

# THE CONFUCIAN IDEOLOGY AND THE MODERNIZATION OF JAPAN

—as Illustrated in the Meiji Edition of the  
*Denshun Nencjū Gyōji* 田峻年中行事—

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## I. THE CONFUCIAN IDEOLOGY OF THE TOKUGAWA PERIOD

The dominant form of ideology in the Tokugawa period (1600–1868) was the Confucianism of Chu Hsi (1130–1200), a tradition of Confucian doctrine which was established as the orthodoxy of the Tokugawa Shogunate.

The Confucianism of Chu Hsi was a form of rational naturalism, aiming at bringing to full development certain natural capacities common to all human beings, these capacities being developed in the universally-existing social relations of Sovereign and Subject, Father and Child, Husband and Wife, Elder Brother and Younger Brother, and Friend and Friend. The writings and instruction of the Confucians aimed at bringing about the cultivation of these natural capacities, the innate capacities for Humanity, Righteousness, Ritual Behaviour, Wisdom, and Good Faith.

The Confucian scripture called the *Ta Hsüeh* 大學 or “Great Learning” provided Chu Hsi with a framework within which the development of the natural capacities could be accomplished. The cultivation of the natural capacities commenced with self-cultivation in the individual and was extended outwards into society, first in the regulation of the family, next in the ordering of the feudal state, and finally in universal terms, in the pacification of the whole world.

Chu Hsi's doctrines were mainly concerned with the cultivation of the mind, and although they inevitably dealt with social and political questions they contained no clear-cut programme in politics. It was therefore possible for the psychologically-based doctrines of Chu Hsi to be interpreted in different ways and to be used to perform different social functions. Thus, reactionary elements were accustomed to place an undue emphasis on the priority of self-cultivation in the individual, thereby precluding discussion of social and political questions, and to

insist on the natural necessity of subordination in the five human relations, using this to justify the maintenance of the established feudal hierarchy of statuses. They were apt to regard all attempts at self-improvement in the social or economic spheres as dangerous signs of imminent insubordination. This, however, was not the only possible interpretation of the orthodox Confucianism of the Tokugawa period. Many Confucians advocated social and political innovations as means of implementing the orthodox Confucian programme of cultivating the innate capacities of the mind.

Such proposed innovations, however, were put forward within the framework of certain social presuppositions derived from Japanese feudal society. It was assumed that there was a great cultural gap between the feudal ruling class and the common people, and that only the ruling class was possessed of the educational qualifications which made rational political action possible. A corresponding separation was presumed in the sphere of economics. Production (principally agricultural production) was carried on by the people and taxed by the feudal lords, but the ruling class took no direct responsibility for the organization of production, and in many cases their attitude was frankly parasitical.

In the realm of agricultural production the officers in charge of rural administration were accustomed to forbid agricultural practices which were considered liable to result in a decline of the fiscal capacity of the village lands, but in general the running of the individual holding was left entirely to the peasants. However, information regarding agricultural practices was sometimes conveyed to the village headmen in writing, and in some fiefs departments bearing such titles as *Kannōkata* 勸農方 (Department for the Encouragement of Agriculture) were established as part of the rural administration.<sup>1</sup> It was in connexion with the work of giving instruction in agricultural practices at this level that Satō Nobuhiro wrote his *Denshun Nenjū Gyōji* (A Calendar of Activities for Agricultural Advisers).<sup>2</sup>

## II. THE WRITINGS OF SATŌ NOBUHIRO

The first adult studies of Satō Nobuhiro 佐藤信淵 (1769–1850) were

- 1 Ono Takeo 小野武夫, *Nihon Sonraku-shi Gaisetsu* 日本村落史概説 (An Outline History of the Japanese Village), Tokyo, Iwanami-shoten, 1936, p. 50.
- 2 The office of Denshun or Agricultural Adviser is supposed to have existed in ancient China. The word occurs in an obscure context in *The Book of Songs*, and is glossed as meaning 'an officer of the fields.' 詩經, 豳風, 七月: 小雅, 大田.

