, ed. *Harada Toshiaki kyōjū taikan kinen ronbunshū*. Kumamoto, 1960. 339-59.

Motoori Norinaga. *Hihon Tamakushige*, in Motoori S., ed., listed below, vol. 6, 22-60.

Motoori Norinaga. *Tamaboko Hyakushū*, in Motoori S., ed., listed below, vol. 10, 109-16.

Motoori Norinaga, Tamakushige, in Motoori S., ed., listed below, vol. 6, 3-19.

Motoori Seizō, ed. Motoori Norinaga zenshū (Complete Works of Motoori Norinaga) 13 vols. 1926-8.

Minoda Katsuhiko. "Higo-han no jūmensei ni tsuite," in Kumamoto kinseishi no kai, ed. Nenpō Kumamoto kinseishi. Kumamoto, 1967. 1-2.

Muto Itsuo et.al., eds. Higo Bunken Sōsho (HBS). A reprint of the collection of source materials relating to Higo province, originally published in 1909-10. 6 vols. 1971.

Nagai Isaburo. Kome no rekishi. 1966.

Nakagawa Itsuki. "Edo jidai ni okeru Higo no seiji/keizai/kyōiku," in Kumamoto Chireki Kenkyūkai, publ. Kyōdoshi kōenshū, vol. 2. Kumamoto, 1929.

Nakai Chikuzan. Sōbō Kigen, in NKT, vol. 23, 315-543.

Nakamura Chūtei. Higo Kōshiden, in HBS, vol. 4, 1-113.

Nakamura Yukihiko, ed. "Miura Baien shū," in Nihon no shisō, vol. 18, 1971. 179-257.

Nihon keizai taiten (NKT). A collection of works on Japanese economy written during the Edo period and earlier. Compiled by Takimoto Seiichi. 54 vols. 1928-30.

Nihon shomin seikatsu shiryō shūsei (NSSSS). Collected historical materials on the life of the Japanese people by various authors under the general editorship of Miyamoto Jōichi, Haraguchi Torao, and Hika Shunchō. 1970 - .

Nihon koten bungaku taikei (NKBT). Collection of Japanese literature from the 8th to the 19th century. 100 vols. Published by Iwanami. 1957-67.

Nishikawa Nyōken. Chōninbukuro. NKT, vol. 4, 387-489.

Nishimura Terao. "Kinsei ni okeru kantaku shinden nōson ni kansuru ikkōsatsu - Higo Nōzu-tenaga no reiraku ni tsuite," Nihon Rekishi, 185 (1963): 46-59.

Ōe Shinobu. "Kaikaku seiji (Hōreki) no nōmin seisaku," KS, 5 (1953): 35-42.

Ōe Shinobu. "Kumamoto-han ni okeru hansei kaikaku," in Horie, ed., listed above, 15-36.

Ofuji Masahide, ed. Shizen Shineidō. Tōdō Shinden. NKBT, vol. 97, 567-724.

Oguri Hiroshi. "Iriai nōyō rinya no kaitai to iwayuru kyōdōtaiteki shoyū ni tsuite," in Chirigaku hyōron, 31 (1958): 406-416.

Ogyū Sorai. Seidan. NKT, vol. 9, 6-194.

Ōishi Shinsaburo. "Kyōho kaikaku," in Iwanami Kōza Nihon Rekishi, vol. 11. 1963. 265-310.

Ono Takeo, ed. Nihon nōmin shiryō shūsui. Collected materials on the history of the Japanese peasantry. 7 vols. (2,4,6, 8A, 8B, 9, 11) 1941.

Ototake Iwazō. Nihon shomin kyōikushi. 3 vols. Kyōto, 1970.

Ozaki Kuniya, ed. Kumamoto no rekishi. 5 vols. Kumamoto, 1958.

Ōzuka shigakkai, ed. Kyōdoshi jiten. 1969.

Satō Kunio. "Higo-han no kantaku shinden - toku ni Yatsushirokai engan hyakuchō/yonhyakuchō/nanahyakuchō shinchi ni tsuite no mondaiten," in Kumamoto Daigaku Hōbungakubu Kokushika dōsōkai, ed. Kokushi Ronsō. Kumamoto, 1965. 64-73.

Seishi Koki. Keizai Mondō Hiroku. NKT, vol. 34 and 35, 3-176.

Shibata Minoru. "Kinsei no jugaku to kyōiku," in Mieda, ed., listed above, 88-107.

Shibuya Toshimi. "Higo-han no nengū ni tsuite," KS, 30 (1966): 40-9.

Shingyō Norikazu. "Ikkō ikki," in Rekishigaku kenkyū kai, ed. Kōza Nihonshi, vol. 3, 1970. 251-63.

Sugiura Minpei. Ishin zenya no bungaku. 1967.

Takashima ekidansho honbu, ed. Shōwa yonjūshichinen jingūkan koyomi. 1971.

Tamamuro Fumio. "Higo ni okeru Jōdoshinshū no tenkai," Nihon Bukkyō, 17 (1963): 33-52.

Tamamuro Taijō. "Bukkyō," in Mieda, ed., listed above, 103-26.

Tamamuro Taijō, ed. Higo-han no nōmin seikatsu. (Kumamoto-ken shiryō shūsei, vol. 10.) Kumamoto, 1960.

Tamamuro Taijō, ed. Higo-han no seiji. (Kumamoto-ken shiryō shūsei, vol. 11.) Kumamoto, 1956.

Tamamuro Taijō. "Hōken seiji to shūkyō no riyō," in Higo Kazuo et.al., eds. Nihon bunkashi kōza, vol. 5, 1959. 90-119.

Tanaka Kyūgū. Minkan Seiyō. NKT, vol. 5, 1-514.

Tokoro Mitsuo. "Ringyō," in Kodama Kōta, ed. Sangyōshi II. (Taikei Nihonshi Sōsho, 11) 1965. 198-223.

Uchimura Masamitsu. Higo-han no nōson seido. Kumamoto, 1929.

Ujiie Hirotaka. "Jōnōgin yori mita murazaisei," KS, 19/20 (1960): 24-30.

Unō Tōfū and Kojō Teikichi. Gindai Iji, in HBS, vol. 1, 1-68.

Yaezu Yōhei. "Keihō sōsho o chūshin to shita Kumamoto-han no keibatsu taikei ni tsuite," Hō to seiji, 8 (1957): 451-81.

Yamada Takio. "Sagamai to Higomai," in Chihōshi kenkyū kyōgikai, ed. Nihon sangyōshi taikei, vol. 8. 1960.

C. Material in English

Alcock, Sir Rutherford. The Capital of the Tycoon. A Narrative of three years' residence in Japan. 2 vols. London, 1863.

