

A historical Inquiry into Transition of Individual Holdings and Family Size in Rural Community

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Introduction

The contemporary observer of industries developed in Japan may easily notice the great, and surprising as well, difference in business scale between agriculture and other industries including commerce, banking, insurance, and so on. Agriculture in Japan has ever been survived in socio-economic circumstances peculiar to her modern economic history*. There are 88 Japanese companies nominated, according to the revenue during the last one year, on the list of the world's largest five hundred corporations indicated by "FORTUNE" ("2003 GLOBAL FIVE HUNDRED"), 20 of which are ranked within 100 of the list, 33 within 200, 55 within 300, and 67 within 400. Those corporations certainly cover almost every industry, commerce, banking, and so on, except for agricultural one. Even from this simple illustration, we do not find so a great difficulty in coming to the conclusion that Japanese enterprises are, as a whole, reaching a vast and huge business size in a variety of industries leaving agriculture at its miniature scale. The very pettiness of agriculture as business performance should be targetted to describe in view of the long-term particulars. Consequently, it is worth indeed some efforts to show how the very present agricultural state of Japan has been realized, especially in land size owned by individual tillers or farmers who might be called peasantry.

As individual holdings, especially under the feudalistic land-holding system, were very closely related with the extent how independent of the rural community each household was, the transition of family size, which could be a significant landmark of the independence or self-support of each owner-occupying small cultivator in rural villages, ought to be examined simultaneously with holdings scale.

An accepted view of independence of peasants tells us that when a society shifts from slavery to feudalism broad-wide independence of peasants enables it to shift, as happened in Europe and even in Japan. It is generally thought that in Japan the turbulent age (Sengoku-Jidai) was the time when the peasantry-household began to live substantially on the produce of his family-worked holdings.

* The word "modern economic" is supposed to mean thereof capitalistic economy thinking much of the substantial difference in quality between feudalistic economy and capitalistic one. As for the word "capitalism" or even the thought derived from the word, it has obviously been replaced by the expression "modern world-system" since Immanuel Wallerstein brought it forward in his famous work "The Modern World-system".

Individual Land Scale The 17th Century

1) Land Restoration by “Taiko”

It should be taken for granted that Japan had entered into the feudalistic economy since the beginning of the 17th century especially on the opportunity of the remarkable alteration of land-own system enforced in the nation-wide scale which, by all means, marked an epoch in Japanese land-own system as well as her socio-economic system leading to agriculture itself. Most people recognize it as so-called “Taiko-Kenchi” since the land renovation was enforced in the initiative of Hideyoshi who was Nobunaga's successor, in power, and called “Taiko”. Although “Kenchi” only means surveying in term itself, the surveying included the standardization of measure of length that was various from place to place and the registration of actual tiller of each soil who, therefore, was forced to be the rent-payers in exchange for being registered on the cadastre. What is epoch-making in this phase, is that the registration liberated slaves placing them under the obligation to pay the landowner, who was a feudal lord, the rent, equally that the restoration played consequently the role of extinguishing intermediary exploiters other than feudal lords and tillers, as far as the official and legal system was concerned.

The average area of arable land owned by each tiller, at the land restoration time, should be our first consideration, in conjunction with the question of what size the tillers owned at the very beginning of our feudalistic land system. It could be only estimated from some Acts of the day concerning with land-own system and reasonable calculation based on the agricultural circumstances in those days, although we unfortunately lack reliable historical documents covering all over the country to prove the feasible size of land distributed to individual tillers.

Firstly, it is said that two-thirds of all the tillers in a village near Osaka owned less than 30 a. at the land-restoration time while each tiller had much larger land in those villages of northern part of Japan.

