



The Kokudaka System: A Device for Unification

Wakita Osamu

Journal of Japanese Studies, Vol. 1, No. 2. (Spring, 1975), pp. 297-320.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0095-6848%28197521%291%3A2%3C297%3ATKSADF%3E2.0.CO%3B2-M>

Journal of Japanese Studies is currently published by The Society for Japanese Studies.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/about/terms.html>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/journals/sjs.html>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

The JSTOR Archive is a trusted digital repository providing for long-term preservation and access to leading academic journals and scholarly literature from around the world. The Archive is supported by libraries, scholarly societies, publishers, and foundations. It is an initiative of JSTOR, a not-for-profit organization with a mission to help the scholarly community take advantage of advances in technology. For more information regarding JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

WAKITA OSAMU

The *Kokudaka* System: A Device for Unification

There exist three competing historical interpretations of the period of transition between the medieval and the Tokugawa periods. The first interpretation, advanced by Araki Moriaki¹ and supported by Sasaki Junnosuke, Yamaguchi Keiji, and others,² argues that the feudal system was first established under the Toyotomi rule. Many of the supporters of this interpretation are specialists of the Tokugawa period, who maintain that the basic units of agricultural production managed by the *myōshu* were worked by slaves who were in the nature of quasi-extended family members (*kafuchōteki doreisei*). Thus, the *shōen* system was basically a system maintained by slavery. According to the supporters of this view, a society that was based on serfs (*nōdosei shakai*) emerged only after the Taikō cadastral survey (Taikō kenchi).

The second interpretation holds that the feudal system as found in the Tokugawa period was established under the Toyotomi rule and that the *reinō* system emerged during the same period. [*Reinō* is a compound of *rei* meaning subjugated and *nō* meaning peasants. The connotation is marginal, economically dependent peasants subjected to exploitation. The term was coined to suggest that these peasants differed from the *nōdo* which is translated as serf.] This interpretation was first advanced by Fujita Gorō³ and is now advocated

1. Araki Moriaki's major works are: *Bakuhan taisei shakai no seiritsu to kōzō* (Ochanomizu Shobō, 1959); *Rekishigaku ni okeru riron to jissō*, Vol. 1 (Ochanomizu Shobō, 1969); and *Taikō kenchi to kokudaka-sei* (Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 1969).

2. Sasaki Junnosuke, *Bakuhan kenryoku no kiso kōzō* (Ochanomizu Shobō, 1964), p. 19; Yamaguchi Keiji, "Joron," *Kōza Nihonshi*, Vol. 4, *Bakuhan-sei shakai* (Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1970).

3. Fujita Gorō, *Kinsei nōseishi-ron* (Ochanomizu Shobō, 1950, reissued in

by Miyagawa Mitsuru on the basis of his examination of the Taikō kenchi.⁴

This second interpretation sees the medieval period as having a *nōdo* system and the Tokugawa period a *reinō* system. The evolution of the former into the latter is seen to have been analogous to the evolution of the classical manors (*die klassische Grundherrschaft*) of Europe into the medieval manor (*die reine Grundherrschaft*) within feudalism.

The third interpretation of the transitional period argues that this was a period during which feudalism was reconstituted (*hōkensei saihensei*). Hayakawa Jirō⁵ and Nakamura Kichiji⁶ have advanced this view and I have attempted to develop it further.⁷ Of course, the “reconstituting” of feudalism in no way suggests that the medieval period and the Tokugawa period were the same. Though both periods were feudal, they clearly were different in nature. What I argue is that the foundation of the feudal authority of the medieval period was shaken by the rising power of the peasants and the peasant revolts at the end of the medieval period, but the authority of the feudal rulers was reconstituted and strengthened by a new group of ryōshu—the rulers of the revitalized feudal society.

With the above background, let me now present my view of the establishment of the *kinsei* feudalism [from the Toyotomi through the Tokugawa periods]:

1970). For Fujita's views see: Wakita Osamu, “Fujita Gorō no chosaku ni tsuite,” *Rekishi no meicho—Nihonjin-hen* (Azekura Shobō, 1970).

4. Miyagawa Mitsuru, *Taikō kenchi-ron* (Ochanomizu Shobō, 1959), Vol. 1. A review of Miyagawa's work cited above by Wakita is found in *Shirin* 43, 1 (October 1960).

5. Hayakawa Jirō, *Nihon rekishi tokuhon*, Chapter 5 (Hakuyōsha, 1937).

6. Nakamura Kichiji, *Nihon hōkensei saihensei shi* (Mikasa Shobō, 1939). For empirical evidence, see the same author's *Kinsei shoki nōseishi kenkyū* (Iwanami Shoten, 1938; 1970, 2nd edition). His most recent view is found in Chapter 3, entitled “Kokudaka sei to hōken-sei” in *Bakuhān taisei-ron* (Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1972).

7. See the following works by Wakita Osamu: “Kinsei hōken-sei no seiritsu” in *Hōken kokka no kenryoku kōzō* (Sōbunsha, 1967), pp. 225–297; “Oda seiken-ka no sō ni tsuite” in *Kobata Atsushi kyōju taikan kinen—Kokushiron-shū* (Kyoto Daigaku Kokushi Kenkyū-shitsu, 1970), pp. 589–604; “Shokuhō seiken-ron,” in *Kōza Nihonshi*, Vol. 4, *Bakuhān-sei shakai* (Tokyo Daigaku Shuppan-kai, 1957), pp. 4–57; *Symposium Nihon rekishi 10: Shokuhō seiken-ron* (Gakuseisha, 1972); “Kinsei hōken-sei seiritsu no rekishiteki igi,” *Nihon-shi kenkyū*, No. 118 (April 1971), pp. 33–48; and *Kinsei hōken shakai no keizai kōzō* Chapter 3 (Ochanomizu Shobō, 1963), pp. 121–226. Also see Wakita Osamu, *Shokuhō seiken-ron I—Oda kenryoku no kibān* to be published from the Tokyo University Press in 1975.

(a) I believe that the small agricultural units as independent units of production existed even before the Nanbokuchō period and that they began to develop visibly after that period. During the sixteenth century, a market economy developed, specialization continued, cities appeared everywhere in the Kinai⁸ and even in other regions, and castle towns and the *rokusai-ichi* (regularly held market in days ending with six) emerged.⁹

(b) The Kamakura and the Muromachi bakufu exerted their military power over the framework of the system of regional control maintained by the ryōshu (*ryōshu shihai taisei*) with the zaichi ryōshu as its core. Their military power eroded the shōen holdings, but their power also in effect served to strengthen the power of the peasants.

(c) Though the rulers of the feudal structure of this period were divided and shaken by peasant revolts (*do-ikki*) and the revolts of the Ikkō sect,¹⁰ the *sengoku daimyō*, and then Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi, succeeded through their political leadership in coalescing the power of the new feudal ruling class—the strong military power of the samurai class. By the successful monopolization of this power, a new structure of feudal rule was established.