Beardsley, Richard K., John W. Hall, Robert E. Ward. Village Japan. Chicago, 1959.

Beasley, W.G. "Feudal Revenue in Japan at the Time of the Meiji Restoration," JAS, 19 (1960): 255-72.

Beasley, W.G. The Meiji Restoration. London, 1973.

Befu, Harumi. "Village Autonomy and Articulation with the State: The Case of Tokugawa Japan," JAS, 25 (1965): 19-32. Reprinted in Hall and Jansen, eds., listed below, 301-14.

Bellah, Robert N. Tokugawa Religion. The Values of Pre-industrial Japan. Glencoe, Ill., 1957.

Borton, Hugh. "Peasant Uprisings in Japan of the Tokugawa Period," TASJ, 2d Ser., vol. 16 (1938): 1-219.

Bureau of Statistics, publ. Statistical Handbook of Japan, 1972.

Chambliss, W.J. Chiarajima Village: Land Tenure, Taxation, and Local Trade, 1818-1884. Tucson, Ariz., 1965.

Craig, Albert. Chōshū in the Meiji Restoration. Cambridge, Mass., 1961.

Craig, Albert. "Science and Confucianism in Tokugawa Japan," in Jansen, ed., listed below, 133-60.

Crawcour, E.S. "Changes in Commerce in the Tokugawa Period," in Hall and Jansen, eds., listed below, 189-202.

Crawcour, E.S. "Some Observations on Merchants - Translation of Mitsui Takafusa's Chōnin Kōken Mokuroku," TASJ, 8 (1961).

Crawcour, E.S. "The Tokugawa Heritage," in Lockwood, ed., listed below, 17-44.

de Bary, Wm. Theodore. "Some Common Tendencies in Neo-Confucianism," in Nivison and Wright, listed below, 25-49.

de Bary, Wm. Theodore, ed. Sources of Japanese Tradition. 2 vols. New York, 1958.

de Geus, Jan G. Fertilizer Guide for the Tropics and Subtropics. Zurich, 1973.

Dore, R.P., ed. Aspects of Social Change in Modern Japan. Princeton, N.J., 1967.

Dore, R.P. City Life in Japan. A study of a Tokyo Ward. Berkeley, 1967.

Dore, R.P. Education in Tokugawa Japan. London, 1965.

Dore, R.P. "The Legacy of Tokugawa Education," in Jansen, ed. listed below, 99-131.

Dunn, C.J. Everday Life in Traditional Japan. London, 1969.

Earhart, H. Byron. A Religious Study of the Mount Haguro Sect of Shūgendō, 1970.

Eliot, Sir Charles. Japanese Buddhism. London, 1935.

Embree, John F. Suye Mura. A Japanese Village. Chicago, 1939.

Fisher, Galen M., transl. "Daigaku Wakumon" (A discussion of Public Questions in the Light of the Great Learning) by Kumazawa Banzan, in Fisher, listed below, 259-356.

Fisher, Galen M. "Kumazawa Banzan. His Life and Ideas," TASJ, 2d Ser., vol. 16 (1938): 221-58.

Fukutake Tadashi. Japanese Rural Society. Ithaka and London, 1972.

Fung Yu-lan. A History of Chinese Philosophy. 2 vols. Translated by Derk Bodde. Princeton, 1953.

Griffis, W.E. The Mikado's Empire. New York, 1876.

Hall, John W. "The Castle Town and Japan's Modern Urbanization," in Hall and Jansen, listed below, 169-188.

Hall, John W. "The Confucian Teacher in Tokugawa Japan," in Nivison and Wright, eds., listed below, 268-301.

Hall, John W. "Feudalism in Japan - a Reassessment," in Hall and Jansen, eds., listed below, 15-51.

Hall, John W. Government and Local Power in Japan, 500 to 1700. A Study Based on Bizen Province. Princeton, N.J., 1966.

Hall, John W., and M.B. Jansen, eds. Studies in the Institutional History of Early Modern Japan. Princeton, N.J., 1968.

Hall, John W. Tanuma Okitsugu, 1719-1788. Forerunner of Modern Japan. Cambridge, Mass., 1955.

Hall, Robert B. and Toshio Noh. Japanese Geography. A Guide to Japanese Reference and Research Materials. Ann Arbor, 1970.

Harootunian, H.D. Toward Restoration. The Growth of Political Consciousness in Tokugawa Japan. Berkeley, 1970.

Harris, Townsend. The Complete Journal of Townsend Harris. New York, 1930.

Hefele, K. "Forstliche Reiseeindrücke in Japan," in Mittheilungen der deutschen Gesellschaft für die Natur und Völkerkunde Ostasiens. Vol. IX (pt. 2),(1903): 147-68.

Henderson, D.F. "The Evolution of Tokugawa Law," in Hall and Jansen, eds., listed above, 203-29.

Hibbett, Howard. The Floating World in Japanese Fiction. Freeport, New York, 1959.

Hirschmeier, Johannes. The Origins of Entrepreneurship in Meiji Japan. Cambridge, Mass., 1964.

Honjo, Eijiro. The Social and Economic History of Japan. New York, 1965.

Hulin, Victor. "Contribution au problème de la relation entre la forêt et l'eau du Japon," in Revue des eaux et forêts, 7 sér., 68 (Paris, 1930): 444-452.

Ishida Ryūjiro. Geography of Japan. 1961.

Jansen, Marius B. Sakamoto Ryōma and the Meiji Restoration. Princeton, N.J., 1961.

Jansen, Marius B., ed. Changing Japanese Attitudes Toward Modernization. Princeton, N.J., 1965.

Johnson, Erwin H. Nagura Mura: An Historical Analysis of Stability and Change in Community Structure. Microfilm. Ann Arbour, 1961.

Johnson, Erwin H. "Status Changes in Hamlet Structure," in Dore, ed., listed above, 153-83.

Joüon des Longrais, F. L'Est et l'Ouest. Institutions du Japon et de l'occident comparées. 1958.

Kämpfer, Engelbert. The History of Japan. Translated by J.G. Scheuchzer. 2 vols. London, 1727.

Kato Shuichi, transl. "Okina no fumi," by Tominaga Nakamoto, in Kato, listed below, 19-35.

Kato Shuichi. Tominaga Nakamoto. A Tokugawa Iconoclast. Reprinted from Monumenta Nipponica, vol. 22, 1-2 (1967). Vancouver, 1967.

Keene, Donald, ed. Anthology of Japanese Literature. To the mid-nineteenth Century. London, 1968.

Keene, Donald, transl. The Treasury of Loyal Retainers (Chūshingura). New York and London, 1971.