conducted under the direction of Udagawa Genzui 宇田川玄隨 (1755-1797), a physician in the service of the Lord of Tsuyama in the Province of Mimasaka, and included the reading of material in the Dutch language. In 1795 he was invited to take up a post in a fief in the Province of Kazusa, and to assist in effecting administrative reforms. On leaving this post three years later he settled down in the Province of Kazusa and devoted himself to study. In 1808 his services were engaged by the steward of the Tokushima fief, where he gave advice on military matters. His earlier writings were mainly on Western subjects. In 1814 he made an abortive attempt to found a school of Shintō in Edo as a result of which he was banished from the city, and after some wanderings he retired to Kazusa and took up writing. In 1845 he presented a statement of his opinions on political economy at the request of Lord Mizuno Tadakuni 水野忠國, and when his banishment from Yedo was revoked in the following year he returned to the city and produced a number of works on the same subject.

The writings of Satō Nobuhiro embody a number of different traditions of ideology. His political theory is Confucian, and is derived not only from the orthodox doctrines of the Chu Hsi school but also from the heterodox Confucianism of Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠 (1666-1728), an advocate of a historical and institutional approach in Confucian studies. He was also inspired by the tradition of nationalist scholarship established by Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長 (1730-1801). He had some acquaintance with Western natural science in its applied aspects, presumably as a result of his Dutch studies. In the realm of agricultural science, one of his principal interests, he shows acquaintance with the "Jikata Books" 地方書, the tradition of writings on rural administration produced by the rural administrators in the service of the feudal lords, as well as with Chinese works of a similar nature, such as the *Mu Min Chung Chieh* 牧民忠解. His use of these sources of technical information, however, is of a scholarly character, and we may suspect that he did not have practical experience of their application.

The core of the political theory of the Confucians was the political theory of early Chinese feudalism, the feudalism of the Chou dynasty. The fundamental preoccupation of this tradition of political theory was that of obtaining and maintaining control over *persons*, and economic considerations were subordinated to this aim. It need hardly be said that this feudal political theory was ignorant of any separation of political and economic functions of the kind advocated by the supporters of Western liberalism in the Meiji period. The *Chou Li* 周禮 (The

Rituals of Chou), a work which was supposed to contain the ideal institutions of the Chou period and which exercised a profound influence on Satō Nobuhiro, demonstrates this aspect of Confucian political theory with great clarity.<sup>1</sup>

Among the duties of the Chief Minister set out in the *Chou Li* is that of "linking the people of countries and states by means of the Nine Dualisms." The Nine Dualisms are:

1. "Pastures" — getting people by means of land.
2. Seniority — getting people by means of nobility.
3. Leadership — getting people by means of the worthy.
4. Scholarship — getting people by means of the Way.
5. Descent — getting people by means of their tribes.
6. Employers — getting people by means of material profit.
7. Officials — getting people by means of the functions of government.
8. Friends — getting people by means of those whom they trust.
9. "The Grove" — getting people by means of wealth.<sup>2</sup>

Some idea of the administrative implications of these basic principles of policy can be gained from the list of the duties of the *Ta Ssu T'u* 大司徒 or Grand Master of the Infantry, the officer responsible for giving "instruction" to the people. Rural administration and instruction in agricultural technology came under this office. There were twelve forms in which "instruction" was given by the *Ta Ssu T'u* and his subordinates.

1. Instruction was given in reverence by means of the rituals of religious observances, so that the people would not be shift.
2. Instruction was given in polite yielding by means of rituals performed in public, so that the people would not contend among themselves.
3. Instruction was given in affection among blood-relations by means of the rituals of private life, so that the people would be free from resentments.
4. Instruction was given in harmony by means of the rituals of music and dancing, so that the people would not be estranged.
5. Ritual distinctions were made between persons of different

<sup>1</sup> The commentator Cheng Hsüan states that the *Chou Li* was written by Chou Kung during the period of his regency, and delivered to King Ch'eng on the latter's accession. There is no evidence that the offices listed in the *Chou Li* were ever established.