(d) The policies that characterized the *kinsei* were the separation of classes, the *kokudaka* system, and, for the Tokugawa period, *sakoku*. *Kinsei* society was clearly feudal in its characteristics: the *chigyō* (fief) system and the enforced class structure.¹¹ But at the same time, by dispensing with the proprietary landownership and the *honryō*, the feudalism that emerged possessed unique characteristics not found in medieval feudalism.¹²

A further analysis of the political powers of Oda and Toyotomi

8. Harada Tomohiko, *Nihon hōken toshi kenkyū* (Tokyo Daigaku Shuppan kai, 1957); Wakita, *Kōzō*, Chapter 2, Section 1, pp. 80–86; and Wakita, “Jinaimachi no kōzō to tenkai,” *Shirin* 41, 1 (January 1958).

9. Toyoda Takeshi, *Chūsei Nippon shōgyōshi no kenkyū* (Iwanami Shoten, 1952), Chapter 3, pp. 301–98; Fujiki Hisashi, “Daimyō ryōkoku no keizai kōzō,” *Nihon keizaiishi taikai 2—Chūsei* (Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1965).

10. Peasant revolts occurred most frequently on land held by temples, shrines, and court nobles because the zaichi-ryōshu, finding themselves between these landholders and the peasants, tended to come to the aid of the peasants. See Wakita, “Nihon hōkensei seiritsu no igi.”

11. From Marx and Weber on, few have denied that such a system was feudal. Recently, however, Ōtani argued that the *kinsei* should be seen as the beginning of the modern period or *kindai shoki*. I can hardly agree with his view. Ōtani Mizuo, *Bakuhau taisei to Meiji ishin* (Aki Shobō, 1973).

12. I once called this “transfiguration” (*isō*). See Wakita, “Rekishiteki igi,” p. 35.

will, of course, show that there existed, despite close overlaps in the persons involved, a clear cleavage in the policies adopted by these two men. (This is independent of the fact that Hideyoshi could not have established his control had it not been for Nobunaga's political unification at the end of the medieval period).¹³

For example, Nobunaga's policies differed from Hideyoshi's not only with regard to the land system, but also with regard to the military obligations within the lord-vassal relationship. While Nobunaga was willing to leave the military obligations of the vassals to contracts between lord and vassal or to voluntary contributions of the latter, Hideyoshi established rules pertaining to military obligations on the basis of *kokudaka*.¹⁴ A second difference in policy concerns commerce. Nobunaga adopted the policy of *rakuichi-rakuza* (free trade with no guilds) in Gifu and Azuchi while still actively protecting the special privileges of the *za* (guilds) in Kyoto, Nara, and elsewhere. He also made use of such guilds for his own benefit. In contrast, Hideyoshi completely abolished the *za* and promoted free trade, thus destroying the medieval commercial practices and privileges.¹⁵ I believe that the power of Nobunaga reflected that of the *senigoku daimyō* while the power of Hideyoshi was that of a *kinsei* ruler.

In the remainder of this essay, I shall discuss problems related to the landholding system, based on my view sketched here. I will concentrate on the landholding system because it was the foundation of feudalism. The differences of opinion concerning when the *kinsei* period began depend on how one evaluates the historical significance of the land survey called the *Taikō kenchi*.

The *kinsei* landholding system, called the *kokudaka* system, was a product of the *Taikō kenchi*. The establishment of the *kokudaka* system meant that:

1. Land was expressed in terms of rice output. The rice output became the tax base, with the tax determined by multiplying the tax base by the tax rate. Taxes were usually paid in rice.

2. The medieval, multi-layered landownership was eliminated and the landholding system between the ruler (*ryōshu*) and the peasants (or merchants) was simplified.

13. Though it is not hard to find in Nobunaga's policies precursors of the policies adopted by Hideyoshi, the policies were basically different despite superficial similarities.

14. Wakita, "Seiritsu," Chapter 4, pp. 274-78; Wakita, "Kōza-Shokuhō seikenron," No. 5, pp. 48-51.

15. Wakita, "Nobunaga seiken no za seisaku," *Ryūkokushidan 56 57 gappei gō* (December 1966); and Wakita, "Kōza-Shokuhō seikenron," pp. 41-43.

3. "Landholding" was restricted by class (ryōshu, peasants, and merchants). The ryōshu "owned" the land in the form of fiefs, the peasants were restricted to owning agricultural land, and the merchants could hold land only in urban areas.

4. The zaichi-ryōshu system of the medieval period disappeared and the ryōshu lost their *honryō* (the land held for generations around their residence) and moved to the cities. Fiefs were given principally as stipends, and the daimyo and the *hatamoto*, who held the fiefs, were not allowed to buy, sell, or otherwise transfer land to others.

5. The hierarchy among the ryōshu was determined by the amount of kokudaka held. Thus, within the *chigyō* system (the granting of fiefs expressed in kokudaka), the shogun and the daimyo (the highest ranked among the ryōshu) wielded substantial power. The shogun, at the apex of this kokudaka system, could and did disengage daimyo (*kaieki*) or transfer them (*tempu*).

6. Though the sale and use of the peasants' land were restricted, their holdings increasingly became de facto, unconstrained private property.

The above characteristics of the kokudaka system define, in effect, the characteristics of *kinsei* society. Our central concern here is to describe and examine how the kokudaka system was established.

It perhaps is accurate to say that the *kinsei* period was a product of the efforts of the ryōshu to restructure the weakening medieval feudal system. The kokudaka system was a product born of the same effort. However, to state my conclusion first, my view is that the kokudaka system did not evolve directly out of the landholding system of the zaichi ryōshu, as earlier studies have suggested. While it is true that the actions of the zaichi ryōshu were an important factor contributing to the establishment of *kinsei* feudalism, the fact that the zaichi-ryōshu system disappeared under the kokudaka system cannot be explained by focusing our examination on the role of the zaichi-ryōshu. Because the kokudaka system was established by depriving the zaichi-ryōshu of their power base, it is difficult to accept the thesis that it somehow evolved out of the landholding system of the zaichi-ryōshu.

From the control achieved by the shugo-daimyo over a *kuni* (*ikkoku shihaiken*) emerged the sengoku daimyo's attainment of control over a region (*ichien chigyō*). The system of the control of all shiki by one ruler (*ishiki shihaiken*) was established under Oda rule. In short, the kokudaka system was established by reorganizing, from above, the landholding of the zaichi ryōshu and the shōen system into a new system based on the political power to control a region.

These systems of control will be further discussed in the course of this article which will attempt to show that this process explains the establishment of the kokudaka system.

I. *The Premises of the Kokudaka System*

The landholding system of the *kinsei* feudal period is known as the kokudaka system. In contrast to the landholding under the *shōen* system based on *shiki* which were shared by more than one holder, under the kokudaka system, the principle of "one land, one cultivator" (*itchi-issakunin*) was observed and the relationship between the *ryōshu* and the peasants was one to one, with the tax¹⁶ system correspondingly simple. The question to be asked here is how one system of landholdings was transformed into the other. Let us now examine briefly the *shōen* landholding system at the end of the medieval period and the landholding patterns of the *sengoku daimyō*, as both were premises from which the kokudaka system evolved.