2) Holdings Scale The 1640s

And then secondly, one data culculated from a historical materials located in a village near Osaka says that nearly half of the tillers belonged to the middle class at the year of 1644 (Kanei-21), whose each products of rice amounted from 5 to 40 koku.* How much rice a piece of land was supposed to produce depends naturally on such agricultural circumstances as climates, water supply, and geographical location especially. Generally speaking, the more southern-west the land was located, the more rice it was capable of producing. Northern part of the country should have been less productive to the contrary. Thinking of the averaged rice-productivity data adapted by the then government, the area equivalent to 10 Koku is most likely to be a little smaller than 1 hectare, that is 1 Chou. On this assumption the rice productivity of 5 Koku to 40 corresponds to half hectare to 4 hectare approximately.

* In Japanese feudalistic economy every piece of land was evaluated in the unit of rice quantity that is Koku, supposing that all the cultivated land could produce rice. It is called “Koku-Daka System”. See figures 4 to 6, K.Ishii, *Nihon Keizaishi* (1976).

3) Holdings Scale 1670-1720

Moreover, we are capable of observing the Acts relating to land heirloom in our feudalistic society which means almost Yedo Era. Tokugawa-Tent-Government, from time to time, instituted the Acts that limited the area inherited when setting up a branch family. The first Act put in force in 1673 (Enpo-1) says that tillers producing 10 Koku of rice should not separate their land even in case of separating family, and the second one in 1713 (Shotoku-3) put restriction on the area by 1 hectare on the same occasion, the idea of which was succeeded by the later acts within Tokugawa Era.

Putting those together, as well as taking thought of productivity increase, the thought would not lead us so astray that generally a tiller started cultivating land, just after the land restoration by "Taiko", with the area of approximately 2 hectare on average.

Tenant System 1884-1950

1) To the Peak of Holdings Size

In the feudalistic land-own system of Japan lasting for about 270 years, as a matter of course, there always happened transfers of land-ownerships all over the country that led her land-own system to the tenant one making the appearance of parasitic landowners on the one hand and of huge mass of tenants on the other as it is well known.

These tenants were not the cultivators who went on farming the land with hired labourers, as seen in England in 18th century, but ones who were formerly the owner-occupying small cultivator, for various reasons lost the ownership, therefore tenanted the land from parasitic landowner at high rent they hardly could afford in most cases, cultivating the land with family-work. They should rather be described as peasants. E.J.Hobsbawm describes agriculture of those years in England as follows;*

* E.J.Hobsbawm, "Industry and Empire" (1968, 1969), p.28. He refers also in the book to the land under the capitalism in Britain as follows;

After the middle of the nineteenth century British agriculture ceased to be the general framework of the entire economy, and became merely a branch of production, something like an 'industry', though of course the biggest industry by far in terms of employment. (p.195)

The strength of British farming in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was the concentration of landownership in the hands of a few very rich landlords, ready to encourage efficient tenants by the terms of their leases, capable of substantial investments and of taking at least some of the strain of bad times by reducing rent or allowing arrears to accumulate. (p.200).

What was already so startling about the British countryside was the absence of a peasantry in the continental sense. It was not merely that the growth of a market economy had already seriously undermined local and regional self-sufficiency, and enmeshed even the village in a web of cash sales and purchases, though this was, by contemporary standards, obvious enough. The fundamental structure of landownership and farming was already established by the mid eighteenth century, and certainly by the early decades of the Industrial Revolution. England was a country of mainly large landlords, cultivated by tenant farmers working the land with hired labourers. This structure was still partly hidden by an undergrowth of economically marginal cottager-labourers, or other small independents and semi-independents, but this should not obscure the fundamental transformation which had already taken place. By 1790 landlords owned perhaps three quarters of the cultivated land, occupying free-holders perhaps fifteen to twenty per cent, and a 'peasantry' in the usual sense of the word no longer existed.

As a result of land-own system which made gradually the tenant system progress during 270 years of feudalistic system, the proportion of tenanted land to the whole land of this country, in 1884, reached much of 36 %, that of peasants to all tillers 21 %.* These proportions should be regarded as the total result of peasantry system made up under the feudalism of Japan.