<sup>2</sup> *Chou Li*, Bk. 2.

- status, so that the people would not transgress.
6. Instruction was given in contentment by means of custom, so that the people would not be unprincipled.
  7. Instruction was given in moderation by means of the administration of justice, so that the people would not be violent.
  8. Instruction was given in a due regard for others by means of oaths, so that the people would not be neglectful.
  9. Instruction was given in observing due measure by means of sumptuary regulations, so that the people would know sufficiency.
  10. Instruction was given in skills by means of hereditary succession in occupations, so that the people would not lapse from their duties.
  11. Honorary titles were determined with reference to worth, so that the people would have care for virtue.
  12. Emoluments were determined with reference to employment, so that the people would raise up great works.<sup>1</sup>

The *Chou Li* provided a model for Satō Nobuhiro's later writings on political economy. He put forward a scheme of institutions in which all organs of the state were subordinated to the Sovereign, or to institutions of education directly under the control of the Sovereign. Production was to be brought under the control of specialized ministries, and all trade and commerce was to be nationalized, merchants being made into salaried officials. He desired the abolition of the distinction between the Four Orders of the People (gentlemen, peasants, artisans and merchants), and wished the people to be cared for by their rulers on an equal basis, as was done in ancient Japan.<sup>2</sup> The centralism in Satō Nobuhiro's political theory was not new to Tokugawa Japan. Confucian writers had been advocating greater centralization since Kumazawa Banzan 熊澤蕃山 (1619-1691) had called for the establishment of "rituals of the court" in the 17th century.

### III. THE MEIJI EDITION OF THE *DENSHUN NENJŪ GYŌJI*

The author's preface to the *Denshun Nencjū Gyōji*, which is dated 1839, states that the work was written for the Lord of Tawara in the Province of Mikawa in response to enquiries made by one of his

<sup>1</sup> *Chou Li*, Bk. 10.

<sup>2</sup> On the subject of Satō Nobuhiro's political theory there is an article by Kawakami Hajime 河上肇 entitled "Bakumatsu no Shakaishugisha, Satō Nobuhiro 幕末の社會主義者佐藤信淵 (Satō Nobuhiro, a Socialist of the Late Tokugawa Period)," *Kyōto Hōgakkai Zasshi*, Vol. VI, No. 10.

retainers, Watanabe Kazan 渡邊華山 (1793-1841). The institution of the Denshun or Agricultural Adviser is said to have been devised by Kung Liu, a great-grandson of Hou Chi, the superintendent of agriculture in the service of the Sage-king Yao. Hou Chi was enfeoffed with the territory of Yu T'ai, but his son lost these lands and took refuge among the barbarians. In due time Kung Liu arose and put the administrative practices of Hou Chi into effect among the barbarians, so that they became wealthy and well-mannered, as is shown by the song "The Seventh Month" 七月 in *The Book of Songs* 詩經. Kung Liu's success is ascribed to the use of the institution of the Agricultural Adviser. However, it is noted that this institution, as such, is not mentioned in the *Chou Li*, nor does it appear to have been employed by later Chinese rulers. Later rulers were more concerned with enforcing the law than with instruction. This does not mean, however, that there is no need for Agricultural Advisers in modern times, as Watanabe Kazan suggested.

The introductory section of the work proposes first that feudal lords should hold meetings at which books on agriculture would be read and discussed by their officers, in a manner similar to the study of classical works in the Confucian schools. Suitable persons should then be selected from among these officers for appointment to the post of Agricultural Adviser. The Agricultural Advisers were to go round the lands under their jurisdiction inspecting agricultural practices and giving encouragement to the peasants. Once in every month they were to read out the chief legal instructions of the Shogunate and the regulations for the Five-Family Groups (*Gonin-Gumi* 五人組) in the presence of the assembled villagers. This was a common practice in rural administration in the Tokugawa period, and these documents included moral exhortation as well as purely legal provisions. It is said that the regulations for the Five-Family Groups are "the basis of the constitution of the state," and their origin is attributed to the *Chou Li*. Co-operative work or exchanges of labour (*yui* 結) among the peasants is especially esteemed. Besides looking to the moral welfare of the rural population the Agricultural Adviser was to acquaint himself with the nature of the land in the area under his jurisdiction, introducing new agricultural products, reclaiming land for cultivation, and making repairs to irrigation works.