(1) Characteristics associated with the *shōen* landholding of the latter part of the medieval period are: (i) the *shiki* had become transferable rights,¹⁷ and (ii) the *shiki* held by peasants were divided among *myōshu*, *sakunin* and *gesakunin*, contributing to the rise of complex intra-class distinctions based on the rights accruing to each *shiki*.

(a) The fact that *shiki* could be traded meant that a *ryōshu-shiki* could be bought by moneylenders with capital (*kōrigashi-shihon*). When the moneylender happened to belong to a class other than the ruling *ryōshu* class, the person who acquired the *shiki* enjoyed only the right to levy an added rent (*kajishi*).¹⁸ The transfer of land by sale in this manner meant that landholding by the *ryōshu* was being threatened.

(b) The subdivision of the peasant *shiki* showed that, despite the demands made by the *shōen-ryōshu*, the peasants had come to enjoy a surplus, and intra-class distinctions emerged because of

16. Throughout this article *nengu* was translated as tax. Unlike the modern connotation of "tax," *nengu* contains an element of "rent."

17. Though there are many studies on this point, readers are referred especially to the works by Nagahara.

18. There is no article that specifically deals with his point. In Tondabaya-shi, a small city which came into being at the end of the medieval period, peasants bought land from the *shugo*. However, they invited a temple of the Shinshū sect to become the *ryōshu*; the peasants themselves did not (more accurately, could not) become the *ryōshu*.

this surplus.¹⁹ This too indicated that landholding by ryōshu was being challenged.

(c) Under the circumstances described above, *isshiki-shoyū* (the holding of all shiki on a piece of land by one person) was attempted by the shōen ryōshu, who wanted to strengthen his landownership. *Isshiki-shoyū* meant, of course, the control of *myōshu-shiki* and *saku-shiki* (cultivation rights) as well as others.²⁰ However, *isshiki-shoyū*, as achieved by the Daitokuji which possessed the capital to do so thanks to its loan activities, was possible only over a given property (land). The kokudaka system could hardly emerge in the same way.

(d) Peasants and townspeople also acquired more than one shiki, and some peasants managed to achieve *isshiki-shoyū*.²¹ This, in fact, constituted peasant landownership. When such ownership was achieved, it was carried over to the *kinsei* period landholding by the *kinsei* peasants, though with the constraints imposed on it by the kokudaka system.²²

(2) The kokudaka system did not emerge because of the developments within the shōen, but rather because of the ability of the sengoku daimyo to exert their power over large units of territory (*ichien chigyō*).

(a) The control of a sizable territory by the sengoku daimyo was achieved by means of conquest or by the expansion of areas commanded by the daimyo's vassals. Recent studies suggest that this control was built upon the rights of the shugo which the sengoku daimyo were able to keep. However, little research has yet been conducted to examine how the sengoku daimyo were able to remold the shugo daimyo's powers to muster military forces and to enfeoff vassals within a province over which a shugo daimyo ruled.²³

19. Nagahara's studies are best on this point.

20. *Yōtokuin denchi narabi ni jishi mokuroku* found in *Dainihon komonjo iewake dai-17 Daitokuji monjo*, No. 3; Tokyo Daigaku Shiryō Hensansho, ed. (Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1954), p. 40.

21. Wakita, "Seiritsu," p. 261. Peasant ownership of *isshiki* was even referred to as "*sōden shiryō*" or inheritable private holdings.

22. The landholding of the *kinsei* peasants was legally constrained by laws prohibiting the purchase and sale of land and other restrictions. But, in reality, trading in land took place and ownership rights were well established. And this became the foundation for the landownership in the modern sense of the term which occurred following the changes in the land tax law at the time of the Meiji Restoration.

23. Fujiki Hisashi, "Kanadaka-sei to sengokuteki kenryoku hensei," *Nihon-*

(b) The most debated questions are on the landholding system; the *kandaka* system has frequently become a subject of intense debate. It was adopted in its purest form in the Tōkai and Kantō regions; regional differences existed in the land systems of various sengoku daimyo. In the Kinai and Chūgoku regions, the land system took complex forms,²⁴ a fact which suggests that one should not consider the *kandaka* system the typical land system adopted by the sengoku daimyo.

Fujiki Hisashi has suggested that the origin of the *kandaka* system may have been the *tansen* (cash levy per *tan* of paddy) imposed by the shugo.²⁵ I cannot agree with this view because the *kandaka* system expressed the rice tax in terms of copper coins in contrast with the *tansen*, an ad hoc cash imposition. While the *tansen* was levied in all parts of the nation, the *kandaka* system was confined to some regions. Also, we know that Nobunaga gave both *tansen* and fiefs expressed in *kandaka* to his vassals.²⁶ Miyagawa attempts to explain the *kandaka* system as one which emerged to adjust the relationship between the principal rice tax and other additional taxes, but I do not believe this attempt successful.²⁷

Though I have not yet undertaken a thorough research of the *kandaka* system, I believe that its development should be explained vis-à-vis the commercial relationships of the time. The reasons for the establishment of the *kandaka* system were: (i) The system followed the substitution of taxes in rice by taxes in cash.²⁸ (ii) The system developed more in the Tōkai-Kantō regions where most goods had to be transported on difficult inland routes, unlike western Japan with its access to the Inland Sea. Under these circumstances, the convenience of cash was far more apparent to the shōen owners of the eastern regions (and later to the sengoku daimyo). (iii) Finally, in order to satisfy their needs, the sengoku

shi kenkyū 93 (September 1967); "Sengokuhō keisei-katei no ichi kōsatsu," *Rekishigaku kenkyū* 323 (April 1967); "Sengokuki no kenryoku to shokaisō no dōkō," *Rekishigaku kenkyū* 351 (August 1969); Murata Shūzō, "Sengoku daimyō Mōri-shi no kenryoku kōzō." *Nihonshi kenkyū* 73 (July 1964); and Miyagawa Mitsuru, "Sengoku daimyō no ryōgoku-sei," *Hōken kokka no kenryoku kōzō* (Sōbunsha, 1967).

24. Mōri used both the *kandaka* and the *kokudaka* methods.

25. Fujiki, "Daimyō ryōgoku no keizai kozo," in *Nihon keizai-shi taikai: Chūsei* (Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1965), pp. 237-45.

26. Inaba *monjo* in *Dainippon shiryō*, Vol. 11, No. 2, p. 721.

27. Miyagawa, "Sengoku daimyō," p. 199.

28. Miyagawa too would agree with this interpretation.

daimyo had to deal with the Kinai economy centered around Kyoto as well as with the continent.²⁹ Their need for cash was obvious.