In 1888, just after the land-tax restoration which the Meiji-Government carried out for the purpose of fundamental security in order to industrialize and arm the country, the proportion raised up to respectively 40 % and 22 %. Both proportions kept going up, thereafter as well, and they finally came up to the peak of 46 % for tenanted land proportion and 28 % for tenants proportion in the decade of the 1910s. On the other hand, a governmental statistics show that the landowners who owned wider than 50 hectare amounted to the highest number of 1408 in 1919. It definitely leads us to the conclusion that even in Japan the large scale business in agriculture could have been probable in the viewpoint of landownership then.

2) The Postwar Agrarian Reform

The size of lands owned by top land holders stopped growing owing to the agricultural panic, as well as financial, commercial, and industrial one, that began in 1930. At the same time, the tenantry land system decisively started making a retreat which ever lasted until the postwar agrarian reform extinguished the peasantry system in Japan. Therefore the agrarian reform must be the latest epoch that affected the landownerships and equally the land scale owned by each tiller, and it undoubtedly made a framework of contemporary land scale of individual farmings.

* For those kinds of figures see the work M.Nakamura, *Kindai Nihon Jinushisei-Shi Kenkyu* (1979).

Analysis

Subsequently, keeping the above in mind an actual case should be verified corroboratively. All the data derived from the historical documents being used are still extant in an area called Hongo (in Hongo especially Asama community is the object to inquire and "Asama-Village" is the official village name used in Edo Era), a part of Matsumoto City at the present, where the hot springs of Asama developed in the last 400 years and rather secluded villages were located. Therefore the lands may have been less competent in agricultural productivity.

1) Classification of Family Size and Holdings Scale

1692-1712 (Genroku-5 to Shotoku-2)

The less productive districts a village was located, generally speaking, the later realization of the peasantry self-support, that would be indicated by family size living together, was. In 1644 (Knei-21), the average family was being made up of 5.6 members in villages near Osaka which belonged to a whitecap of agrarian productivity in those days, with the natural tendency that the wider land a family was holding the more members it had. We could not see so a great difference between the family size of 350 years ago and the present one that we are easily to presume the high productivity of those villages in the crest of the waves. Other villages in the same district also had diminished the size down to 4.5 at the latest till the end of the 17th century. Compared with this, in less productive districts like Shinano (Nagano-Prefecture at present) the family size did not dwindle to 5 until the middle of the 18th century that might mean there had been a time lag of approximately 100 years between the most productive district and the least ones in the degree of peasantry self-support.

As Asama-Village was located in Shinano it must be worth examining its case in family size at Edo Era precedent to the analysis of holdings scale. From one of the earliest documents showing individual family states we are to manage to derive the village's data of 1712 (Shotoku-2). The data made from a temple-members list ("Shumon-Ninbetsu-Aratame Chou") says that the village had 48 families including those who tenanted living places (see the table). The number of families increases as far as 56 when the tenanting families are regarded as independent. Since those tenanting families should have lived on their own, after all independently, and therefore, we ought to count the tenanting family as a family, the data is to reveal that the average household had 5.91 relative members, with nine families keeping, on average, two servants who are excluded from count. The figure 5.91 members in 1712 points out that the gradually developed cultivation productivity had already drawn up the individual peasants to its own self-support from the beginning of the 17th century on, even in such a less productive place as Asama-Village.

CLASSIFICATION OF FAMILY SIZE

Persons	Households as written	Families based on the relatives	Servants included
≥ 10	6	11	2
< 10 and ≥ 5	28	24	14
< 5	22	13	3

(Source: Asama-Village's "Shumon-Ninbetsu-Aratame Chou, 1712)

Attention should be paid to the feature herewith that middle sized stratum had most servants who were supposed to work with actual cultivating. Now that among the middle sized stratum 5 households (two households with servants belongs to the biggest sized stratum and also two belongs to the smallest one) presumably cultivated lands with those hired labourers, it is very likely that some farmers, even in this village, had developed such farming as needed outer labour. At the same time, big-composite family having plural marriages in it had already, to some extent, begun to disintegrate though 11 families still maintained their big size.