Lockwood, William W., ed. The State and Economic Enterprise in Japan. Princeton, 1965.

McEwan, J.R. The Political Writings of Ogyū Sorai. Cambridge, 1962.

Matsumoto Shigeru. Motoori Norinaga. 1730-1801. Cambridge, Mass., 1970.

Nakamura, James. Agricultural Production and the Economic Development of Japan, 1873-1912. Princeton, N.J., 1966.

Nakamura, James. "Growth of Japanese Agriculture, 1875-1920," in Lockwood, ed., listed above, 249-324.

Nivison, David S. and Arthur F. Wright, eds. Confucianism in Action. Stanford, Calif., 1959.

Norman, E.H. "Andō Shōeki and the Anatomy of Japanese Feudalism," TASJ, 3d Ser., vol. 2 (1949).

Rein, J.J. Japan. Nach Reisen und Studien im Auftrage der Königl. preussischen Regierung dargestellt. 2 vols. Leipzig, 1881.

Rickett, W. Allyn. Kuan tzu. Hong Kong, 1965.

Roretz, A. von. "Bericht über eine Reise durch die südlichen Provinzen von Japan," in Mittheilungen der kk. geographischen Gesellschaft. XVIII (Vienna, 1875): 549-554, and XIX (1876): 76-82, 515-20.

Sansom, G.B. A History of Japan. 1615-1867. 3 vols. London, 1964.

Sansom, G.B. A Short Cultural History. New York, 1962.

Sansom, G.B. The Western World and Japan. A Study in the Interaction of European and Asiatic Cultures. New York, 1950.

Sheldon, Charles D. "'Pre-modern' merchants and modernization in Japan," in Modern Asian Studies. 5,3, (1971): 193-206.

Sheldon, Charles D. The Rise of the Merchant Class in Tokugawa Japan. 1600-1868. An Introductory Survey. New York, 1973.

Shively, Donald H. "Bakufu versus Kabuki," in Hall and Jansen, eds., listed above, 231-61.

Siebold, Ph. von. Nippon. Archiv zur Beschreibung von Japan. 7 vols. Leiden, 1832-51.

Smith, Thomas C. The Agrarian Origins of Modern Japan. Stanford, Calif., 1959.

Smith, Thomas C. "The Japanese Village in the Seventeenth Century," in Hall and Jansen, eds., listed above, 263-82.

Smith, Thomas C. "Land Tax in the Tokugawa Village," in Hall and Jansen, eds., listed above, 283-99.

Spae, Joseph J. Itō Jinsai. A Philosopher, Educator and Sinologist of the Tokugawa Period. New York, 1967.

Taeuber, Irene B. The Population of Japan. Princeton, New Jersey, 1958.

Takekoshi Yosoburo. The Economic Aspects of the History of the Civilization of Japan. 3 vols. London, 1930.

Thunberg, Karl Peter. Reise durch einen Theil von Europa, Afrika und Asien, hauptsächlich in Japan, in den Jahren 1770 bis 1799. Translation of the Swedish original text into German by C.H. Groskurd. 2 vols. Berlin, 1794.

Titsingh, M. Mémoires et Anecdotes sur la dynasties régnante des Djogouns, souverains du Japon. Paris, 1820.

Totman, Conrad. Politics in the Tokugawa Bakufu. 1600-1843. Cambridge, Mass., 1967.

Tsukahira, T.G. Feudal Control in Tokugawa Japan: The Sankin-Kōtai System. Cambridge, Mass., 1966.

Veitch, John G. "Notes on the Agriculture, Trees, and Flora of Japan," in Alcock, listed above, vol. 2, Appendix E, 475-90.

Watson, Burton, transl. Han Fei Tzu. Basic Writings. New York, 1964.

Watson, Burton, transl. Hsün tzu. New York and London, 1963.

Webb, Hershel. The Japanese Imperial Institution in the Tokugawa Period. New York and London, 1968.

Weber, Max. The Religion of China. Toronto, 1968.

Yuasa, Nobuyuki, transl. The Narrow Road to the Deep North and other Travel Sketches. London, 1966.

INDEX

Aburatsu 油津, 121.

ado 阿土, 172, 173; TN: 384, 390.

afforestation, 123 ff.; allegations in TN, 126 ff; and decrease in river water, 129-32; and decreasing precipitation, 132; restricting iriai rights, 132-5; and deteriorating soil quality, 134; and deteriorating forage quality, 135; pine sap blamed for decreasing crop yield, 135-7; 301. TN: 406 ff.

agemai 上米, 43, 190.

agriculture, commercialized, 55 ff.; different degrees of commercialization, 56-7; new technology, 57-8; rise in production in Higo, 148 ff.; double cropping, 155-156; crop substitution, 156-7.

akashiru 阿迦汁, TN: 384.

Akita county 飽田, 184.

Akita domain, 秋田, 122.

akiyama 明山, 73.

akuden 悪田, 170.

Alcock, Sir R., 19n, 209, 212, 215; on Edo and Kantō plain, 216; 217; 219-20.

Amakusa peninsula , 93.

Ame no shita no hitogoto 宇下人言, 287.

Amida 阿彌陀, 268, 272. TN: 425n.

Anami Jinbei 穴見甚兵衛, 230, 266, 267.

Ancient School, see, kogaku.

Andō Shōeki 安藤昌益, on village headmen, 54; on priests, 252; on religion of common people, 256; 289-90.

annual tax (nengū), 233 ff.; general, 234-6; experienced by peasantry, 246-9. TN: 338-40.

aragaki 荒垣, 108.

Ariake bay 有明湾, 81, 165.

Ariyoshi house 有吉家, 160-1.

arrowroot, 70n; 228. TN: 397.

Asama volcano, 37. 浅間山

Aso county 阿蘇, 168; commented by Furukawa, 223; 285.

Aso shrine 阿蘇, 262.

azukari seido 預制度, see deposit system.

Baba Bunkō 馬場文耕, 289.

bakufu 幕府, 14-22; and religious institutions, 254.

bakuhan system 幕藩体制, 15.

banbyō ichidokuron 万病一毒論, 319.

banishment (mura harai), 52, 52n. TN: 420, 423.

bank crash of 1802, 189.

Bashaku-machi 馬借町, 371.

Bellah, R.N., 266.

Bizen 備前, 109n, 122, 159.

Bōchū 坊中, 260.

Buddhism, see also, Shinshū sect, influence on bakufu, 23-5; 26-8; TN: 392.

bugyō 奉行 (commissioner), 98.

Bungo 豊後, 225.

bunmeshi 分飯, 226.

bushidō (Way of the Warrior), 29. 武士道

buyaku 夫役, see, corvée.