(3) A noteworthy feature of the land system of the sengoku daimyo was that they limited the freedom of the recipients of fiefs to sell or pawn these fiefs.³⁰ This should be considered a policy to prevent the transfer of land to a non-ruling class as had occurred under the shōen system.

(4) The sengoku daimyo identified and determined the peasants who were to bear tax burdens. It has been well established that many peasants were of the *myōshu* lineage. No new taxes were allowed by Rokkaku within his domain of Ōmi,³¹ but some daimyo, such as the Imagawa in Suruga, had house rules allowing increases in the tax burden.³² I believe that such a house rule indicates the strength of control over peasants that the sengoku daimyo had. The tax burdens had to be raised when possible because of continuing warfare.

II. *Landholding under Oda Rule*

After entering Kyoto, the sengoku daimyo Oda Nobunaga destroyed the Muromachi bakufu and established a new government. To the extent that we can, let us describe the land system under his rule:

(a) The regions under the control of Oda were divided among his powerful vassals, such as Shibata Katsuei in Echizen and Hashiba Hideyoshi in Kita-Ōmi. Nobunaga himself administered Ōmi and his son Nobutada ruled Owari and Mino. This pattern of rule was a version, perhaps a securer version, of the regional rule of sengoku daimyo, which was, in fact, *isshiki-shihai* on a regional basis, but this *isshiki-shihai* was grafted onto the complex landholding patterns of the late medieval period. The regions administered by Shibata or Hashiba included fiefs given to other vassals and even the shōen of temples.³³ Furthermore, it should be noted that what Nobunaga adopted was a policy of enfeoffing vassals (*à la* Lehen system) with the *isshiki* all within one region, as was done when the *isshiki shihai*-

29. Historical evidence on this exists for Go-Hōjō and Imagawa.

30. For example, Articles 13 and 16 of *Imagawa kana-mokuroku* in Sato Shinichi, ed., *Chūsei hosei-shiryō-shu*, Vol. 3 (Iwanami Shoten, 1966).

31. Article 24 of *Rokkaku-shi shikimoku* in the source cited in the preceding footnote.

32. Article 1 of *Imagawa kana-mokuroku* included in the source cited in footnote 30.

33. Wakita, "Seiritsu," pp. 230-49.

ken of Yamashiro was given to Harada Naomasa, when the *isshiki shihai-ken* of land west of the Katsura River was given to Hosokawa Fujitaka, and of the Kawashima-shō to Kawashima Ichisuke.³⁴

(b) Land assessment became considerably more organized through resurveys and remeasurements. Yields came to be expressed on *koku* units in the Kinai, Ōmi, Harima, and Echizen, and in *kan*-units in Ise, Owari, and Mino. Which of these units was used depended on the province, indicating the political inability of Nobunaga to apply a uniform measurement throughout the regions under his control.³⁵

The *kokudaka* system, of course, developed from the provinces in which the *koku* was used as a unit of measurement. But even in these provinces during the rule of Oda, the system could not be called a bona fide *kokudaka* system because the amount of rice indicated by the *kokudaka* also indicated the tax burden,³⁶ and the value expressed in *koku* was the sum of the yields of various crops including rice, millet, and beans.³⁷ In 1580, Hideyoshi began to give fiefs expressed in *koku* in Harima, which he controlled; this was almost a bona fide *kokudaka* system because the *kokudaka* in this case was not merely the tax burden expressed in *koku* units.³⁸

(c) Complex landholding patterns were difficult to change.³⁹ Though Nobunaga changed the landholding pattern by recognizing his vassals' rights to rule a given region and by exchanging fiefs held by his vassals,⁴⁰ the process proceeded only gradually. Also, vassals continued to hold their land (*honryō*) as *zaichi ryōshu*. They frequently left their wives and children in the *honryō* even when they themselves had to live elsewhere to engage in warfare.⁴¹

(d) Nobunaga's policy towards the *shōen* was to allow their continued existence provided that the *shōen*-holders could show that they had been successfully collecting taxes during the preceding twenty

34. Wakita, "Seiritsu," p. 256.

35. That these surveys and registrations were reported by province indicates that they were conducted with the province as a unit.

36. Some believe that this was not the amount of the rice tax. See Imai Rintarō, *Oda Nobunaga* (Chikuma Shobō, 1966), p. 104.

37. Wakita, "Nōmin shihai," p. 13.

38. Araki, *Taikō kenchi*, pp. 197-98.

39. In the letters of assurance (*andojō*) issued by Nobunaga to his vassals, Nobunaga recognized the *myōden* and the purchased paddies, i.e., the lands which were vassals' *honryō* or which vassals had purchased.

40. Following a fire in 1578 in Azuchi, Nobunaga ordered his vassals to move to Azuchi without their wives or children. *Nobunaga-kōki*, Vol. 11.

41. See Wakita, "Seiritsu," pp. 268-69.

years.⁴² Nobunaga confiscated the landholding of only those temples such as the Enryakuji which revolted against his authority.⁴³

We shall now turn to examine the registration of peasants, the resurveying of land, and the assessment of corvée under the Oda rule. The registration of peasants for the purpose of creating a record which identified each peasant's land and his tax dues was not a simple process because the new records had to be compiled against the background of the complex landholding patterns and tax burdens of the late medieval period. Here, let us indicate the characteristics of these registrations using one example. A part of the registration of 1580 for the Awaji village in Omi province, which was administered by Nobunaga from 1580, read:⁴⁴

Name of Location	Size of Land	Tax Paid in Rice	Tax Recipients	Name of Peasants
Minami Taira	1 <i>tan</i>	5 to 5 <i>shō</i>	Gotō Shūri	Saburōjirō (of Tsutsumi village)
Are		5 <i>gō</i>	Iguchi Seiroku	
		2 to 2 <i>shō</i>	the warehouse (i.e., directly to Nobunaga)	
Naita	.5 <i>tan</i>	2 to 2 <i>shō</i>	Yamaoka	Toyoda Sōzaemon (a <i>sakunin</i>)
		3 to 8 <i>shō</i>	Miyaki	

The registration included the name of the location of the land, the amount of land, the amount of tax due, the names of the tax recipients, and the names of the peasants. The unit of land size was the *tan* which consisted of 360 *bu*. The amount of rice listed indicated the tax to be paid and it was arrived at by adding together the taxes due on rice, millet, and soy beans.

The relationship between the tax recipients and the peasants was specified in the register. However, in reality the relationship was rather complex as indicated by the fact that it was sometimes referred to as the "distribution of tax incidence" (*chirigakari*), i.e., a tax recipient was receiving dues from more than one peasant, or a peasant owed dues to several recipients. One *tan* of land could be shared by three recipients (as in the above example) and one village might have more than ten tax recipients. This meant that what each peasant paid to a specific tax recipient could be and often was very

42. Wakita, "Seiritsu," pp. 264-70.

43. The Enryakuji on Hieizan was burned by Nobunaga because the temple challenged his authority and also because it was in a strategic location.