As for scale of individual holdings, a cadastre written in 1692 (Genroku-5) seems one of the earliest documents extant in this area, as it is not too much to say that documentary confirmation of individual holdings could be traced back only as far as the beginning of the 17th century at the earliest. We can extract from the cadastre 92 landholders as peasants altogether in the whole village, with 18 farmers living in adjacent villages like Misayama-Village, Mizukuma-Village, or Omura-Village. As might be expected from the hilly location limited in area, the biggest holders' land ranged no more than 17.3 hectare while there were 12 less-than-1a. holders on the other hand, and the average area held by individual holders amounted merely to 4.871a.. The middle class that held less than 1 hectare but more than 0.1 hectare form 74 % of the whole, that is middle classed holdings built up a mass and consequentlty they have a majority of the whole, as the following table makes clear.

CLASSIFICATION OF HOLDINGS SCALE

Hectare	Households	%
≥ 1.5	3	3
< 1.5 and ≥ 1	9	10
< 1 and ≥ 0.5	23	25
< 0.5 and ≥ 0.1	45	49
< 0.1	12	13

(Source: Asama-Village's Cadastre, 1692)

It is very probable that all of 9 families hiring outer labour mentioned above belonged to the top class of holdings, thus that the holdings scale from 1 hectare to 2 was more than enough to self-support a family, as long as this village was concerned. Therefore, it is a feasible conclusion that during the 17th century even in this district independency of each peasants had been making gradual progress.

2) Classification of Family Size and Holdings Scale

Second Half of the 18th Century

Since, unfortunately enough, we lack historical documents showing family size of this village in the 18th century, we are obliged to try a document of the same kind giving information of an adjacent village's (Matsuoka-Village) family size that may be regarded as very similar to Asama-Village. As a matter of convenience, the adjacent village's (Matsuoka-Village's) family size classification in 1811 (Bunka-8) is shown as follows, though the year belongs to the early 19th century. The data still gives us a rough tendency of family size in this district.

CLASSIFICATION OF FAMILY SIZE

Persons	Households as written	Families based on the relatives	Servants included
>=10	8	3	—
<10 and >=5	6	22	—
<5	11	25	—

(Source: Matsuoka-Village's "Goningumi Chou, 1811)

It is clear from the table that there had increased the proportion of small-sized family of less-than-5 during 100 years since 1712 although any servants are not found in any households as it is a very small village, thus its area for cultivation was very limited. Now that the table has almost the majority in the smallest class, it seemed verified that, generally speaking, self-support or independence of peasantry had made its progress during 100 years of the 18th century. in this district, as expected.

We are obliged to concentrate on a rather rough description of holdings scale in those days, since, as far as Asama-Village is concerned, we lack historical documents showing family size of this village in the 18th century. A tax-ledger written in 1764 (Horeki-14) could be the material used hereby. Besides, there happens to be accounts of individual landholding area missing in this document, because of which we can not help making a presumption by estimating individual area owned each peasant from the tax amounts imposed on them.

However, the cadastre of 1692 gives us a hold for this task. The total amount of the whole village's holdings reached as much as 44.8 hectare and official productivity of rice, which is the only information in the documents, was 607 Koku. The are-area per 1 Koku hereby is supposed to be 7.4 a. Using the figure, the presumed holdings classification can be carried out, therefore we are able to

classify the probable holdings scale.

133 holders were listed altogether on the tax-ledger ("Mochi-Daka-Ninbetsu Chou") written in 1764. As a matter of course, the holdings in other villages should be added to individual holding areas. After counting the outer holdings as well, there appeared 5 households holding more than 1.5 hectare, as can be seen from the following table as well as the former table, while 3 in 1692.

