

Actual Circumstances of Land Transfer through the Rural Land
Reform 1946 – 1952

Haruhisa KIMURA

Introduction

Whoever says the Rural Land Reform says GHQ or refers to the Allied Powers. It illustrates enough study we have so far to understand the political aspect of the Reform. And, it has already become commonplace to regard the Rural Land Reform, designed by General Headquarter (abbreviated as GHQ henceforth) and executed by the Japanese Government immediately after the latest war, as the epoch that exterminated the absentee landlordism or the parasitic tenure system in Japan, therefore recreated independent proprietors or owner-cultivators all over the country partly for purpose of turning out foodstuffs in increasing amounts. The process of proceeding the Rural Land Reform, in fact proceeded by the Japanese Government which was rather forced to do so by directives from GHQ, however, has not been revealed in detail yet except for GHQ's policy and its deep influence on the Japanese Government, mostly because there was an enormous variety of examples proceeded from place to place, accordingly a rough description of the Rural Land Reform, as a whole, could only be feasible. It also might be because the actual procedure of the Land Reform was dogged by such complexities as various decisions and measures by many local land commissions which in fact held responsibility for the administration of the land reform program and for the actual transfer of land ownership through purchase and sale. In consideration of the decisive lack of samples as such, showing how individual reform was actually proceeded and how thoroughly it changed the individual landholdings status or tenancy, this study deals with the actual circumstances of the Rural Land Reform proceeded in Hongo-District of Matsumoto-City.¹

On making a historical inquiry into land-holdings scale in Asama-Village, as called in its feudalism, which was a part of Hongo-Village in the prewar time, the writer once made it clear that the Rural Land Reform had played a role to bring the land-holding scale back to the status quo of approximately one hundred years ago.² Accordingly, now that the ineffectiveness of Japan's agriculture today directly stems in the Land Reform, precise grasp of aspects of the Rural Land Reform extracted from the works of this kind should be necessary in order to understand not only how drastically our prewar situation was reformed but also how our postwar agriculture started.

Notes

1. This work rests, regarding the circumstances of Hongo-District, mainly on first-hand research into historical documents formerly held by Hongo branch of the City Office and preserved at present in the Archives of Matsumoto-City, while the discription of "Passage of the Rural Land Reform " is mostly based on published materials most of which are reprints of historical papers edited by GHQ, *History of the Non-Military Activities of the Occupation of Japan, 1945-1951*. This study, therefore, is very likely to be a serial of the former work

describing historically the landholdings status of Hongo-District, H.Kimura, ' A Historical Inquiry into Transition of Individual Holdings and Family Size in Rural Community ' , *All-Round Area Review* (" Chiiki-Sogo-Kenkyu "), 2004.

2. See H.Kimura, A Historical Inquiry into Transition of Individual Holdings and Family Size in Rural Community, op. cit.

I Passage to the Rural Land Rrform

1. PLANNING-OUT OF THE FIRST LAND REFORM PROGRAM

As is broadly known, there were two successive Rural Land Reform programs, the first of which was drawn out by the Japanese Government and passed by the Diet with some amendments in vain, and the second of which was, as a matter of fact, designed by GHQ and proceeded actually from 1947. As for the first plan for the Land Reform, it was handed over to SCAP (Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, General Headquarters) by the Government officially in response to the SCAP directive announced on 9 December 1945.¹ The directive had required the Government to submit a report containing plans for a broad program of agrarian reform which would include some provisions for agrarian development and goals the Government should reach.² One of and probably the most important of all the goals thus set in the directive was, in the concrete, the transfer of land ownership from absentee landowners to cultivators. Nevertheless, the core of the report was the provision that landowners including absentee landowners were to be limited to the possession of five *cho* of agricultural land.³

SCAP regarded the report as limited in scope, avasive and temporizing, as well as inadequate to eradicate the abuses of the then Japanese land tenure system, mainly because about 60 percent of the tenant-cultivated farm lands would be excluded from the program because of the provision permitting individual landowners to retain five *cho* of tenant-cultivated land.⁴ It had been the principle of the United States' postsurrender land reform policy since the beginning to transfer land ownership from absentee landowners to cultivators. As the thought of transfer of ownership, that is establishment of independent proprietors, had been distinctly indicated in the Atcheson-Feary Memorandum submitted to SCAP on 26 October 1945, SCAP was likely to aim at changing even the whole tenant-cultivated farm lands to owner-cultivated farm lands.⁵