44. Awaji village today is Chūzu-chō, Yasu-gun in Shiga prefecture.

small in quantity. This complicated the relationship between the recipients and taxpayers, and problems often arose in administering taxes. This, therefore, was the reason why the ruling class charged village organizations with the task of collecting and delivering taxes.⁴⁵

In the above example, about fifteen peasants were registered and the tax recipient and peasants were clearly distinguished. In another document relating to this village, a reference was made to the effect that the membership of the village consisted only of peasants and did not include anyone of samurai status. Thus, it is clear that the tax recipient (i.e., the samurai) and the peasants did not share in the same community life of the village.⁴⁶ One cannot, of course, say that this was so in every case because we find, for example, in a record of a cadastral survey made by Takayama Ukon who held the Takatsuki Castle that some persons appeared both as peasants and as tax recipients.⁴⁷ It perhaps is safe to say that the example of the Awaji village showed the appearance of conditions necessary for the separation of classes.

Though it is only a single example, one of the peasants registered had the entry "sakunin" next to his name. Since this person had a last name (Toyoda), we can infer that he was one of the well-off peasants. This suggests that peasants without such an entry were classified as myōshu-hyakushō. Apparently, under Oda rule, peasants were registered to determine who were myōshu-hyakushō with tax obligations and only in special instances were "sakunin" identified and registered.

A decree issued in 1576 by a vassal of Nobunaga, Shibata Katsue, who ruled Echizen, read: "Myōshu-hyakushō are authorized to keep, as established by precedent, those incomes to which they are entitled."⁴⁸ The meaning of the decree was that the myōshu-hyakushō could continue to receive the added rent (*kajishi*) which they had been collecting from the sakunin. This indicates that the economic relationships between the myōshu-hyakushō and those below them—the sakunin or the *hikan*—were respected under the Oda rule.

The assessed amount of the rice tax varied widely from 1 *koku* 5 *to* to 6 *to*⁴⁹ due to Nobunaga's policy to allow basic exemptions (in

45. Wakita, "Nōmin shihai," pp. 18–22.

46. Wakita, "Sō ni tsuite," p. 593.

47. Takayama *kenchi-chō* in Miyagawa, *Taikō kenchi-ron*, 3:117–54.

48. *The Dairen monjo* in Makino Shinnosuke, ed., *Echizen wakasa komonjosen* (Sanchūsha, 1933), p. 152, reprinted in 1971.

49. Wakita, "Nōmin shihai," pp. 13–14.

Omi, one-third of the yield was exempted from the tax for 1569)⁵⁰ according to differences in the productivity of land and to account for the intra-peasant class payment relationships already existing (i.e., as in the above example of the sakunin, whose yield was assessed only at 7.6 *to*).

An important part of the tax burden was corvée. Under the shōen system corvée was performed for the benefit of a single recipient as the taxes were paid by peasants to a single recipient. However, during the final stages of the shōen system, the relationship between taxpayers and tax-recipients became complex. While the taxes in kind could be easily divided among recipients, corvée was more difficult to divide. A peasant could perform his corvée, at least in theory, for various recipients—one day for A and another for B. But in reality, such an allocation of corvée was impossible.

Thus, under the Oda rule, the right to assess corvée was given exclusively to the military leader who had the right to *ishiki shūhai*.⁵¹ For example, in Echizen, Shibata Katsue ordered in the decree of 1576 cited earlier⁵² that: "In the event a work crew is required, they must be raised under the authority of the seal affixed herein. Even if such a work crew is to be paid, no work crew should be employed without this seal." The decree further stated that the peasants were not required to supply the work crew if not accompanied by the order affixed with Shibata's seal. The intent was to prevent every enfeoffed individual from raising a work crew to the detriment of the peasants as well as to allow Shibata to monopolize all the rights to levy corvée.

Corvée, levied on adult males, was assessed by household unit⁵³ and not by the amount of land held (*kokudaka*). Because the demand for corvée was heavy, peasants often attempted to create larger households, even by combining families, in order to lessen the burden.⁵⁴ Such measures taken by the peasants explain why the 1593 decree issued in Owari by Hideyoshi prohibited two peasant families from living together as a single household.

As we have seen, while the policies adopted under the Oda rule were, in some respects, the forerunners of the policies soon to be adopted by Hideyoshi, they differed in nature.

50. Wakita, "Nōmin shihai," p. 15.

51. In Ōmi province, this was Hashiba Hideyoshi in the north, Sakuma Nobumori east of Lake Biwa, and Akechi Mitsuhide in the Shiga district.

52. *The Dairen monjo*, cited in footnote 47.

53. Wakita, "Nōmin shihai," pp. 28–29.

54. Wakita, "Sō ni tsuite," pp. 602–03.

III. *The Establishment of the Kokudaka System*

Upon the establishment of Toyotomi rule, the landholding patterns observed under the Oda rule were transformed into a *kinsei* feudal landholding system called the kokudaka system. That is, the existing landholding patterns were destroyed by the Taikō kenchi, Hideyoshi's cadastral surveys, which initiated his land reform. Many studies of the Taikō kenchi were made during the 1950's, but these studies left several problems unresolved, and no consensus seems to have emerged on the interpretation of the historical significance of the Taikō kenchi; my own interpretation differs from others. With the above caveat, let us now examine the establishment of the kokudaka system.

First, the Taikō kenchi was undertaken with the definite intent to establish the kokudaka system only during the latter half of the 1580's.⁵⁵ This fact has rarely been examined and discussed. Before that date, only the letter of enfeoffment issued by Hideyoshi in Harima showed that the policy Hideyoshi was carrying out would become the kokudaka system.⁵⁶

Second, the kokudaka system was imposed from above in order to eliminate the complexities and contradictions found in the landholding patterns under the Oda rule. The system thus was intended to reorganize the landholding patterns then existing, accommodating the prevailing patterns to the extent useful in realizing its goals, and still based on the *isshiki shihai*. To the extent that the *isshiki shihai* descended from the rights enjoyed by the shugo, one can say that the region held by the recipient under the kokudaka system constituted "possession" (*ryōyū*) of the region.

The abolition of the *zaichi ryōshu* system by the separation of military from peasant class and by the kenchi not only physically removed the samurai from their regional base to the cities, but also deprived the samurai of their regional political and economic base. This meant that these samurai lost their claims to the land over which they had held the "highest degree" of landownership. In this fact lies the unique characteristic of the landholding system of the *kinsei ryōshu*. That is, landholding was now by the feudal ryōshu class as a whole and no longer by individual ryōshu.⁵⁷

This change in landholding meant that the transfer of land was

55. This is clear from the entries in the kenchi of 1589.

56. Even under Toyotomi rule, the landholding patterns of the 1582–1583 period were still basically the same as those found under Oda rule.