CLASSIFICATION OF HOLDING SCALE

In the year 1764		
Hectare	Households	%
≥ 1.5	5	4
< 1.5 and ≥ 1	3	2
< 1 and ≥ 0.5	19	14
< 0.5 and ≥ 0.1	74	56
< 0.1	32	24

(Source: Asama-Village's Tax-Ledger, 1764)

What is more, although the lower class that held less than 1 hectare but more than 0.1 hectare forms 70 % of the whole, the proportion of petty holders who held less than 0.1 hectare almost doubled that of 1692. That resulted in marked decrease of the middle class holding 1 hectare to 1.5, rather naturally. Those trends certainly suggests us, on the one hand, that loss of land made a mass of petty landholders who probably could not live off their own lands and accordingly were bound to work lands as tenants, and on the other, that accumulation of lands made a few large landlords who had some pieces of tenanted land. As far as holdings are concerned, 150 years since the "Taiko-Kenchi" developed the dissolution of holdings into the poles gradually.

3) Classification of Family Size and Holdings Scale

1856 -1866 (Ansei-5 to Keio-2)

The state of both family size and holdings scale at the end of Edo Era which definitely should be regarded as the end of Japan's feudalism, is to be examined here with a temple-members list, i.e. a census register of Edo Era, of 1856, and a cadastre written in 1866. The informations acquired from those two documents undoubtedly indicates what the terminal state of our feudalistic holdings was, as well as that of family size. Trying preferentially the family size at the terminus of the feudalistic holdings, the classification is being materialized as follows.

CLASSIFICATION OF FAMILY SIZE

Persons	Households as written	Families based on the relatives	Servants included
≥ 10	21	11	3
< 10 and ≥ 5	57	65	15
< 5	32	50	10

(Source: Asama-Village's "Goningumi-Ninbetsu-Aratame Chou, 1856)

Aproximately 150 years later from 1712, the number of households increased tremendously, to the tripled. Especially at a glance we would rather be surprised at the increase of the smaller strata being less than 10 members with the multiplied number of servants in the smallest stratum. The table supposedly gives us the suggestion that at the end of our feudalistic holding system the self-support of peasants had thus definitely been set up and there appeared at one pole a handful of large holdings and at another a major of pesants who held so small lands that they coould not live on their own holdings, therefore had to tenant some lands with rent.

Trying to examine the issue of holdings, the classification of land holdings in this village at the end of Edo Era is shown as follows. The data was extracted from a cadastre written in 1866 (Keio-2) named "Asama-Village's Tabata-Nayose Chou" .

CLASSIFICATION OF HOLDING SCALE

In the year 1866		
Hectare	Households	%
≥ 2	3	2
< 2 and ≥ 1.5	3	2
< 1.5 and ≥ 1	3	2
< 1 and ≥ 0.5	24	19
< 0.5 and ≥ 0.1	63	51
< 0.1	28	23

(Source: Asama-Village's Cadastre, 1866)

The table in which we find the holders who held lands in Asama-Village but did not belong to the village, indicates that the proportion of each stratum had not changed so dynamically that we can not see any significant differences between the holdings state of 1764 and that of 1866, except that the holders in the two upper strata had increased the holding area compared with 1764. Large-scaled holdings by a few owners, hence, had been developing the accumulation of lands during the century from 1764 with maximum of 2.2 hectare in this village. As a result of feudalistic holdings that lasted aproximately 250 years, disolution to the poles arrived at 4 % of large-holders on one hand and 74 % of petty-holders on the other at last, gradually decreasing the percentage of millde-scaled holders from

some 20's percent to 19 percent.

From those tables concerning with land holdings in Asama-Village, we should extract the conclusion that till the end of Edo Era even in such a district as the village was located the tenant system had apparently been set up.

4) Classification of Holdings Scale Till the War after the Meiji rent restoration

As mentioned above, the land-tax restoration, that formed an important and indispensable part of the Meiji-Restoration, triggered off the expansion of the tenant system because of high rated rent based on high rated land-tax imposed by the Ishin Government. Our tenant system went on expanding continuously thereafter till the Depression time, in Japan so-called "Showa Kyoko" beginning in 1927 stopped it.* As the depression in Japan started, substantially, under the influence of the Great Crash brought about in the United States just prior to it, although in Japan it was led by a financial panic, agriculture was damaged more badly than finance, commerce or industry. So called agricultural panic, that began in 1930, originated from the fall in the price of agricultural products ruined our agriculture to so a considerable extent that landlords' accumulation of lands no longer grew, because it lost the source of rent supply. Among rural communities, especially such sericultural districts as Nagano-Prefecture producing cocoons, were struck most severely all the more because their products were directly connected with raw silk exported mainly to the United States. This was the occasion when our tenant holdings system receded for the first time since the land-tax restoration of Meiji.