The calendar of activities which follows lists the duties of the Agricultural Adviser in terms of the latest agricultural practice. Besides routine operations the Agricultural Adviser is to devote attention to the encouragement of forms of production as yet unadopted. For example, he is to encourage sericulture and the manufacture of wax. A large

part of the duties of the Agricultural Adviser, however, are of a ritualistic character. At the New Year he is to present compliments to meritorious old persons on behalf of his lord, and throughout the year he is charged with seeing to the observance of Shintō festivals. Festivals are considered to be of some importance, for they cause the people of the villages to be grateful for their lord's bounty, and to be little disposed to move from their native places. It is feared that they might change their occupation to that of merchants, or "disperse and go elsewhere." In this connection it is recommended that the orgiastic Chinese *Cha* festival should be celebrated as a harvest festival in the tenth month, since it was described by Confucius as being "the extreme of Humanity, the ultimate of Righteousness,"<sup>1</sup> and the authorities are advised to make benefactions of food and drink to the people at this time. The author is opposed to the worship of Buddhist deities at Shintō shrines, a reflection of his sympathy with the nationalist school of literary scholarship. In addition to the technological material and religious observances, a fair part of the calendar of activities is occupied by a commentary on the verses of the song "The Seventh Month."

The Meiji edition of the *Denshun Nenjū Gyōji* was published in 1877 by one Shimamura Yasushi 島村泰, styled "a commoner," who added to the text a commentary designed to facilitate the application of the author's recommendations in the changed circumstances of the early Meiji period, as well as some new material relating chiefly to Shintō observances. The commentary gives equivalents for the administrative offices mentioned in the text in terms of the new administrative structure, and emphasizes the unity of Japan under the Imperial House. Thus, the author's mention of the "accession" of his lord (the Lord of Tawara) is reprovved as the use of an "excessive appellation." The commentator also recommends additions to the written matter to be used by the Agricultural Advisers. Western works on agriculture should be studied at the meetings of Agricultural Advisers, while the Charter Oath and the Imperial Rescripts should be added to the material read out before the villagers. In one or two instances the commentator wishes to emend the author's recommendations. Thus, he rejects naked dancing at Shintō festivals on the ground that it is "a barbarous custom," and he proposes that the dances at the *Bon* Festival should be named "agricultural dances" instead of "*Bon* dances."

At the end of the book the commentator adds an Appendix consisting of a brief account of the agricultural correspondent system

<sup>1</sup> *Li Chi* (The Book of Ritual), 11. 禮記, 郊特牲.

operated under the Department of Agriculture in the United States. The account is said to be derived from a history of the U. S. Department of Agriculture published in Washington. It is suggested that, if in future it should be decided to appoint Agricultural Advisers, they might also fulfil the functions of agricultural correspondents.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

We may conclude our examination of the Meiji edition of the *Denshun Nenjū Gyōji* by relating it to the development of agricultural education in the first half of the Meiji period.<sup>1</sup>

The first important change in the administration of the rural population after the Meiji Restoration took place in 1879 when the fiefs of the feudal lords were transformed into administrative units subordinate to the central government. When first established there were 262 such areas, each headed by the former feudal lord acting in the capacity of Governor, and enjoying a government salary equivalent to 1/10 of the estimated fiscal capacity of the former fief. In 1871 these areas were transformed into Prefectures on the personal command of the Emperor Meiji, and in the next few years they were consolidated into Prefectures of greater size.<sup>2</sup> The Prefectural administrations, mainly staffed by the former local feudal administrative personnel, were the most important administrative bodies in contact with the peasantry. Beneath them were subordinate organs of local government at County and Village levels.