Byōmei ikai 病名彙解, TN: 399n.

Byōmeikai 病名解, TN: 399.

Chambliss, W.J., 52.

chigyō 知行 (exercise of proprietorship), 21.

chigyōtori 知行取, 161.

Chihaku, Doctor, interpreted, 311; 317-324. 智伯

chikata chigyō 地方知行, 183n.

Chikugo 筑後, 25.

Chikuzen 筑前, 243n.

Chōninbukuro 町人袋, 36n, 257n.

chōnin bungaku 町人文学, 282.

Chōnin Kōken Mokuroku 町人考見目録 (Observations on Merchants), 92.

Chōshū 長州, 8,9.

Chu Hsi 朱子, 30.

Chūzō 忠蔵, TN: 372.

Confucianism, 18, 23, 26, 28-34, 43; concerned about Buddhist influence, 249 ff.; and medicine, 318-9.

corvée (buyaku, kōyaku), 49, 125; and land reclamation, 164. TN: 385.

Craig, A., 114.

Daigaku Wakumon 大学或問, 287.

daimyō 大名 (lords), 16.

Daitō temple 大盗寺, TN: 423.

Daiunkyō 大雲経, 263.

danka system 壇家, 269. TN: 427.

Danna Haramitsu 壇那波羅蜜, TN: 427.

Dazai Shundai 太宰春台, 43.

debt transfer (karigae), 102-3, 243; TN: 362-4.

Denshūkan 伝習館, 110.

deposit system (azukari seido), 187-9.

dezukurimai 出作米, TN: 367.

district headman (sōshōya), 99, 100-3; petition against jōmen method, 190-2; attacked, TN: 345, 348; TN: 349, 350; duties defined, TN: 352.

diviners, 258-9; TN: 354.

Dohei 土平, interpreted, 312; 316-7.

doki 土気 (earth ether), 355.

Dokōkankenroku 土貢管見録 199.

domain schools, 30, 404n. (see also, Jishūkan)

Dōmei 道迷, 311.

domen 土免, 386.

donations, 184-6, 236. TN: 370.

doyō 土用 TN: 355-6, 355n.

Edo 江戸, 37, 40n, 57, 73, 213; Kämpfer on housing, 214; food, 214-5; comment by Alcock, 216; Harris on life of common people, 218; Thunberg on houiing, 219n; 254.

eta 穢多, 371n.

family limitation, 207-9.

'first ears of rice' tax (hatsuhogome), 229, 236. TN: 368.

fertilizers, 58; horse manure, 59; night-soil, 59-60; 227; green fertilizer, 61, 63, 64, 68, 179; commercial f., 62, 67; 144, 179; replacement of green f. by commercial f., 67, 69-70; fish fertilizers, 68; shortage of green f., 134, 171, TN: 409; water, 172, 172n; ashes, 226-7.

five-family groups (gonin gumi), explained, 53, 53n; 206, 207n, 244.

forestry, 72-5; in Higo, 121 ff., (see also, afforestation)

fuchi 扶持, see, stipends.

fudai 譜代, 16.

fudasashi 札差 (rice brokers), 46.

Fujiwara Seika 藤原惺窩, 23.

Fujizawa 富士沢, 217.

Fukui 福井, 210.

Furukawa Koshōken 古河古松軒, on Higo, 85-9; 158; on Aso region, 168; on peasant life in Higo, 222-4; on rainprayers, 264-5; 286; on Katō cult, 385n.

gakkō-tō 学校党, see, school faction.

gakuryō shinchi 学寮新地, 161.

Gamō Kunpei 蒲生君平, 112n.

geiyū biraki 鯨油開, 161.

gendaka 現高, 148.

Gendōkan 原道館, 113.

Gengo 玄語 (Discourse on Metaphysics), 291.

genki 元気, TN: 406.

ginjunbi nashi no ginsatsu hakkō 銀準備なしの銀札発行, 94n.

ginsatsu 銀札, see, paper money.

gisaku 擬作, 183n.

Gisuke 義助, interpreted, 311; 314-5.

gōdaka 郷高, 148n.

gofu 護符, 259.

go-gindokoro 御銀所, 187.

gogyō 御形, 227n.

gojō 五常, 266n.

gokamachi regulation 五ヶ町制度, 85, 117.

gokō gomin 五公五民, 143.

Go-Kyōyusho 御教諭書 207, 207n, 258, 266.

gonin gumi, see, five-family group 五人組.

go-shamen biraki 御赦免開 160, 161.

go-shamen tateyama 御赦免建山, 125.

gōshi 郷士, see, rural samurai.

Gōshi county 合志, 149, 270n.

goshō gomen 後生御免, 272.

Gotō Konzan 後藤艮山, 319.

gowari no sakutoku 五割の作徳 explained, 157-8. TN: 341, 341n.

go-yōen 御用塩, 120.

go-yōkin 御用金 (forced contribution), 21.

go-zenmai 御膳米, 20.

Griffis, W.E., 209, 210, 221.

gun 郡 (county), 98.

gunbugyō 郡奉行 (Commissioner of County Affairs), 85.

gundai 郡代 (county official), 85, 99.

gundai jikifure 郡代直触 307.

Gunsho ruijū 群書類従 112.

hadakamugi 裸麦, 338n.

Hakirishitan 破切支丹, 27.

hakobe はこべ, 227n.

Hakodate, described by Alcock, 212. 箱館

Hamamachi 浜町, 118, 226n, 307.

hamen kemi 破免検見, see, reassessment.

Hanawa Hōkiichi 塙保己一, 112.

hangaku 藩学 (domain schools) 404n.

Han-no-ura 飯ノ浦, 221.

hankō 藩校 (domain schools) 404n.

hansatsu 藩札, see, paper money.

hara 原, 65-7; plant life on h., 66-7; afforestation of h., 74.

Haramachi 原町, 213n.

haraigashira 払頭 (Head of Payment), 240, 247.

Harris, T., 209, 215; on peasant life, 217-8.

hatamoto 旗本, 44; 44n.

hatsuhogome 初穂米, see, 'first ears of rice' tax.

Hayashi Ōen, 林櫻園, 112.

Hayashi Razan 林羅山, 28.

Hayashi school, 47.

Hayashi Shihei 林子平, 112.

hazekata onma 櫨方御間, 119.

hazekata yakusho 櫨方役所, see, Wax Office.

hazeyama 櫨山, 119.

Hefele, K., on hara, 65; 130.