In addition, when the wartime regulation covered almost all the aspects such as economy, politics, culture and even thought, agriculture was naturally regulated in respect of the supplying amount and price of products as well as manners of land-holdings. Now that the government had to secure foods in any way, the increase of owner cultivator was to be targetted with the sole object of an increased yield. At the wartime holdings were thus regulated definitely, officially and legally. The tenant system did degenerate in quality on this moment.

Being based on those circumstances surrounding holdings scales from the Meiji land-tax restoration to the time immediately before the wartime regulations, the situation of land holdings after the rent restoration is shown in the following table.

* For Showa-Kyoko, see the work M.Nakamura, *Showa-no-Kyouko* (1982).

CLASSIFICATION OF HOLDING SCALE

In the year 1889 (limited to rice-fields)			In the year 1889 (presumptive)		
Hectare	Households	%	Hectare	Households	%
>=2	0	0	>=2	1	2
< 2 and >=1.5	1	2	< 2 and >=1.5	0	0
< 1.5 and >=1	0	0	< 1.5 and >=1	4	7
< 1 and >=0.5	11	19	< 1 and >=0.5	12	21
< 0.5 and >=0.1	32	56	< 0.5 and >=0.1	32	56
< 0.1	13	23	< 0.1	8	14

(Source: Asama-Village's Cadastre, 1889) (Source: Asama-Village's Cadastre, 1889)

The data shown on the table is derived from a cadastre written in 1889 when the land-tax restoration was supposed to be already completed. Since the data of the table, however, is limited to scales of rice-fields which dominated 75 % of the whole agricultural land, a presumptive situation of land scale should serve as a good reference. The percentage itself of each stratum had not changed so remarkably, rather changeless, but we ought to pay a careful attention to the number of the households nominated on those two tables. There are only 57 owners in 1889 while we count 127 in 1866, that means the Meiji rent restoration reduced the land owners by less than half. Hence more than half of the owner-occupying tillers became bankrupt by losing all the lands and became tenant-tillers due to the restoration. The Meiji restoration thus played a decisive role of building up the parasitic tenant system through high rated land-tax leading to high rated rent loaded on tenants.

5) Classification of Holdings Scale Immediately After the War

a) process of the reform

As is broadly known, the postwar agrarian reform lasting for approximately four years from 1946 exterminated the tenantry holdings system.* The agrarian reform, as a matter of fact, was intended and enforced by the Genrral Headquarter ("G.H.Q." is an abbreviation for it) of the allied forces which occupied Japan after the war.

The occupying forces recognized that the tenantry holdings system itself had been one of the factors leading Japan to the aggressive war on account of poverty caused by the semi-feudalistic tenantry holdings system and above all landlords had been the major part of Japan's prewar ruling class. More than that, they were facing an urgent and significant problem to solve. The Japanese were starving. The extreme decrease of the working population in agriculture of the country had completely exhausted agriculture of the country during the war and the exhausted agriculture could not afford the whole polulation inflated by

* As for the post war agrarian reform, see the work H.Arisawa and others, *Showa Keizaishi* (1994). See further reading, *History of the Agrarian Reform in Nagano-Prefecture* (1991).

demobilized ex-soldiers just after the war. Being compelled by those circumstances to reform the agrarian status totally, the G.H.Q. ordered the then puppet Japanese government to make a plan for agrarian reform. Vexed at an unsatisfactory plan made by Japanese government, the occupying forces thrust a new and thoroughgoing plan designed mostly by the British force at the government.