2. PLANNING-OUT OF THE SECOND LAND REFORM PROGRAM

In consequence of the report's insufficiency, another rural land reform program was formulated by SCAP officials and presented to the Government in an informal conference. This program was accompanied with six concrete provisions the Government should secure, the most inportant of which might be the one that all tenant-cultivated land held outside the community of residence of an owner

should be subject to transfer, all lands owned by resident landlords in excess of one *cho* average of tenant-cultivated land in Japan Proper, and owner-cultivators should be limited to the ownership of three *cho* of agricultural land in Japan Proper.⁶

GHQ's policy of area limitation owned by absentee landowners, however, was not settled down as smooth as mentioned above. The plan which NRS (National Resources Section) had originally designed seems to have had the limitation of all lands owned by resident landlords in excess of three *cho* average of tenant-cultivated land, and therefore area limitation of three *cho* owned by resident landlords had been GHQ's unofficially agreed consensus till the Sixth Meeting Allied Council held on 12 June 1946.

We are able to find some significant discussions on limitation area owned by resident landlords on the Third Meeting Allied Council and the Fifth. On the Third Meeting, Lieutenant General Kuzma Derevyanko, the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, insisted that the Council should hear information on what the Japanese Government had done to prepare for organization of the Rural Land Reform,⁷ and succeedingly on the Fifth Meeting he submitted a draft pointing out that land owners leasing the land should possess three *cho* at the most.⁸ This draft submitted by the Soviet Union instantly encountered the British draft on the Sixth Meeting where the British representative insisted on the limitation of one *cho* of tenant-cultivated land owned by resident landlords.⁹ The British draft was based upon a thought that the United Kingdom and the United States could not accept the Soviet Union's policy because it was accompanied with a provision that there would be no compensation for confiscated lands by the Government. The provision proposed by the Soviet Union was, to the United Kingdom, nothing but a perfect negation of private property. After these discussions the British draft including a provision that area owned by resident landlords should be limited to one *cho* average in Japan Proper was adopted on the Seventh Meeting and the adoption led to the presentation by SCAP to the Japanese Government in the informal conference.

3. PROVISIONS FOR ACTUAL PROCEDURE

The Government was to purchase about 2 million hectares of tillable land for subsequent sale to tenant farmers. The entire process of transfer was scheduled to be completed by 31 December 1948. The essence of the actual procedure of the second Rural Land Reform was such categories of lands as subject to purchase as listed below:¹⁰

- (1) All arable lands owned by absentee landlords. An absentee landowner, as defined by the law, was a person whose land was situated outside of the administrative limits of the city, town or village within which he had permanent residence, and outside of designated portion of adjacent cities, towns or villages.
- (2) All tenanted lands owned by resident, noncultivating landlords exceeding an average of one *cho* in Honsyu, Shikoku and Kyushu, and four *cho* in

Hokkaido.

- (3) All lands held by owner-cultivators exceeding an average of three *cho* in Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu, and 12 *cho* in Hokkaido.

As for purchase price, it was based on its recorded rental value, an officially calculated figure revised every 10 years, used for assessing taxes. The law (Owner-Farmer Establishment Special Measures Law) established this price at 40 times the 1938 rental value for paddy land and 48 times the rental value for upland fields. Besides that, landlords were to receive an additional subsidy of 220 yen per *tan* of paddy fields and 130 yen per *tan* of upland fields." The subsidy was limited to an amount of land not exceeding three *cho* in Japan Proper and 12 *cho* in Hokkaido.

The preferential right of tenants was specifically approved, and in addition the land was to be offered for sale first to the tenant farmers who were cultivating it at the times of purchase. The provision included the policy that all pertinent land transactions since 23 November 1945 were to be considered null and void.

Regarding sale price, in actual practice it averaged 750 yen per *tan* for paddy field and 465 yen per *tan* of upland. Moreover, such provisions were so effective that the process of land sale was successfully proceeded owing to small variable annual payments and a long period of amortization, in addition to yen inflation goin on.