The central government did not attempt to make revolutionary changes in the technology of Japanese agriculture. Rural society was shepherded paternalistically as in the past, and allowed to transform itself within the framework of new institutions imported from the West, the legal and economic institutions characteristic of western capitalism.

The rural population was affected by the introduction of these institutions chiefly in the fields of land-tenure and taxation. Immediately after the Restoration the Meiji government had announced that the village lands would continue to be held by the peasants, and in 1872 a step was taken in the direction of instituting western categories in land-tenure with the abolition of the feudal prohibition of the sale of

<sup>1</sup> The following account is based on Tōbata Seiichi 東畑精一 & Morinaga Toshitarō 森永俊太郎, general editors, *Nihon Nōgyō Hattatsu-shi* 日本農業發達史 (History of the Development of Japanese Agriculture), 12 Vols., Tokyo, Chūōkōron-sha, 1953-1959. Hereafter cited as *NNH*.

<sup>2</sup> There are at present 42 Prefectures, excluding Okinawa.



land.<sup>1</sup> In 1873 plans were drawn up for the transformation of the feudal fiscal system based on tax-payments in kind (rice) into a system based on money payments determined with reference to assessed land values, and by 1877 the surveying and valuation of agricultural land had been completed. As a result of this measure the peasantry were issued Land Certificates (*Chiken* 地券) bearing a valuation upon which the Land Tax (payable in money) was levied, and which also constituted the legal title to the ownership of land. No additional burdens were laid on agriculture by the change in the fiscal system, and this, in combination with a considerable degree of currency inflation, produced some measure of rural prosperity in the late 1870's.

In 1881, however, the government decided to reform the currency and to call in the large volume of inconvertible paper currency which had been issued by several of its departments in the previous decade, as well as the large quantities of notes issued by the Shogunate and the feudal lords in the latter years of the Tokugawa régime. The deflationary effects of this measure produced an agricultural depression which lasted throughout the 1880's. Distress was particularly severe in the years 1881-1884. The proportion of tenant cultivators among the peasantry increased, and there was some movement of population out of agriculture.

The methods employed in agricultural education during the first half of the Meiji period were largely a continuation of those of feudal times. Peasants were encouraged to meet to discuss agricultural techniques, and individuals were sent to give instruction at the instance of local government bodies. There is record of the establishment of the office of "Agricultural Guide" (*Nōgyō Shinan-nin* 農業指南人) in part of the present Iwate Prefecture in 1870. This officer was to try out crops and give instruction in tillage and the use of implements.<sup>2</sup> From about 1875 there is a considerable volume of evidence of agricultural advice being issued by the Prefectures, including information regarding new techniques.<sup>3</sup> From about the same date there is also evidence of the organizing of agricultural discussion societies, frequently with the encouragement of the Prefectures or the lower organs of local government.<sup>4</sup> During the 1870's, however, the central government did very

<sup>1</sup> *NNH*, Vol. 1, p. 58.

<sup>2</sup> *NNH*, Vol. 5, p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Such as the agricultural methods advocated by Tsuda Sen 津田仙. See *NNH*, Vol. 5, p. 18 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *NNH*, Vol. 5, p. 12.

little in the sphere of agricultural innovation, apart from introducing and distributing new plant varieties and importing some foreign tillage implements.<sup>1</sup> The first explicit declaration of an intention to organize agricultural education on the part of the central government came in 1879 when the head of the Bureau of Agriculture, Matsukata Masayoshi 松方正義, published a policy document entitled *Kannō Yōshi* 勸農要旨, "The Essentials of the Encouragement of Agriculture." This document was mainly of an exploratory character, and stressed the necessity of making thorough surveys of existing conditions. In the same year the Bureau of Agriculture divided Japan into 12 Agricultural Areas, and issued recommendations to the subordinate organs of government for the organization of a hierarchy for the encouragement of agriculture extending from the Prefectures down to County level. Consultation was to take place between the various levels in this hierarchy (Agricultural Area → Prefecture → County) in order to promote the improvement of agricultural practices. These recommendations proposed that "in each County one to three persons well skilled in agriculture should be selected, and should keep under permanent review the agricultural practices of their County. They should meet at suitable times to discuss the merits and demerits of seed selection, methods of cultivation, pastoral husbandry, crop processing, and all other aspects of agricultural practice, together with methods of improving the same."<sup>2</sup>