The new plan ruled that an absentee landlord who did not live in the village where he lent lands should hold no lands within the village and he who lived in the village where he lent lands should hold tenanted lands less than one hectare with the exception that the limitation should be three hectare in Hokkaido. The whole tenanted lands except for ones mentioned above were to be requisitioned till two years later then. The rule indicated likewise that requisitioned lands should lead to onerous delivery to each tenant with the average price of 760 yen for 0.1 hectare of rice field and 450 yen for non-rice field. The enforcement of the plan was supposed to create 2,000,000 hectare of lands owned by owner-cultivators that would meet approximately 80% of the former lands tenanted and to involve a million of landlords and four millions of tenant cultivators. As a result of this reform 1,870,000 hectare of tenanted lands, in fact, turned to owner cultivators' lands that occupied 81% of the prewar tenanted lands and the proportion of owner cultivators ascended to 57.1% in 1949 from 36.5% in 1947.

b) actual circumstances of Asama-Village

The land own situation of Asama-Village at the time when the agrarian reform was about to start is as above, though the details at the wartime are unknown due to the scantiness of both private and official documents. With the setting mentioned above, we should verify how holdings scale changed in Asama-Village by way of the postwar reform.

The research into the real aspects of the reform in Asama-Village which is a part of Matsumoto-City at present, was accompanied with a great difficulty, owing to the regulations for privacy protection. Since the regulations made it impossible to inspect the cadastres, though they do exist in the archives, the following analysis will be carried on without the cadastres.

It should be needed to grasp, in the first place, what situation the post-war agrarian reform changed, therefore what was the terminative status of landholdings immediately before the war actually and exactly in Asama-Village. As for land holdings of Asama-Village which, in fact, had been a part of Hongo-Village since the beginning of the 20th century, here is a bulky document written in 1945 as a result of an agrarian survey previous to the agrarian reform. The document has informations in bulk such as family size and amount of rents in addition to the scale and the kind of each cultivated land. The precise datas derived and processed from the document are shown in the following tables. Even if the Meiji land-tax restoration undoubtedly drove many petty tillers to tenant cultivators, the classification of holdings scale in Asama-Village does not seem to have changed remarkably except for the land scale owned by a few large landowners.

CLASIFICATION OF HOLDING SCALE

In the year 1945		
Hectare	Households	%
>=2	2	1.2
< 2 and >=1.5	1	0.6
< 1.5 and >=1	7	4
< 1 and >=0.5	27	16
< 0.5 and >=0.1	70	42
< 0.1	59	36

(Source: Asama-Village's Agrarian Survey by the Farmland Committee of Hongo, 1945)

COMPARATIVE CLASSIFICATION OF HOLDING AREA

In the year 1889		In the year 1945	
Hectare	Area held (%)	Hectare	Area held (%)
>=2	9	>=2	9
< 2 and >=1.5	0	< 2 and >=1.5	2
< 1.5 and >=1	18	< 1.5 and >=1	15
< 1 and >=0.5	37	< 1 and >=0.5	39
< 0.5 and >=0.1	35	< 0.5 and >=0.1	30
< 0.1	2	< 0.1	4

(Source: Asama-Village's Cadastre, 1889 and Asama-Village's Agrarian Survey by the Farmland Committee of Hongo, 1945)

According to the table the percentage of individual class does not differ much from that of 1889, except that there had been a rapid increase of the number of owner-occupying tiller. The half of a century since 1889 had tripled the number of the land owner from 57 to 166 as far as the figures are concerned. Comparing also the status quo of those two years, in the area owned by each stratum we do not find such a great difference among the percentages (see the table below) that we need to concentrate on the whole scale actually being cultivated by owners-occupying. The whole area owned by owner-occupying of approximately 50 hectare, the figure of which is extracted from the cadastre written in 1866, reduced by half to some 24 hectare in 1889 indicating that the Meiji rent restoration altered half of the whole land of Asama-Village into tenanted lands. Till 1945, the whole area cultivated by owners-occupying and lent to tenants had made a sudden increase to some 70 hectare, supposedly due to the war time agrarian regulations.