4. PLAN OF OPERATION

Since the main problem connected with the complex task of transferring land ownership was that of avoiding a disruption of farming operation when Japan needed maximum production to meet the critical food situation, the operation was scheduled to be accomplished through a series of transactions as 31 March 1947, 2 July 1947, 2 October 1947, 31 December 1947, 2 February 1948, 2 March 1948, 2 July 1948, 2 October 1948, and 31 December 1948.¹²

Transfer operation consisted of (1) the selection and purchase by the Government of lands in appropriate categories, (2) the retention of the land acquired, whenever necessary, for a short interim period, and (3) a final sale to eligible buyers.

After an investigation of each tract of cultivated land within the jurisdiction of the village, each local land commission drew up purchase plans and posted them as public notices in all the villages for a 10-day period during which the landowners affected had the right to file complaints.¹³ Meanwhile the prefectural land commissions were to approve the plans submitted by the local commissions on condition that there were no complaints. The approval by the prefectural commission made land purchase valid and the lands became the property of the Government on the date specified by the purchase writ.

As for sale of lands, only some scattered sales were found although sales themselves had begun in July 1947. Now that the complexities inherent in the purchase of land from resident landlords and owner-cultivators had caused the delay of sales, most prefectures had still not been capable of sale even until

October 1948 apart from some prefectures which could barely sale monthly.

Another and critical problem confronting the local commissions was consolidation of scattered lands which has kept preventing Japan's agriculture from large-scaled one in good economy. Though circumstances connecting with water rights and intricacy of each cultivated lands lay behind this problem, the major barrier came from the opposition of the farmers who preferred to retain the land they were accustomed to cultivate. As a whole we might be able to conclude that consolidation of lands was made only unsuccessfully.

Finally we must notice the landlords' opposition to the land reform, each of which we could never certify because they carried on a campaign both singly and in groups and in every unofficial manner. Among the tactics employed by landowners in their attempts to evade the compulsory sale of their lands, frightening tenants into collusive agreements for the falsification of tenants' actual status, by threatening eviction or court action, was rather popular. A more widespread form of obstruction by landowners was the eviction of tenants from land by direct illegal action or by quasi-legal methods. About 23,000 cases developed into legal disputes as far as the present observer can certify.¹⁴

The last step in the land transfer program was the official registration of title transfers in registration offices throughout the country. This was a laborious task since an approximate total of 27 million separate tracts of land had changed their owners and each piece of land had first to be checked with the local tax office and the local land registry office to insure accuracy of boundary descriptions and adequacy of title. The vast task of registration, which had barely started in December 1948, is supposed to have been officially completed by 31 March 1950.¹⁵

Notes

1. Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, *History of the Non-Military Activities of the Occupation of Japan, 1945-1951*, p.25, originally SCAPIN-411, 9 December 1945.

2. *ibid.*, p.25. SCAPIN-411 went far beyond the problem of land tenure. It is the basic directive which called for a comprehensive program of reform embracing many aspects of the agrarian economy.

The concrete contents the directive pointed out are as follows:

- (1) The transfer of land ownership from absentee landowners to cultivators.
- (2) Provisions for the purchase of farm land from nonoperating owners at equitable rates.
- (3) Provisions for the purchase by tenants of land at annual installments commensurate with their income.
- (4) Provisions for reasonable protection of former tenants against reversion to tenancy status.
- (5) A guarantee to agriculture of a share of the national income commensurate with its contribution.

3. A *cho* is the unit for an area that is almost equivalent to 1 hectare.

4. *History of the Non-Military Activities of the Occupation of Japan, 1945-1951*, op.cit., p.30.
5. *Collection of Materials Relating to The Rural Land Reform*, vol.14, pp.77 and 96., originally, *GHQ/SCAP Documents Relating to Japanese Land Reform*.
6. *History of the Non-Military Activities of the Occupation of Japan, 1945-1951*, op.cit., pp.31 and 32.

This program, in the concrete, consisted of the following 6 articles:

- (1) Lands to be purchased,
- (2) Price and conditions of payment,
- (3) Resale to tenants,
- (4) Price and conditions of payment by tenant purchasers,
- (5) Land commissions,
- (6) Written contracts.