Higo domain 肥後, role in Meiji Restoration, 8-9; geography, 81-5; function today, 84; viewed by Furukawa, 85-9; population, 90n; finances prior to Hōreki reform, 90-7; strategic tasks, 93; assessed yield, 148n; increase in assessed yield discussed, 151 ff.; stipends, 183; peasant life in H., 222 ff.; food, 225; natural calamities, 229.

Higo Kōshiden 肥後孝子伝 (The Lives of Filial Sons of Higo), 109.

Hihon Tamakushige 秘本玉くしげ, 293.

hinin 非人, TN: 371, 371n.

hinin ninbetsuchō 非人人別帳, 374.

hinintō 非人頭, 374n.

hinoki 檜 (cypress), 122. (see also, afforestation)

Hirano-ya 平野屋, 163.

Hirata Atsutane 平田篤胤, 251.

Hiroshima 広島, compared with Kumamoto, 88.

Hisahara village 久原, 134, 135.

Hitoyoshi 人吉, 268.

hiyatoi 日雇 (wage labour), 39.

hirakata , 55.

Hizen 肥前, 225.

hōkōnin 奉公人 (indentured labour), 38-9, 244.

honbyakushō 本百姓, 49, 100.

honji suijaku 本地垂迹, TN: 400n.

hōon 報恩, 266.

hontomononari 本途物成 (principal land tax), 234.

Hōreki reform 宝暦改革, in Higo, 90-185; appreciation by Shimada, 187.

Hori Heitazaemon 堀平太左衛門, 88, 107, 108.

hoshika 干鰯, 67.

Hosokawa Muneyoshi 細川宗孝 92; murdered, 97.

Hosokawa Shigekata 細川重賢, 45; comment by Furukawa, 88; 97; on purpose of domain school, 110.

Hosokawa Tadatoshi 細川忠利, 85.

Hōtaku-gun 飽託, 149.

Hotaru Nagaaki 帆足長秋, 111.

Hotokehara 仏原, 182.

hotoke no za 仏の座, 227n.

Hsü Kuang-Chi 徐光啓, 63.

Hsün tzu 荀子, 33-4; TN: 408n.

hyakushō bōzu 百姓坊主, 270.

hyakushōdai 百姓代, see, peasant deputy.

hyakushō uedateyama 百姓植立山, 124.

hyōtori 俵取, 183n.

Hyūga 日向, 268.

ichidai kyojū 一代居住, TN: 428.

ichijō ikkaji 一城一侍, 253.

Ide Hei'uemon 井手兵右衛門, 182

Ikeda Mitsumasa 池田光政 24, 109n.

ikki ryūtairon 一気留帯論, 319.

ikkō ikki 一向一揆, 272.

Ikoma rod 生駒, TN: 347, 389.

imogo いもご (volcanic earth), 82n.

inaka 田舎, TN: 387n.

Inazu Ya'uemon Yorimasu 稲津弥右衛門頼勝 351n.

in'u 淫雨, TN: 391.

inga ōhō 因果応報 27.

Inoue Kowashi 井上毅, 9, 11.

iriai 入会 (right of usufruct), 70-5; curtailment of, 71, 130, 171, 180. TN: 409.

Ishida, R., 131.

Ishinhō 医心方, TN: 398n.

Itō Jinsai 伊藤仁斎, 29, 319.

ji 時, TN: 354.

jibutsudō 持仏堂, 270.

jihikiawase land survey 地引合せ, 87, 148, 154, 157.

ji'in hatto 寺院法度, 254.

jinarashi land survey 地撫 148.

jingi isen 仁義為先, 273.

Jishūkan domain school 時習館, 30n, 109-114; kokugaku influence? 11-3, 293.

jizamurai 地士, 181.

Johnson, E.H., 64-5, 67.

jōmen method of tax assessment, in Kyōhō reform, 44; 55; 定免法 141; introduced by shogunate, 144-5; effect on peasantry, 146; in Higo, 146; as incentive, 152; introduction in Higo, 190; petition against, 190; 239, 298; and dating of TN, 305, 330. Proposed in TN: 376 ff.

jōnōgashi 上納貸, see, tax payment loans.

jūmensei 受免制, see, jōmen method.

junkai 順会, 106n.

junmachi 准町, 85.

Kaga 加賀, 272.

Kagami 鏡, 173, 240n.

Kagen 価原 (The Origin of Value), 291.

Kaibo Seiryō 海保青陵, 43.

kaidan 戒壇, 251n.

kaikaku 改革, see, reform.

kakaehinin 抱非人, 374n.

kakaku 家格, 49n.

kakedokoro 掛所, 270.

Kamigata 上方, 87n, 87; life in K. compared with mountains of Higo, 223.

Kamimashiki-gun 上益城郡, 123.

Kamiyama village 上山村, 310.

Kämpfer, E., on importance of timber, 72, 74; 209, 211, 213-4; on forests as source of food, 227; on arrowroot, 228; on Yamabushi, 259.

Kanadehon Chūshingura 仮名手本忠臣蔵, TN:364

kanake 金気, 92.

kanmai 欠米, 235.

Kanmuryōjukyō 観無量寿経, TN: 425n.

Kanokogi Ryōhei 鹿子木量平, 103, 152, 174-8.

Kansei igaku no kin 寛政異学の禁, 30.

Kansei reform 寛政改革, 46-7.

Kansei sankijin 寛政三奇人, 112n.

kanzen chōaku 勧善懲悪, 27.

karigae 借替, see, debt transfer.

karō 家老 (elders), 161.

Katō Chikage 加藤千蔭, 112.

Katō Kiyomasa, 159, 168, 313. TN: 384n, 385n 加藤清正.

Katō, S., 290.

Katsura Shūshi 桂洲子, 399n.

Kawakami Gensai 川上彦斎, 113.

Kawasaki 川崎, 286.

Kawashiri 川尻, 81, 85, 93, 240n.

Keian Ofuregaki 慶安御触書, 19, 19n, 20, 205, 206.

Keihō Sōsho 刑法草書, 107.

keizai 経済, 284.

Keizai Mondō Hiroku 経済問答秘録, 225, 255.

kemi 検見, see, tax assessment.

kemi method of tax assessment 検見法, 44, 140; in Higo, 147; contrasted with jōmen method, 152; 158, 298, 330.

kenchi 検地(land surveys), 22, 44.

ki 気 , 317.

ki 気 , 354, 355.

kika 気化 , TN: 394.

Kikuchi-gun 菊池 , 123, 149.

Kikuchi Shigetomo 菊池重朝, 110.

Kimyō temple 奇妙院, TN: 393.

kinkayū きん[illegible]粥, 19.

kinnō gōshi 金納郷士, 180.

kiriboshi daikon 切干大根, 226.

Kiso 木曽 , 122.