57. Of course, the power of the shogun as the highest ryōshu was supreme.

no longer possible as it had been during the medieval period, and transfers were now achieved only through the elimination of daimyō lineages or through the reassignment of daimyō by the shogun. Also, during the height of the *kinsei* period, no matter how large the loans were that the daimyō received, there was never any suggestion of a transfer of land to persons other than members of the ruling class. This explains why this system of landholding was destroyed not on an individual basis but only through the total rejection of the entire landholding system in the Meiji Restoration.

The kokudaka system destroyed the shōen system. There has been little study made of this process, but let me hazard a view of my own, using as an example the Kōfukuji. This temple, the largest landholder in Yamato during the medieval period, was allowed to keep land assessed at 15,000 *koku*. The holding of 15,000 *koku* was established following a rather complex route. The remeasured yield reported to Nobunaga was 18,209 *koku*, but the yield reported to Hideyoshi was over 25,000 *koku*. (Hideyoshi later discovered that the temple had been underassessed by 7,000 *koku* by Nobunaga, but Hideyoshi “commended” the amount to let the temple keep the 15,000 *koku*.)⁵⁸

The assessment made by Oda Nobunaga was based on the assessment made of the shōen holding of the temple. Hideyoshi’s action in effect reassessed the yield and reduced the amount that the temple was allowed to keep. The loss suffered by the temple indicated Hideyoshi’s success in reducing the economic base of the shōen holder. This is especially true when we realize that some portion of the tax dues of the shōen would now be taxed away as rice tax. The reassessment and the rice tax based on this reassessment clearly show what type of basic policy was then pursued.

On the basis of the kokudaka system which developed as just described, the fief system (*chigyō-sei*) was established. Under the fief system, the unified central authority had the power to discontinue the lineage of a daimyo or to transfer a daimyo from one fief to another. The daimyo in turn controlled their vassals through the stipendary system. The strength of the power of the upper ruling class was an important characteristic of the kokudaka system.

An aspect of the fief system which has been frequently debated among scholars is military duties (*gunyaku-ron*).⁵⁹ It is said that the

58. Nagashima Fukutarō, *Nara bunka no denryū* (Chūō Kōronsha, 1944), pp. 402–21.

59. For information on the military obligations, see Sasaki, *Bakuhan ken-*

unified central authority imposed military obligations on the daimyo according to the assessed yield of the daimyo's fiefs, and that the Toyotomi rule was maintained by this military support. Also frequently discussed are the effects of such military obligations on the daimyo policies affecting peasants.

The kokudaka system also was the system used to define class structure. Each of the classes—the samurai, peasant, and merchant—was governed by respective rules pertaining to residence, occupation, and life-style. Class distinctions were reenforced by the landholding pattern which defined the position of each within the system. No inter-class mobility was possible and the outcasts—*eta* and *hinin*—were rigidly controlled.⁶⁰

Another important aspect of the kokudaka system which requires our attention is the fact that the tax system was based on rice. The tax base determined by the *kenchi* was not confined to rice yielding paddies, but included paddies, uplands, and residential plots. Even rent in the cities was determined by assessments measured in terms of "rice yield." For example, in Osaka, the Tokugawa bakufu assessed rents after assessing the value of land in 30 different grades ranging from 4.5 *koku* equivalent to .87 *koku* equivalent. Though the rent was paid in cash,⁶¹ what is significant was the fact that the rent was assessed in the rice equivalent, i.e., the kokudaka system was extended even to urban areas.

Why was the kokudaka system applied in such a fashion? Many say that it was because the ryōshu wished to collect taxes in rice to the extent it was feasible. This must be true for paddies, but I believe it is a mistake to emphasize this intent on the part of the ryōshu. In reality, taxes were also paid in soy beans and in cash. To focus our attention on the taxes paid in rice is to place undeserved emphasis on them.

Some scholars, though they offer no adequate explanation, believe that rice was collected basically to meet military needs.⁶² However, if we consider the fact that the kokudaka system began in the Kinai and its environs, one could offer an alternative explanation and I myself do not believe that rice was collected for military purposes. Rice was collected to defray the costs involved in performing

ryoku, pp. 185–205; Miki Seiichirō, "Chōsen no eki ni okeru gunyaku taikai ni tsuite," *Shigaku Zasshi*, Vol. 75, No. 2 (February 1966).

60. The relationship between status and landholding still remains an important topic for future research.

61. Osaka-shi Sanjikai, ed., *Osaka shi shi* (Osaka-shi Sanjikai, 1911), 1:256.

62. Araki, *Taikō kenchi*, pp. 209–11.

the duties required by Hideyoshi and in undertaking public works (thus, rice was being paid in lieu of corvée), but even so, the amount of rice collected was too large if such needs were the only purpose for collecting taxes in rice. Also, rice deteriorated in quality after two years, necessitating the replacement of stock. My view is that rice was collected because it was marketable. Even in the medieval period, rice was traded because there was a demand for it by the *shōen ryōshu* in and around Kyoto and the townspeople in Kyoto. The Toyotomi government collected taxes principally in rice in order to obtain the most important of the traded goods, and also to prevent the peasants from engaging in rice trading.

From the beginning of the *kinsei* period, trading in tax rice was active. Rice was traded in large quantities in Kyoto, Osaka, and Edo. That the Toyotomi government, which established the *kokudaka* system, was clearly aware of the marketability of rice is evident in that it always measured the value of rice on hand in terms of the market value in cash. There also is evidence that the regime manipulated the price of rice. In any event, rice must be seen, above all, as a good which was widely traded. In short, I believe rice became the principal medium of tax payment because it could be traded. The collection of taxes in rice also had the effect of preventing the rise of cash taxes, allowing the ruling class to maintain control of, and more easily manipulate, the whole market mechanism. The peasants thus were discouraged from participating in the market.⁶³

We must now turn to questions relating to the determination of the tax base according to the yield and to the determination of the tax dues by annually determining the tax rates.

The assessed tax burden, determined under the sengoku daimyo and under the Oda rule, was generally high, in the neighborhood of 1.5 *koku* per *tan*. Because of this Nobunaga allowed for basic specified rates of reduction of the tax burden. Under the *kokudaka* system of the Toyotomi government, the assessment of the tax burden was made on the basis of the yield and the general economic conditions of the region,⁶⁴ and later on the basis of the estimated yield alone. The assessed yield thus became the tax base; it was no longer the amount of the tax burden to which some specified rate of reduction

63. Though the early *kinsei* were basically self-supporting and little involved with markets, after the mid-seventeenth century the peasants were gradually drawn into the market economy.

64. *Todai* clearly was not the amount of output. The proximity to towns and the output of jute and other products were considered in determining the *todai*.

was applied. This means that *men* came to mean the tax rate to be applied on the assessed yield, and not the rate of reduction of the tax burden as was the case prior to the Toyotomi regime.⁶⁵

Such a change had a significant impact on both the administration of the tax system and the tax burden. Changes in the tax rate became the most crucial variable to be determined by the ruling class. The tax burden was determined by manipulating the rate to be applied to the assessed yield.