7. *GHQ/SCAP Documents Relating to Japanese Land Reform*, op.cit., pp.173 and 174. The following is the concrete speech of the Soviet Union's representative on the Meeting : This Directive orders the Japanese Government, " To remove economic obstacles to the revival and strengthening of democratic tendencies." It directs, " to establish respect for the dignity of man and destroy the economic bondage which has enslaved the Japanese farmer for centuries." Considering these Directives of the Supreme Commander as the basis for the realization of the liquidation of all backwardness of the Japanese village and attributing to the realization of these Directives their most important significance, I have suggested that the Council would hear information on what the Japanese Government has done to prepare for reorganization of Rural Land Reform in Japan in compliance with the Directives received by it.
8. *ibid.*, p.183. The speech and the contents of the draft, in the concrete, are as follows: LIEUTENANT GENERAL DEREVYANKO (as interpreted): In my opinion the draft of the Rural Land Reform submitted by the Japanese Government on March 15, of this year, does not solve the problems set forth in the Directive by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers dated December 9, 1945.

The main drawbacks of the draft are as follows:

The purchase of extra land in excess of the quota of 5 *cho* cannot result in the solution of the land program in Japan, as a great many land owners leasing the land, possess exactly from 3 to 5 *cho*. It will be recalled that in the original draft of the Rural Land Reform submitted by the Japanese Government to the Diet in December 1945, the land quota amounts not to 5 *cho*, but to 3. As is well known, the reactionary Diet turned down the proposal of the Government and in the interest of preserving landlord ownership, raised the average quota to 5 *cho*. (the rest omitted)

9. *ibid.* pp.187 and 189. The representative of British Commonwealth, W. Macmahon Ball, made a speech on the Sixth Meeting as follows:
MR. BALL: Well, MR. CHAIRMAN, you may recall that the last meeting I did put forward what I called my first thoughts on this question and since then we have been able to try to work them out in some more detail, and I did make available yesterday to Members of the Council more careful and

more detailed proposals. (the rest omitted)

Then, the British representative, Mr. Ball put forward a proposal to suggest ways in which the Japanese Government's programme might be amended to make it achieve the main purposes of the SCAP directive.

Suggested Amendments to the Programme

- a. The maximum average area of tenant cultivated land which any non-operating landowner may own should be reduced to 1 *cho*. (the rest omitted)
10. *History of the Non-Military Activities of the Occupation of Japan, 1945-1951*, op.cit., pp.37 and 39. There are actually seven articles altogether referred in the paper which, for the rest, are (4) All agricultural lands owned by corporations (juridical persons) or other organizations, whose cultivation was not essential to their principal business activities. (5) All farmlands not currently used for cultivation. (6) All farmlands not previously mentioned but which might be offered for sale to the Government. (7) Additinal properties including meadow, pasture and reclaimed lands, housing sites, buildings and equipment needed to complete a farmunit.
11. A *tan* is equal to one tenth of a *cho* or 0.09917 hectares.
12. *History of the Non-Military Activities of the Occupation of Japan, 1945-1951*, op.cit., p.65. Those schedules are to be examined for the rest of this paper by means of the samples of Hongo-District.
13. 10-day period for public notice was strictly observed in Hongo-District like many other districts as referred later on.
14. It is not needed in this paper to deal with the matter of consolidation of scatterd lands and the landlords' opposition since the paper aims at not them but revealing cicumstances of land transer.
15. *History of the Non-Military Activities of the Occupation of Japan, 1945-1951*, op.cit., p.103.

II The Rural Land Rrform in Nagano-Prefecture

After an inquiry into nation-wide tendencies we must make a survey of the process of land reform proceeded in Nagano-Prefecture to which Matsumoto-City belongs, therefore Hongo-District does. On dealing with this sort of subject, what the difference is made between nation-wide experiences and those of Nagano-Prefecture should be the first consideration, including the case of no difference at all.