Kitamura, T., 162.

kitōshi no kao ni kagaku no kage mo nashi 祈祷師の顔に科学の陰もなし, 258n.

kō 候 , TN: 354, 355.

koban 小判, 238.

Kōbō Daishi 弘法大師 see, Kūkai.

kodō 古道 (Ancient Way), 294.

kogaku 古学 (Ancient School), 29; in Higo, 111.

Kōgawa Shūan 香川修庵, 319.

ko'i faction 古医派 318, 328.

kōjū 講中, 257; TN: 415, 415n.

kokemi 小検見 ("small assessment"), 236.

koku 刻 , TN: 355.

kokugaku 国学 (School of National Learning), 26; influence on Jishūkan? 111-3; 292.

Kokura 小倉 , described by Siebold, 212; health of common people, 213; tax payment in K., 241n; 246n.

komebarai 米払 , 241n.

komigome 込米, 235.

komononari 小物成, (miscellaneous taxes), 234.

komugi 小麦 , 338n.

komusō 虚無僧(mendicant priest), 252, 258, 261. TN: 373.

konnyaku 蒟 , 215, 228.

kōritsutsu 郡筒, 181.

kosei faction 古世派, 318, 328.

Mt. Koshiro 小岱山, 137.

kōyaku 公役, see, corvée

Kuan tzu 管子 , on link between nature and society, 32n, 336n.

kuchimai 口米 , 235. TN: 360.

Kujikata Osadamegaki 公事方御定書 , 107.

Kujū 久住, 240n.

Kūkai 空海, 401.

Kuma river 球磨川, 121.

Kumamoto 熊本 , function today, 84n; 85; viewed by Furukawa, 88-9, 93.

Kumazawa Banzan 熊沢蕃山, 26n, 29, 73, 130, 138, 251, 269n, 287.

kumi 組, 99.

Kunitake Dansuke 国武弾助, 94, 97.

Kunitake no dokutake 国武の毒茸 , 97.

kuramai chigyō 蔵米知行, 93, 183.

Kyōhō reform 享保改革, 43-5.

Kyōku poem 狂句 , 258.

Kyōnen konkyū no tekagami 凶年困窮の手鏡 230-2.

Kyōto 京都, 37, 57, 213, 214.

kyūchi 給地 20.

kyūmin biraki 窮民開, 161.

Kyūshū 九州, population, 41n; economic zones, 84n, climate, 131; peasant life, 219-20; climate described by Furukawa, 224.

land flight, 39-42; in Higo, 179-80.

land reclamation, 43, 150; in Higo, 159-80; different types of, 159-62; contrasted with Bizen, 160; wide distribution of reclaimed land, 161; peasants reluctant to till new fields, 166-7; drainage problems, 169-78; proposed, TN: 389-91.

Legalism, 31-4, 108.

local administration, in Higo, 98-107; rural samurai, 183.

lords, see, daimyō.

mabiki 間引 (thinning), 207. (see also, family limitation.)

mansha flower まんしゃ, 117.

Masamune Hakuchō 正宗白鳥, 282.

masu 升 (wooden measure), 247.

matsu 松 (pine), 123. (see also, afforestation.)

matsu hijiri 松聖, TN: 430n.

Matsudaira Sadanobu 松平定信, 46, 47, 252, 287.

Matsui house 松井家, 160, 161, 163.

Matsuyama 松山, 141.

medical science, 318-20.

menjō 免状, 238.

merchants, 21, 35 ff., 42, 45, 46; and town culture, 282 ff.

merchant guilds, checking migration to cities, 40; recognized by authorities, 45.

metsuke 目付 (censors), 22; in Higo, 100.

miko 巫子, 259.

Mimibukuro 耳袋, 49n.

Minamata 水俣, 264.

Ming fa 明法, 336n.

Minkan Seiyō 民間省要 (Essentials of Civic Life), 204.

Minoda, K., 162.

Mito 水戸, stipends, 183.

Mitsui Takafusa 三井高房, comment on Hosokawa, 92.

Miura Baien 三浦梅園, 290-1.

Miyabe Teizō 宮部鼎蔵, 113.

miyadera 宮寺, 260.

Miyahara 宮原, 173.

miyaza 宮座, see, shrine association.

Miyazaki Antei 宮崎安貞, 57.

Miyoshi Kiyoyuki 三善清行, 322n.

mizunomi 水飲, 49; and land reclamation, 165.

monopolies, 46; in Higo, 116-117.

monzeki temple 門跡寺, 254.

Morioka 盛岡, 122.

Morishita, I., 148- 154.

Morita, S., 11, 12, 185, 296, 310.

Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, 111, 287, 292-5.

motoyama 本山, 73.

mura harai 村払い, see, banishment.

mura iriyō 村入用, 234.

mura yoriai 村寄合, see, village assembly.

Murata Harumi 村田春海, 112.

mutaka 無高 (landless peasant), 49; and land reclamation, 165.

Nagasaki 長崎, 93.

Nagase Masaki 長瀬真幸, 112.

Nagoya 名古屋, 73.

Nagoya Gen'i 名古屋玄医, 318.

Nagura village, 64, 64n, 68.

Nakae Tōjū 中江藤樹, 29.

Nakai Chikuzan 中井竹山, 30, 251, 252, 254n.

Nakajima Hirotari 中島広足, 112.

Nakamura, J., 148n.

Nakayama Ichinoshin 中山市之進, 305.

nanakusa 七草, 227.

Naoe Kanetsugu 直江兼続 24, 245.

Naosuke 直助, 311.

nawahane 縄外, 241.

nazuna なずな, 227.

Negishi Morinobu 根岸守信, 49n.

nen 年, 356.

nengū 年貢, see, annual tax.

nengū wappujō 年貢割付状 238.

nibumai 二歩米, 190.

Ni'ichi Banashi 仁一咄, 307, 308, 310.

ninjūteikan 忍従諦観 27.

Ninnōkyō 仁王経 263.

Ninomiya Sontoku 二宮尊徳, 25.

Nishimura, T., 168, 171.

Nisuke 仁助, interpreted, 311, 312-3.

nobiru 野蒜, 227.

Nōgyō Zensho 農業全書, 57.

nohinin 野非人, 374n.

Norman, E.H., 290.

nokata 野方, 387n.

Nozu district 野津, 168.

Nung chêng chüan shu 農政全書, 63.

Nung sang t'ung chüeh 農桑通訣, 63.

Nyorai ~~如~~ 来, 420.

Obi 飫肥 121.

oboe 覚, 188.

Ōbugyō 大奉行 (High Commissioner) 98.

Odawara 小田原, 211-2.