It was up to the ryōshu to determine a rate at which "the peasant would neither live nor die." I agree with the view that the tax burden was to be determined in such a way as to tax away the entire surplus of the peasants. Though opinions still are divided on the degree of the success of this policy,⁶⁶ the decree prohibiting intra-peasant class rent payments (*sakuai*) testifies to the intent of the ruling class to eliminate any exploitation of peasants by peasants which would have the effect of reducing the revenue of the ruling class.⁶⁷

However, the new tax system in the long run resulted in reducing the effective tax rate. This occurred because the assessed yield tended to be fixed while productivity began to rise during the latter half of the seventeenth century, because commercial crops began to become increasingly significant, and because peasants continually resisted increases in taxes.⁶⁸ Despite numerous methods adopted by the bakufu to cope with the situation, even the absolute tax revenue began to decline after the mid-eighteenth century.⁶⁹

IV. Peasant Status and Peasant Agriculture

Let us examine several views on the exact procedure by which peasant status was determined. Though there exists some difference

65. The exact process by which the *men* ceased to mean the amount by which the tax was reduced and came to be a tax rate is not known.

66. It is a mistake to think that all the surplus was taxed away from the peasants. This is evident in some of the preferential treatment which larger peasants (*yūryoku nōmin*) enjoyed, though it is accurate to say that the surplus tended to be taxed away. However, there are scholars who argue that none of the surplus was taxed away. See Takeyasu Shigeji, *Kinsei hōken-sei no tochi kōzō* (Ochanomizu Shobō, 1966).

67. For the decrees prohibiting the rent assessments of one peasant by another, see *Bunroku 4-nen Kinoshita Katsutoshi okitegaki, Nozaki monjo* in *Echizen Wakasa komonjo-sen*, p. 622; and *Tenshō 15-nen Asano Nagamasa okitegaki, Watanabe monjo* in *ibid.*, pp. 637-38.

68. Because of increases in productivity and other reasons, despite the nominal tax rate of about 50 per cent, the effective tax rate may have been as low as 10 per cent of the peasant output in the Kinai region.

69. The *bakufu's* tax revenue ceased to increase after the Hōreki period.

between the views of Araki and Miyagawa, they both argue that the persons who were registered as peasants were sakunin who were below the level of myōshu.⁷⁰ The argument that the Taikō kenchi was a “progressive” policy to make petty peasants self-reliant is based on this observation. And such a view leads to the interpretation that the characteristics of Hideyoshi’s rule and the *kinsei* feudalism were “progressive.” I believe this view is in error.

All the persons registered as taxpaying peasants under Oda rule were myōshu-hyakushō with the exception of those who were specifically noted as sakunin. When the Taikō kenchi was undertaken, these persons were again classified as peasants. There exists no historical evidence to refute this.

Of course, there is evidence showing that some larger myōshu (i.e., small zaichi ryōshu) exerted economic control over marginal, dependent peasants or petty peasants called *hikan-hyakushō*. Many of these myōshu were samurai vassals. How should one interpret these historical facts? If a person was a vassal, he usually left his land (*zaichi*) because of the policy of separation of the classes. Then, either one of his relatives inherited the land, or a petty peasant who had worked for the vassal was registered as a taxpaying peasant.

However, the independent status acquired by the petty peasants as the result of the separation of the classes must not be discussed at the same level as the question concerning “self-reliance” (*jiritsu*) which figured importantly in the debate on the nature of the Taikō kenchi. The meaning of “*jiritsu*” in the debate concerned the landholding of the small zaichi ryōshu who did not become samurai despite the policy of class separation.

When the historical evidence of the period of the Taikō kenchi is reexamined, we discover that the basic aim of the kenchi was to deny the status and rights of the ryōshu to persons who, even if they had once been samurai vassals, chose to become peasants. A well-known decree of 1582, issued by Asano Nagamasa reads in part: “The *otona hyakushō* shall not collect rent from peasants by engaging the latter as tenant cultivators. . . . No work needs to be performed by peasants for the benefit of the *otona hyakushō* or local representatives of the ryōshu.”⁷¹ Clearly, the *otona hyakushō*, who were considered peasants, were prohibited from demanding dues or corvée from other peasants, i.e., in no way could the privileges of the ryōshu be availed by these former ryōshu who were now peasants in status.

70. Miyagawa, *Taikō kenchi-ron*, Vol. 1, pp. 328–29.

71. See footnote 67 above.

This, however, did not mean that the right of these persons to own land was not recognized.

Is there any evidence indicating that the ryōshu-turned-peasants were prevented from owning land? None can be found. In more remote regions, each register usually listed only one large landholder, a former ryōshu. His name came first, and persons who worked their land were listed separately (*bunzuke*).⁷² In such instances it was clear that the right to own land by these former ryōshu was recognized.

The evidence important for both Araki and Miyagawa—the example of Idomura Yoroku of Omi—indicates that Idomura was fearful of his *hikan hyakushō* being registered in the kenchi register. (We do not know the result of the kenchi). In this case, Idomura gave the *saku-shiki* (cultivation rights), or the land which he owned, to his *hikan*. It is quite possible that this *saku-shiki* was recognized at the time of the kenchi.⁷³

Save for these examples, it is warranted to describe the result of the kenchi as follows: The ryōshu-turned-peasants were able to maintain their position as village leaders and their tax burden was substantially reduced. According to the Bunroku kenchi, one Yoshimura who lived near Osaka, for example, had only 58.464 *koku*. But we find that in 1622 his family had about 60 *koku* which was tax exempt and 80 *koku* which was cultivated by tenants.⁷⁴ That is, at the time of the Bunroku kenchi the family held 60 *koku* which was exempted from corvée, plus 80 *koku* which did not appear in the kenchi and which, of course, was also exempt from corvée. There are many such examples in many regions. Such evidence clearly contradicts the dominant interpretations of the Taikō kenchi now widely accepted.

72. Many examples of this are found in the Shinshū region.

Translator's note: In clearly understanding this and the preceding paragraphs, it is important to realize that those separately listed (*bunzuke*) were persons who had been "dependent" on the former-ryōshu or on the better-off *hyakushō*. The new domain rulers did not prohibit, after the kenchi, the continued *sakuai* relationship, i.e., persons in the *bunzuke* status still paying rent to the landholding former ryōshu or *hyakushō*. The new domain rulers, however, prohibited the *sakuai* relationship between the *otona-hyakushō* and the *hira-hyakushō*, that is, between the "elder" peasants (the former-ryōshu or better-off *hyakushō*) and the "average" peasants who had not had "dependent" relationships before the kenchi. From the point of the new regime, both the *otona-* and *hira-hyakushō* were independent (or non-"dependent") peasants among whom any *sakuai* relationship could not be permitted.