1. TRANSFER OF LANDS

In spite of the provision that all tenanted land owned by each resident landlord exceeding an average of one *cho* in Japan Proper should be purchased by the Government as well as the provision that all lands held by owner-cultivators

exceeding an average of three *cho* in Japan Proper should be purchased by the Government, actual limitations were different from prefecture to prefecture or even from city to city. Those measures originated in Owner-Farmer Establishment Special Measures Law, Art. 3, which approved the differences of limitation between prefectures if only the average area of tenanted lands owned by resident landlords in the whole country should meet one *cho* with the exception of Hokkaido and if only Honshu's limitation of three *cho* held by owner-cultivators should be secured on average.¹

Accordingly maximum retention by land owners, as can be seen from the following TABLE I, varied from 1.5 *cho* to 0.6 *cho* regarding resident-noncultivating owners and maximum one by owner-cultivators varied from 4.5 *cho* to 1.8 *cho*. Among the data from the table, Nagano-Prefecture's maximum area for resident-noncultivating owners is set down as 0.8 *cho* which belongs to rather lower-limited group while maximum area owned by owner-cultivators in Nagano-Prefecture is 2.6 *cho* in spite of standardized area of three *cho*. Such is to be a persuasive explanation for the lower limit of Nagano-Prefecture as area of tenanted land owned by each landlord, whether resident or absentee, was smaller than the average area of the then Japan.²

TABLE I

AREA SPECIFIED BY CENTRAL AGRICULTURAL LAND COMMISSION AS MAXIMUM RETENTION
BY LAND OWNERS IN EACH PREFECTURE, 28 March 1947
(cho)

Prefecture	Resident Noncultivating Owner	Owner Cultivators	Prefecture	Resident Noncultivating Owner	Owner Cultivators
Aomori	1.5	4.5	Shiga	0.8	2.7
Iwate	1.2	3.8	Kyoto	0.7	2.2
Miyagi	1.5	4.3	Osaka	0.6	1.9
Akita	1.4	4.3	Hyogo	0.6	2.0
Yamagata	1.4	4.4	Nara	0.7	2.0
Fukushima	1.2	3.8	Wakayama	0.6	1.9
Ibaraki	1.2	3.7	Tottori	0.9	2.6
Tochigi	1.3	3.9	Shimane	0.8	2.2
Gunma	1.0	3.0	Okayama	0.7	2.3
Saitama	1.0	3.0	Hiroshima	0.6	1.8
Chiba	1.2	3.6	Yamaguchi	0.8	2.5
Tokyo	0.7	2.2	Tokushima	0.6	2.1
Kanagawa	0.8	2.3	Kagawa	0.6	2.0
Niigata	1.1	3.6	Ehime	0.7	2.2
Toyama	1.1	3.7	Kochi	0.8	2.1
Ishikawa	0.9	2.7	Fukuoka	0.9	2.8
Fukui	0.9	2.7	Saga	1.0	3.3
Yamanashi	0.7	2.1	Nagasaki	0.8	2.3
Nagano	0.8	2.6	Kumamoto	1.1	3.1
Gifu	0.7	2.2	Oita	0.7	2.3
Shizuoka	0.7	2.3	Miyazaki	1.0	3.0
Aichi	0.8	2.4	Kagoshima	0.8	2.2
Mie	0.8	2.4			

Source : General Headquarters, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, History of the Nonmilitary Activities of the Occupation of Japan, Appendix p. 21, Appendix 1, M, originally Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Notification No. 42, 10 May 1947.

Likewise, in spite of the upper limit of 3 *cho*, there were also differences of limitation depending on county or city in Nagano-Prefecture as TABLE II below shows. According to the table the limited area in Nagano-Prefecture varies from 0.6 *cho* to 0.9 *cho* as for resident noncultivating owner, and owner cultivators from 1.6 *cho* to 2.7 *cho*. Here we will have to note it on mind that regarding the owner cultivators especially the distance between the maximum limitation and the minimum one becomes great, in concrete 1.1 *cho* as well as that Hihashi-Chikuma County to which Hongo District we are focusing on belonged had the limitation of 0.8 *cho* for resident noncultivating owner and 2.5 *cho* for owner cultivators.