Oguni 小国 230, 267. (see also, Aso county)

Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠, 29, 251, 287.

ōhō ihon 王法為本, 273.

o-jikiyama お直山, 73.

okabo 陸稲 (long-grained Indian rice), 82.

o-kakomai お水主米, TN: 360, 360n.

o-kami お上, 18.

o-kariage お借上, 94.

Okayama 岡山, compared with Kumamoto, 88.

o-komori お籠り (rain prayer) 262.

oku o-yama 奥御山, 124.

o-kurabaraikitte 御蔵払切手, 241.

onden 隠田 (hidden fields), 82, 107, 148, 148n.

oneki 瘟疫, TN: 397.

onmyōji 陰陽師, see, diviners.

Ono, T., 11, 304, 305.

Onwakan 温和館, 110.

Ōsaka 大阪 37, 57, 73, 213; Thunberg on housing, 214.

Oshima 小島, 81.

Ōsumi 大隅, 268.

o-tateyama お建山, 73; in Higo, 124.

o-tomeyama お留山, 73; in Higo, 124.

Ōtsu 大津, 222, 240n.

Ou Yang-Hsiu 歐陽脩 317.

outcasts, 89; village described, 220; TN: 371.

Owari 尾張, 122.

oyabun 親分, 374n.

o-yama 御山, 73.

o-yamashihaiyaku 御山支配役, (official in charge of the woodland), 99, 125.

Ōyōmei school 王陽明 (Wang Yang Ming), 29.

paper money (ginsatsu), in Higo, 94, 95, 96.

paper mulberry, 118.

peasant deputy (hyakushōdai), 99-100.

peasantry, food, 19; Tenmei famine, 37; and growing money economy, 37; pawn service, 38-9; land flight, 39-42, 179-80; quality of life improved, 55; in Higo, 87, 88; 158; life as seen by Tanaka Kyūgū, 204; life mirrored in legislation, 205-206; regional differences of quality of peasant life, 209 ff.; Alcock on p. life, 216-7; life in Kyūshū, 219; 221; life in Higo, 222 ff.; food 231-2; punishments, 245-6; experience of annual tax, 246-9; and priesthood, 249 ff; life described by TN: 361; attachment to priests, TN: 414 ff.

population, 41, 41n; in Higo, 90n.

priesthood, attacked by Confucian scholars, 249 ff., 301-3.

rain prayers, 263-5; TN: 392-5.

reassessment, 144, 239; TN: 358 ff.; abolishment proposed, 377.

reform (kaikaku), 42-7.

reform of county administration, in Higo, 96.

rei 霊, TN: 357.

Rein, J.J., on hara, 65-6; 70n.

reirakuson 零落村, see, village decay.

Reishōken 麗松軒, 304, 306.

rengesō 蓮華草

Rennyō 蓮如, 271.

rensaku nōgyō 連作農業, 59.

ri 理 (law of heaven, principle) 28.

Ri'uemon 理右衛門 311.

rōnin 浪人, TN: 421.

rural samurai, stipends, 182-183; duties, 182; involved in local administration, 183.

ryōbu shintō 両部神道, 400.

ryūjin 龍神, 263, 264.

ryūō 龍王, 263, 265.

Sagara 相良 , 89.

Saigandenji 西巌殿寺 , 260.

Saishunkan 西春館, 111, 328.

Saiyū Zakki 西遊雑記 (Random Notes from a Journey to the West), 85.

Sakanoshita 坂ノ下, 212.

Sakuma Shōzan 佐久間象山, 113.

Sakusuke 作助, interpreted, 312, 316-7.

sale of rank, 180-6; TN: 365.

salt production, 120.

sankin kōtai 参勤交代 (duty of alternate attendance), 16-7, 35, relaxed, 44; 45; TN: 349.

Sansom, G.B., 22, 64, 287.

sashiko 刺子, 241, 242, 247.

Sassa Narimasa 佐々成政, 347.

Satō Nobuhiro 佐藤信淵 208n.

sato o-yama 里御山, 124.

Satsuma 薩摩 , 8,9; comparison with Higo, 87; control over travellers, 89; 240; 242n; 268.

Sawatari 猿渡 , 306.

school faction (gakkō-tō), 113.

Seidan 政談, 287.

Seiden engi 井田衍義, 12, 12n, 306, 310.

Seishi Kōki 正司考祺, 225.

Sejikenbunroku 世事見聞録, 252, 286.

Sendai 仙台 , 20.

senobi fields 畝延, 297; TN: 342-3, 346, 347, 386, 387.

seri 芹 227.

sericulture, 118.

setsu 節 , 354, 354n.

shakuhachi 尺八 , 261.

shamisen 三味線, TN: 417.

Shao Yung 邵雍, TN: 406n.

Sheldon, Ch., 36n.

Shibuya, T., 153.

shichibeya 質部屋, 108.

Shiki nōkaisho 四季農戒書, 24, 245.

Shimada Katsuji 島田嘉津次, 150, 186, 305, 306.

shimo 下 , 19.

Shimoda family 下田 , 51n, 84n.

Shimonoseki 下関 , 212.

shimpan 親藩 16.

shin 心 (mind), 357.

Shinshū sect 真宗派, 249, 265 ff., 303, 323-4; attacked, TN: 414 ff.

Shintō 神道, 24; in village, 25-6; in Higo, 261-5; 303, TN: 392 ff, 300 ff.

shindendaka 新田高, 150.

shingoji 神護寺, 260.

Shingon sect 真言宗, 269.

shinōkōshō 士農工商, 17, 20, 45.

Shinpūren 神風連, 9.

Shinran 親鸞, 268. TN: 413n, 425n.

shinsanko 新参戸 ("new worshippers"), 51n.

shinsei 親政 (personal rule), 33.

shinshin ihon 信心為本, 273.

shiofuki 潮吹, 177.

Shirakawa 白河, 267n.

shirasu しらす (volcanic earth), 82n.

shizensei 自然世, 289.

shogunate, see, bakufu.

shōkan 傷寒, TN: 397.

shoku 稷, TN: 432.

shōnin muyōron 商人無用論 ("Uselessness of the Merchant"), 42.

shosha negi kannushi hatto 諸社禰宜神主法度, 262.

shrine association (miyaza), 50, 50n, 55, 225.

Shūkyōkan 習教館, 110.

shūmon ninbetsuchō 宗門人別帳 (census register), 27.

Shun 舜, 33.

Siebold, Ph. von, 20, 20n, 209, 212, 214-5.

Smith, T.C., 18, 39, 51, 55, 142, 211.