73. For evidence on Idomura, see Wakita, *Kōzō*, pp. 149–52.

74. Yoshimura *monjo*. Wakita, *Kōzō*, p. 160.

There exists no evidence indicating that marginal, petty peasants became "self-reliant" as the result of the Taikō kenchi. Not only that, as we have seen in the case of the Yoshimura family, the ryōshu-turned-peasants received the privilege of tax exemption. The time is ripe to reexamine the meaning and the significance of the Taikō kenchi.

It is evident that the ryōshu-turned-peasants, who remained in the villages after the separation of classes, were important in the formulation of the Toyotomi regime's policies toward peasants. Some of the relatives of these former ryōshu became samurai and others merchants, and they occupied influential positions. Had the Toyotomi regime adopted policies to redistribute land to the petty peasants, depriving the rights of landownership from these ryōshu-turned-peasants, the regime would have undermined its own foundations. Thus, no such attempt was made. As peasants, the former ryōshu went from being tax recipients to tax payers, they suffered from heavy tax burden, and their social status declined. The Toyotomi regime could not go any further and deprive them of landownership.

Registration in the *kenchi-chō* (cadastral survey registers) determined the status of an individual as a peasant. And the private landownership of the registered peasants was fully recognized. This does not mean, however, that each registrant necessarily represented an independent unit of agricultural production. I believe that in many cases more than one member of the same household was registered. My view is based on the fact that in some instances three generations of one household were registered⁷⁵ and that the number of the registrants was far larger than the number of the households to be found in a later period.

For example, the Bunroku *kenchi-chō* of the Saraike village in Kawachi⁷⁶ showed 18 registrants and 9 residential structures. But in the census taken in 1644, only 11 households were reported. The increase in the number of households during the period between the Bunroku survey of 1594 and the 1644 census can be explained by the division of two households. However, in both periods during each of which households were estimated to have been small and to have consisted of nuclear families, the number of registrants was considerably larger than the number of households reported. This clearly

75. An example of this can be found in Miyagawa Mitsuru, *Hekishō chōshi* (Hekishō-chō machi-yakuba, 1954), p. 136.

76. Tanaka *monjo*. On the Saraike village, see Takao Kazuhiko, *Kinsei no nōmin seikatsu* (Sōgensha, 1958); and Asao Naohiro, Chapter I, *Kinsei hōken shakai no koso kōzō* (Ochanomizu Shobō, 1967).

shows that the number of registrants was unrelated to the number of units of agricultural production.

Landownership by peasants became firmly established. Following the separation of classes and the establishment of the *kokudaka* system, the *ryōshu* lost various claims and their demands on peasants were limited to those clearly established by the laws of the regime. Many decrees were issued prohibiting the sale and purchase of land, but not all were effective.⁷⁷ The strength of peasant landownership undoubtedly was established through the peasants' protests and struggles in the latter part of the medieval period. In a sense, the conditions necessary for the new tax system, which was adopted following the Meiji Restoration, were then emerging.

Finally, let us turn to examine several basic aspects of the peasant agriculture of the period. Generally speaking, peasant households were small and consisted of nuclear families. Some included relatives, but the number of such households was not large. There were upper-class peasants who had *genin* (servants) and *hikan* families, i.e., dependent petty peasant households. The latter usually lived in small buildings erected within the residential land owned by, and near the residence of, the upper-class peasant household. The families of both the upper-class and *hikan* families were small.⁷⁸

These small family units were the basic units of agriculture. Only in a minority of cases were the *hikan* families used in larger units managed by a landlord. Such larger units were the *kinsei* version of the medieval *zaichi-ryōshu* units of agriculture which had not been eliminated because the *hikan* had failed to become "self-reliant" despite the *Taikō kenchi*.

As described earlier, because the *zaichi-ryōshu* ceased being *ryōshu* and became peasants with tax obligations, it was most likely that the *hikan* who had worked under the *zaichi-ryōshu* were forced to bear the brunt of the tax obligations. The former *ryōshu*'s economic condition undoubtedly was precarious, and this was the reason why small agricultural units consisting of family members became predominant in time.

During the early *kinsei* period, the supplementary labor force—*fudai* and *genin*—increasingly consisted of indentured *hōkōnin* (servants) working off their debts and of *hōkōnin* employed on annual

77. Landownership by peasants was the only bona fide ownership. This is the consensus among legal historians.

78. Based on *Jinchiku aratame-chō* and *Hitokazu iekazu aratame-chō* of the first half of the seventeenth century.

contracts.⁷⁹ Servants of the samurai class, first appearing during the early *kinsei* period, were the first of the latter type of the *hōkōnin*. Before the mid-seventeenth century, few servants retained on annual contracts were to be found in agricultural households because few households could pay their wages which, if the decree issued by the domain of Kaga was any guide, were as high as 12 *hyō* of rice per annum. Agricultural households paid nearly 50 per cent of their output in taxes and subsisted on the grains which they harvested. They became able to employ servants and agricultural labor only after the mid-seventeenth century when they began to have sufficient surplus because of the commercial crops which they were planting in increasing quality.

As the inevitable process of intra-class differentiation took place, the less successful peasants were forced to become *fudai* and *genin*. Though the Tokugawa bakufu prohibited the sale and purchase of persons, it allowed persons to become *fudai* or *genin* on a long-term basis, which meant that the de facto sale and purchase of persons took place. Many written agreements testifying to this practice can be found.

Little is known about farming practices. Some scholars stress the importance of upland cultivation on the development of *kinsei* agriculture,⁸⁰ while others consider the increasing use of plows enabling deep plowing most significant.⁸¹ Except for the *Seiryōki*, no pamphlets on farming were written before the latter half of the seventeenth century, and our understanding of the farming methods of the period is confined to the research conducted by Furushima Toshio.⁸² We do know that agriculture of this time, which mainly produced grains for the household's own consumption, was gradually becoming market-oriented.⁸³

Regional differences in agriculture were considerable, and even within an advanced region such as the Kinai, the area of cultivation was unstable because of changes in the course of rivers and because of flooding. For example, in 1581, 20.5 per cent of rice tax was waived because of the loss of cultivated land in Awaji village in Omi. The proportion of the rice tax waived for the same reason was slightly higher for Takahama village of Settsu at the time of the Bunroku

79. Wakita, *Kōzō*, pp. 254-57.

80. Asao, *Kiso kōzō*, p. 4, suggested that the cultivation of uplands may have been important in the agricultural development during the *kinsei* period.

81. Araki, *Bakuhān taisei*, p. 213.

82. Furushima Toshio, *Nihon nōgyō gijutsu-shi* (Jichō-sha, 1954).

83. Wakita, *Kōzō*, pp. 203-11.

kenchi; the assessed yield of the village was reduced by 83 *koku* from the base of 405 *koku*. These were lowland villages facing Lake Biwa or adjacent to the banks of the Yodo River, and they had more than the usual share (about 5 per cent) of fields which were not always arable. Even so, the high ratio of the unstable cultivated area to the total indicates the yet underdeveloped state of the large scale irrigation and flood control technologies.

OSAKA UNIVERSITY