TABLE II

AREA SPECIFIED BY NAGANO PREFECTURE AGRICULTURAL LAND COMMISSION AS MAXIMUM RETENTION BY LAND OWNERS IN EACH COUNTY OR CITY
(cho)

County or City (see note)	Resident Noncultivating Owner	Owner Cultivators	County or City	Resident Noncultivating Owner	Owner Cultivators
Kami-Ina(1)	0.5	1.6	Iida	0.7	2.3
Suwa(1)	0.5	1.6	Minami-Saku(1)	0.8	2.5
Shimo-Ina(1)	0.6	1.8	Kita-Saku(1)	0.8	2.5
Nishi-Chikuma	0.6	1.8	Chiisagata(2)	0.8	2.5
Chiisagata(1)	0.6	1.8	Higashi-Chikuma(2)	0.8	2.5
Sarashina(1)	0.6	1.8	Kita-Azumi(1)	0.8	2.5
Hanishina	0.6	1.8	Sarashina(2)	0.8	2.5
Kami-Minouchi(1)	0.6	1.8	Shimo-Takai(2)	0.8	2.5
Minami-Azumi(1)	0.6	1.8	Kami-Minouchi(3)	0.8	2.5
Nagano	0.6	1.8	Shimo-Minouchi(2)	0.8	2.5
Ueda	0.6	1.8	Suwa(2)	0.8	2.5
Kami-Ina(2)	0.7	2.3	Matsumoto	0.8	2.5
Higashi-Chikuma(1)	0.7	2.3	Minami-Saku(2)	0.9	2.7
Kami-Takai	0.7	2.3	Kita-Saku(2)	0.9	2.7
Shimo-Ina(2)	0.7	2.3	Higashi-Chikuma(3)	0.9	2.7
Shimo-Takai(1)	0.7	2.3	Minami-Azumi(2)	0.9	2.7
Kami-Minouchi(2)	0.7	2.3	Kita-Azumi(2)	0.9	2.7
Shimo-Minouchi(1)	0.7	2.3			

Note : Kami-Ina(1) consists of 6 villages,(the same meaning for the rest), Suwa(1)-8, Shimo-Ina(1)-21, Chiisagata(1)-16, Sarashina(1)-19, Kami-Minouchi(1)-4, Minami-Azumi(1)-1, Kami-Ina(2)-25, Higashi-Chikuma(1)-1, Shimo-Ina(2)-16, Shimo-Takai(2)-8, Kami-Minouchi(2)-4, Shimo-Minouchi(1)-1, Minami-Saku(1)-16, Kita-Saku(1)-24, Chiisagata(2)-17, Higashi-Chikuma(2)-18, Kita-Azumi(1)-12, Sarashina(2)-8, Shimo-Takai(2)-11, Kami-Minouchi(3)-20, Shimo-Minouchi(2)-9, Suwa(2)-12, Minami-Saku(2)-7, Kita-Saku(2)-3, Higashi-Chikuma(3)-17, Minami-Azumi(2)-14, Kita-Azumi(2)-5.

Source: Nagano-Prefecture, History of the Rural Land Reform in Nagano-Prefecture, vol. 2, pp. 59 and 60, originally titled "Nagano-Ken Nochi-Kaikaku Shi,"(Nagano-Prefecture, 1960).

2. PURCHASE PLANS

Initial action that the local commission took in preparing for the transfer operation was to make an investigation of each tract of cultivated land within the jurisdiction of the villages. Reporting forms for this purpose, provided by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, specified the size, type and location of land available for purchases by the Government. A ministerial ordinance of 14 January 1947 instructed village commissioners to study all records and undertake all investigations necessary to determine the ownership status of the properties within their jurisdiction.³ Information thus obtained was to be reported to prefectural governors. On the basis of these investigations a consolidated estimate of the total amount of land available in each prefecture was calculated by the prefectural land commissions. This estimate, in turn, served to establish the amount of cultivated land available for transfer in each of the ownership categories fixed by law.