In 1881 the Agricultural Society of Japan was founded. This institution was modelled on the Royal Agricultural Society of England, and although many of its important office-holders were senior government officials it was a non-official body.<sup>3</sup> Under its auspices the services of the exponents of the established tradition of agricultural practices, the so-called *Rōnō* 老農, or 'old peasants,' were mobilized for the purposes of agricultural instruction.

In 1881 the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce was established. In the course of the three years following its establishment one of its officials, Maeda Masana 前田正名, produced a memorial on economic policy

<sup>1</sup> *NNH*, Vol. 1, p. 112 and Vol. 3, p. 238. The Ministry of the Interior established a school of agriculture in association with an agricultural botanical garden at Shinjuku, Tokyo, in 1874. In 1877 the school was moved to Komaba, Tokyo. Its management was transferred to the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce in 1881.

<sup>2</sup> *NNH*, Vol. 5, p. 11. It appears that the 12 Agricultural Areas mentioned at this date soon fell out of use, for 9 Agricultural Areas are used in documents of the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce dated 1885.

<sup>3</sup> The first president of the Society was Shinagawa Yajirō 品川彌二郎, an official of the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce. See *NNH*, Vol. 3, p. 278 ff.

covering the whole of the Japanese economy, and including recommendations for agricultural education. This document is characterized by a centralist and directionist point of view which was more in line with the Confucian tradition than the then prevailing trend of public opinion. Three main proposals were put forward in respect to agricultural education.

1. The obligatory establishment of the village-level agricultural societies which under the existing law might be brought into being at the instance of the Prefectural Governors.

2. The institution of a system of itinerant agricultural instructors.

3. The establishment of agricultural research stations, exhibitions of produce, breeding stations, and institutions providing instruction in agricultural science.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *NNH*, Vol. 5, p. 13. Maeda Masana did not entertain favourable expectations of the Agricultural Society of Japan. Concerning this body he wrote at a later date: "When we consider why Japanese agriculture does not advance, we find that it is clearly due solely to the fact that agriculturalists adhere determinedly to barbarous practices and are devoid of any ideas of a scientific kind. Two years ago, in 1890, when I was Vice-Minister at the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce, some part of the Ministry's funds were saved and passed over to the Agricultural Society of Japan for the purposes of enabling 'old peasants' from all parts of the country to see the Third Japanese Industrial Exhibition and at the same time to see for themselves the results obtained in the rice-growing experiments at the School of Agriculture and Forestry, and other matters of profit to agriculture. After they had come up to the capital they held a discussion-meeting of 'old peasants' at which I also was present. After discussion had continued for several days, and when all were about to return to their native places, there were some who said that they had never got any profit whatever out of these meetings. Ah, what words are these!... If it had been a discussion-meeting of 'old peasants' from foreign countries overseas, it could scarcely have been possible to hear in a few days all that could be said about the good and bad results obtained from a vast range of experience accumulated over many months and years. This is a matter concerning which no Japanese agriculturalist should fail to be roused.... Only in one regard were my expectations of the visit of the 'old peasants' to the capital fulfilled. One day they enjoyed the honour of being permitted to bow before the Imperial carriage inside the main gate of the palace as His Majesty passed by, and at the same time they were entertained at the invitation of the Minister and Vice-Minister of the Imperial Household at the detached palace at Shiba, where they partook of tea and confectionaries. I have heard it said that there was none but went joyously home to his native place to distribute these confectionaries among his relatives and friends, deeply moved by the munificence of the Imperial bounty and determined thereafter to devote his energies to the service of the public. This I heard in the course of my peregrinations about the country two years ago, and we may be assured that by this means great benefit was conferred on the development of Japanese agriculture." Quoted in T. Ono, *Nōson-shi* 農村史 (A History of Rural Japan in the Meiji Period), Tokyo, Tōyōkeizaihipō-sha, 1941, p. 290.