No change in the classification of holdings scale and the significant change in the number of owner-occupying tillers certainly give a suggestion that the war time regulation to increase independent cultivators, to some extent, carried out the governmental intention though the ultimate goal of increasing supply of agricultural products was hardly achieved.

The situation immediately before the post war agrarian reform turns out to be more complexed than described so far if we observe the historical documents with keen interest. As generally known, even an owner-occupying cultivator could tenant some area paying rent. Even if in this case he may be, in a general term, called a part tenant cultivator, he who owns wider land than he tenants is especially called "Jikosaku" while "Kojisaku" means a tenant cultivator who cultivates his own land smaller than he tenants. The number of classified cultivators in this manner is seen in the next table.

CLASSIFICATION OF CULTIVATORS

	Household	%
Owner-occupying	96	36
Part tenant cultivator (Jikosaku)	41	15
Part tenant cultivator (Kojisaku)	11	4
Full tenant cultivator	121	45

(Source:Asama-Village's Agrarian Survey by the Farmland Committee of Hongo, 1945)

There are two major masses, thinking only of the number of households, to one of which owners-occupying belong and to the other of which full tenant cultivators belong, with the appearance of the largest landowner who held more than 4 hectare in 1945. The tenanted area of 41 hectare meets 58 % of cultivated land, thus land occupied by owner-occupying 42 %. As a whole it is apparent that till the end of the latest war full tenant cultivators had become to form the most massive part of the whole cultivators in Asama-Village and much more than the half of cultivated lands had already been tenanted. Considering the largest landholder held more than 4 hectare in 1945 even in such a hilly and limited village as Asama-Village, after all it is very likely that accumulation of lands by a few landowners had become to form the parasitic tenant system to the extreme extent, with the complicated situation of landownerships especially for almost 50 part tenant cultivators.

Here is another interesting documents written in 1949 about the downside area of Asama-Village ("Shimo-Asama"), which gives some informations on what was being brought by the reform. Compared the holdings immediately before the reform with the holdings in the middle of it,* the average percentage of the lands acquired through the reform is 48 %, although the average percentage does not seem meaningful in this case where the reform was actually proceeding then. In fact, 40 % of the cultivators acquired more than 60 % of their lands through the reform with one fourth of the cultivators acquiring the whole land by the purchase realized by the Agrarian Committee. Consequently, the average holdings scale in 1949 ascended to 0.47 hectare from 0.31 in 1945 when the restoration had not yet begun. Looking back further on 1889, the average holdings scale is estimated as 0.42 hectare, while 0.39 hectare in 1866.

* It could not be expressed as "after the reform" , because in this village, like many other villages in Nagano-Prefecture, the reform lasted till the middle of the 1950s.

Summary

The time has come for a summing-up. At the beginning of this country's feudalism, the average cultivators including those who were nominated on cadastre newly and for the first time, started their farmers life with approximately 2 hectare of rice-field or non-rice-field, though they are only estimated to have held that area being based on some acts relating to land own system. What is clear is that during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and even eighteenth century family size in our rural communities had been continuously heading for reduction that represents the extent of independency of cultivators. The trend was true to the newly-developing and therefore less productive district like Asama-Village, as the steady progress toward reduction of the family size of the village was verified thereof.

As for holdings scale, dissolution of cultivators into the two masses in one of which there were a few large landowners and in another many tenanting petty tillers who may have been holding their own soil even if their held area was trivial, as far as the village is concerned. The fact that till the end of the latest war the largest landholder of Asama-Village had already reached a comparatively large scale of more than 4 hectare which must have been the largest in the village, is a noticable point. The individual holdings scale has come to the peak in Asama-Village as early as many other villages till the war time. It surely means the holdings scale jumped backward at a single stroke of the postwar agrarian reform to our feudalistic stataus. Therefore, it is a reasonable conclusion that the agrarian reform played a role to bring the landholding system in rural communities back to the status quo of at least one hundred years ago. Large scaled agriculture, as long as holdings scale is concerned, had been probable in the pre-war time, setting apart a qualitative valuation.