As a matter of fact, Nagano-Prefecture's local land commissions carried out four continual investigations of the kind mentioned above, the last one and the most accurate one of which calculated that land available for the governmental purchase would amount to 42,729 *cho* which meted 69.2% of all tenanted lands.⁴ To the contrary, the proportion of the whole country indicated 81.1 % then, and therefore the distance of approximately 12 % between Nagano-Prefecture's proportion to be transferred and that of the whole country must be a subject to be given the explanation for. The lowness of the proportion of liberated lands' area fundamentally stemmed in the smallness of area owned by absentee landlords whose tenanted land was supposed to be purchased by the Government and completely transferred in ownership. In fact, area owned by absentee landlord to be purchased in Nagano-Prefecture was rated at 29.7 % while the proportion of the whole country was 41.5 %.⁵ As a result, while 84 % of all lands was to become owner-cultivated lands, area of tenanted lands was estimated to amount to 14 %, which was the third highest proportion of the whole country, next to 15.4 % of Shiga-Prefecture and 14.4 % of Nara-Prefecture.⁶

Apart from the situation mentioned above, the reader may have to pay attention to the fact that Nagano-Prefecture had more proportion of exempted area from purchase by the Government than the whole country, concretely Nagano-Prefecture's proportion amounted to 11.5 % to that of Japan on average 9.1 %. Regarding exemption to be granted, Owner-Farmer Establishment Special Measures Law had a provision that the Government should not make the purchase if the land was nationalized, sited for research, town-lot, or so on, the actual parts of the provisions of which are to be as follows :⁷

The Government shall not make the purchase, prescribed in Art. 5, of the agricultural lands which fall under any one of items mentioned below:

1. Agricultural lands which the Government or any public corporation employs for public or official purposes ;
2. Agricultural lands which are owned by the Metropolis, Hokkaido, prefecture, city, town, or village (omitted for the rest);
3. Agricultural lands which are used as the object of experiment and research

- or guidance of agriculture (omitted for the rest);
4. Agricultral lands which are situated within the area of the lands whre the adjustment of town-lots shall be effected (omitted for the rest);
 5. Agricultural lands which are deemed as suitable to be used for the altered purpose in the near future (omitted for the rest) ;
 6. In the case that, inasmuch as an owner farmer cannot follow by himself the cultivating business on his owner-farmer lands because of illness or any other cause to be specified by the Ordinance concerned, the same owner-farmer lands are temporarily employed by other person for the purpose of cultivating business on the ground of lease or loan for use, the agricultural lands which the City, Town or Village Agricultural Land Commission deems to be the lands to be cultivated in the near future by the owner himself and deems it suitable that it be so cultivated. (omitted for the rest) ;
 7. Owner-farmer lands into which have been developed, by the owner of the pasture lands purchased in accordance with provisions of Art. 40-2, the pasture lands which remain in his ownership after the said purchase ;
 8. Agricultural lands the yield of which is very fluctuating, such as newly reclaimed lands, burnt-over lands, lands periodically converted into forests, (omitted for the rest) ;

Among those No. 3, No. 6, and No. 7 turned out higher weighed in Nagano-Prefecture than the whole country, respectively 11.2 % for Nagano-Prefecture to 8.6 % of the whole country, 22.6 % to 12.2 %, and 42.7 % to 29.6 %.⁸ In dealing with the purchase of pasture, in fact, each local land commission found some difficulties, under the situastion that in December 1947 the Owner-Farmer Establishment Special Measures Law was amended to extend the purchase principles for cultivated land to pasture land though the original land reform legislation had provided for the purchase of a limited amount of pasture land. The total amount of lands legally classified as pasture lands amounted to 939,023 hectares, of which 19 percent (182,377 hectares) was in Hokkaido.⁹ The amendment defined pasture lands as those used chiefly for grassing or mowing. If more than 30 % of the surface of the area in question was covered by trees, it was classified as forest land. In the case of the purchase of pasture lands, even more than in the case of cultivated lands considerable latitude was necessary to provide for varying land conditions. The task of recommending the exemptions was entrusted to specially created pasture land advisory commissions appointed in each prefecture by the prefectural governor, which consisted of 10 agronomists, livestock specialists, farm management and reclamation specialists. The price which the Government would pay for pasture land was not to exceed 45 percent of the price of nearby upland fields with approximately the same type of soil. Thus, it should be presumed to some extent that Nagano-Pfecture's higher weight of No. 7 category was very much affected by the determination of its pasture advisory commission.