Sōbō Kigen 草茅危言, 251, 254n.

social stratification, see, shinōkōshō.

sonnō jōi 尊王攘夷, 113.

sōroku 僧録, TN: 426.

sōshōya 惣庄屋, see, district headman.

sō yoriai 惣寄合, 106n.

stipends (fuchi), 20; in Higo, 93-4.

sugi 杉 (cedar), 122, (see, afforestation)

suiro 水牢 (water-dungeon), 246.

Suizenji 水前寺, 87.

suji 筋, 99.

sukegō 助郷 ("assistant villages"), 49.

sumptuary legislation, 44, 47; governing peasant life, 205-206; TN: 429.

sunshi 寸志, see, donation.

sunshi go-kenin 寸志御家人, 180.

sunshi sunkō 寸志寸考, see, Sale of Rank.

Suzuki Shōsan 鈴木正三, 27.

suzuna 菘, 227n.

suzushiro 清白, 227n.

tachiyokome 立横目, 247.

Taeuber, I., 91 n.

Taiseiden 大聖殿 (Paragon Hall), 29.

Takahashi 高橋, 85, 119.

takamochi 高持, 49.

Takase 高瀬, 85, 91, 240n.

Takamoto Shimei 高本紫溟, 112.

takawari 高割, 235.

Takayama Hikokuro 高山彦九郎, 112.

Takefu 武生, 221.

Takuma county 託麻, 87, 149, 184.

Tale of Nisuke, MSS, 11-2; domain reform as background, 47; discussed, 282 ff.; content summarized, 296-303; interpreted, 304-332; limitations to objectivity, 330.

Tamaboko Hyakushū 玉鉾百首, 295.

Tamakushige 玉くしげ, 287, 293, 294.

Tamamuro, T., 12, 305, 306, 307, 308.

Tamana county 玉名, 123, 134, 149.

Tanaka Kyūgū 田中丘隅, 204, 286.

tanata 棚田("shelf-fields"), 82.

Tanuma Mototomo 田沼意知, 257n.

Tanuma Okitsugu 田沼意次, 46

tatami 畳, 205, 314.

tawarahane 俵刎, 241.

tax assessment, 43; in Higo, 139 ff., 236-9. TN: 341 ff.

tax payment loans, 242-3.

tax rate, in Higo, 153-4.

tenaga 手永 (district), 98-9.

tenaga sanyaku 手永三役(three district officials), 99.

Tendai sect 天台派, 269, 271.

ten'i 天意, 357.

tenri 天理, TN: 412.

tenryō 天領 (shogunal land), 37.

tensai 天災, TN: 395.

tezukeyokome 手付横目(super-intendent), 99, 100.

Thunberg, C.P., 26n, 59-61, 209, 212, 214, 216, 219n.

tobo とぼ, 242.

tokaki 斗掻, 242.

Titsingh, M., 165.

toboko とぼこ 247.

Tōdō 藤堂, 141.

tōhōsaku, see, Tung Fang Shuo.

tokoro 苣, 231.

Tokugawa Harusada 徳川治貞, 293.

Tokugawa Iemitsu 徳川家光, 28.

Tokugawa Ieyasu 徳川家康, 14, 25, 33.

Tokugawa literature, 282 ff.; various genres, 284, limitations of criticism, 291-296.

"Tokugawa Plateau", 41.

Tokugawa Tsunayoshi 徳川綱吉, 29.

Tokugawa Yoshimune 徳川吉宗, 21, 43, 45, 47.

Tokugawa Yoshinao 徳川義直, 28.

Tominaga Nakamoto 富永仲基, 251, 290.

tomura 十村, 99.

~~Toyotomi Hideyoshi, 21.~~

Tosa domain 土佐 122, 184n.

toshi 歳, 357.

tōshi 通, 99.

Tōshōgū 東照宮, see, Tokugawa Ieyasu.

Toyotomi Hideyoshi, 21, 268, 347n 豊臣秀吉.

tozama 外様, 16.

tsubogari 坪刈, 238.

tsuke todoke 付届, 269.

Tsuruzaki 鶴崎 81, 85, 240n.

Tung Chung Shu 董仲舒, 395n.

Tung Fang Shuo 東方朔, TN: 375.

Uesugi Harunori 上杉治憲, 45.

ujigami 氏神 (clan god), 25.

Umakata-machi 馬方町, 371n.

unjō 運上, 236.

urbanization, 40, 40n, in Higo, 84-5.

uruchi 粳 (long-grained Indian rice), 82

Uto 宇土, 85.

village, 48; leading families, 48-50; stratification, 49; assembly, 51-2; and market economy, 54 ff.; in Higo, 82-4.

village assembly, (*mura yori-ai*), 51-2; in Higo, 106.

village decay (*reirakuson*), 167, 173 ff., 299-300. *TN*: 383 ff.

village headman, 50, 54; in Higo, 98, *103-5*, 206; attacked, TN: 345, 352.

village leadership, 48; privileges, 49-50; foundation of authority, 50-51; supremacy of trad. leadership challenged, 55.

Wang Chen 王禎, 63.

waritobo わりとぼ, 247.

Watanabe Tadasu 渡辺質, 306, 307, 308.

Wax office, 119, 161, 187.

wax production, 118-9.

wealthy peasants (*gōnō*), 18, 38, 36n, 155. *TN*: 312.

Yabe 矢部, 182, 186, 271, 305.

Yamabushi 山伏, *259-60*, 263, 303, *TN*: 392 ff., 398, 430 ff.

Yamaga Sokō 山鹿素行 29.

Yamakoshi やまこし, 247.

Yamanaka village 山中村, 310.

Yamashita 山下, 310.

Yamawaki Tōyō 山脇東洋, 319.

yang 陽, 32.

Yao 堯, 33.

yatsu 奴, 125.

Yatsushiro 八代, 85, 168, 240n.

yin 陰, 32.

Yokoi Shōnan 横井小楠, 113.

Yokome 横目 (police), 22.

Yokozō 横蔵, *TN*: 372.

yomogi 艾, 227.

Yoneda house 米田, 160-1.

Yonezawa 米沢, 45, 246n.

Yoshida shrine 吉田神社, 262.

Yoshimasu Tōdō 吉益東洞, 319.

Mt. Yoshimuta 吉牟田宮山, 123.

Yoshino 吉野, 122.

yuitsu sōgen no shintō 唯一宗源の神道, 400.

zaimachi 在町 (rural town), 84-5, 93, 116.

zainaka go-kenin 在中御家人 (rural samurai), 181.

zakata , 55.

Zashiki 佐敷, 85, 264.

Zen sect 禅宗, 269, 271.

Zensuke 善助, 311.

Zen'uemon 善右衛門 311.

Zokumaru 賊丸, *TN*: 423.