In 1885, a year after the publication of Maeda Masana's proposals, the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce distributed to the Prefectures a set of Regulations providing for the employment of itinerant agricultural instructors. Instructors could be employed in giving instruction in "ordinary agricultural practice" or in specialized fields such as sericulture, tea production, sugar growing, pest control, and animal husbandry. Instructors would be of two kinds, (a) those who would travel all over the country, and who would be officials of the Bureau of Agriculture appointed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce, and (b) those who would give instruction within the area under the jurisdiction of a Prefecture. Appointments in the second category would be made by the Ministry on recommendation from the Prefectures. The instructors would have official status, but would be unpaid. However, allowances for travel expenses, stationery, etc., would be paid by the Ministry. To these Regulations were appended a number of recommendations for the guidance of instructors in the performance of their duties. In order that their instruction should be effective they were to be amiable and discreet, and to refrain from any arrogant behaviour. If they found agricultural practices in use which were harmful they must explain that this was so, giving full reasons. They must attend local agricultural meetings held under the auspices of the Prefectures, and answer questions put to them.<sup>1</sup> It appears that only three appointments were made in the first category—the instructors sent out by the central administration. Of these, two were trained in Western agricultural science and one was an 'old peasant,' Funazu Denjihei 船津傳次兵 (1832–1903). The itinerant instructors were most active between the years 1885 and 1889. This is the period of greatest activity among the expositors of the 'old peasant' school of agricultural practice, and coincides with the period during which the social power of the landowning class was consolidated in the countryside as an integral part of the now established Japanese capitalism. It is only after this period that Western agricultural science begins to affect Japanese agriculture through newly established teaching institutions. As a part of this tendency the itinerant agricultural instructors were abolished in 1893, and their duties transferred to the personnel of new government experimental stations.<sup>2</sup> By this

<sup>1</sup> *NNH*, Vol. 3, pp. 311–312.

<sup>2</sup> *NNH*, Vol. 3, p. 317. Funazu Denjihei was in favour of combining Western science with traditional agricultural methods. He opposed superstitious practices, and wished sericulture to be carried on by men. See *NNH*, Vol. 4, pp. 679–735.

<sup>3</sup> *NNH*, Vol. 5, p. 17.

time the ideology of liberalism was firmly established, and voices were raised against measures which were thought to be in the nature of "government interference."

The policies adopted by the Meiji government in the field of agricultural education did not conform to the Confucian ideal of the extension of the beneficent influence of the Imperial court. The Confucian schemes of ritual would have required a more active role on the part of the central government. Nevertheless, the policies of the Meiji government did not conflict with Confucian political theory. The Confucians recognized the legitimacy of a passive role on the part of the ruling class in certain circumstances, and in any case they opposed administrative measures which disrupted the established order of society. "In practising ritual the gentleman does not seek to make alterations in established custom."<sup>1</sup> They did not esteem change for its own sake. From the Confucian point of view the policies of the Meiji government are to be explained as resulting from an appraisal of the government's ability to influence Japanese society.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Li Chi* (The Book of Ritual), 2. 禮記, 曲禮, 下.

<sup>2</sup> In an essay on Ritual, the Sung reformer Wang An-shih speaks metaphorically of the Sage's influence on the individual members of society in terms of carving wood to form vessels and training horses to pull carts. "However, sometimes the Sage casts the wood aside and does not make a vessel from it, sometimes he casts aside a horse and does not train it to pull a cart. In these cases, as in others, the Sage acts on the basis of their natural endowments" (*Li Lun*, in *Wang Lin-ch'uan Chi*, Bk. 16. 王臨川集. 卷十六禮論).