3. PURCHASE AND SALE PRICE

The price at which land would be purchased by the Government was based on its recorded rental value, an officially calculated figure revised every 10 years, used for assessing taxes. The Owner-Farmer Establishment Special Measures Law established the price at 40 times the 1938 rental value for paddy land and 48 times the rental value for upland fields.¹⁰ As mentioned above, landlords were scheduled to receive an additional subsidy of 220 yen per tan of paddy fields and 130 yen per tan of upland fields. In Nagano-Prefecture 25 percent of the whole purchase amounts was paid in cash while 21 percent in the whole country on average.¹¹ It is very likely to be a suitable explanation that it was due to its smallness of tenanted land area whether owned by resident or absentee landlords, in another word, due to the smallness of purchased land area.

Regarding sale price, tenant purchasers had the option of paying the whole amount or making an initial payment at the time of transfer in the case of which the balance could be paid in 24 annual installments, with interest of 3.2 percent per year, actually payable over a period of 30 years. Moreover, the annual installments, plus land taxes and other financial obligations incident to land ownership, could never exceed one third of the gross income from the yield.

As for Nagano-Prefecture's case of sale price, payment of the whole amount all at once grasped surprisingly high proportion of 99.9 %, supposedly because sale price kept the level determined by the Law while price of agricultural products was rising rapidly owing to the food crisis prevailing all over the country, and simultaneously because sale price level turned out very low owing to the extreme inflation going on.¹²

Putting those mentioned above together, the reader should keep it in mind that results of land transfer in Nagano-Prefecture considerably exceeded the area planned, therefore the Rural Land Reform was proceeded quite successfully and throughly in Nagano-Prefecture.

Notes

1.-a Owner-Farmer Establishment Special Measures Law, Law No.43, October 21st, 1946, art. 3. After indicating limited areas in both cases in Item 2 and Item 3, says,

" The area per Metropolis or prefectures prescribed in Item 2 or Item 3 of the preceding paragraph, shall be determined in such a way that the average area thereof shall become about one chobu with regard to the lands mentioned in Item 2 and about three chobu with regard to the lands mentioned in Item 3.

In case it shall be deemed especially necessary, the Metropolitan, Hokkaido or Prefectural Agricultural Land Commission may, subject to the approval of the Central Agricultural Land Commission, divide the limits of the Metropolis, Hokkaido or prefecture concerned into two or more limits and determine the same area in place of the area mentioned in Item 2 or Item 3

of Par. 1 in respect to each of the said limits. However, the area to be determined in respect to each of the limits shall be determined in such a way that the average area thereof shall become nearly the area per Metropolis, Hokkaido or prefecture concerned, mentioned in Item 2 or Item 3 of the same paragraph."

- 1.-b In the sentences "chobu" means exactly the same as "cho", and the unit of land area has been used commonly till the present day.
2. As for owner-farmers of tenanted lands, the proportion to all the farmers was in Nagano-Prefecture 26.4 % as compared with that of the whole country 22.3 % while the proportion of owner-farmers of tenanted land leasing less than 0.5 cho, was 17.6 % in Nagano-Prefecture compared with the whole country's 13.9 %. Consequently, in Nagano-Prefecture, the proportion of owner-cultivators borrowing small piece of land to all was very much higher than the whole country concurrently with lower proportion of non-borrowing owner-cultivators.
See Nagano-Prefecture, *History of the Rural Land Reform in Nagano-Prefecture*, vol. 2, originally titled "Nagano-Ken Nochi-Kaikaku Shi" (Nagano-Prefecture, 1960).
3. *History of the Non-Military Activities of the Occupation of Japan, 1945-1951*, op.cit., p.61.
4. *History of the Rural Land Reform in Nagano-Prefecture*, op.cit., vol. 2, p.75, table 17.
5. *ibid.*, p.80, table 23.
6. *ibid.*, p.76.
7. Owner-Farmer Establishment Special Measures Law, Law No. 43, October 21st, 1946, Art. 5, extracted from *History of the Non-Military Activities of the Occupation of Japan, 1945-1951*, op.cit., Appendix pp. 34 and 44, appendix 4.
8. *History of the Rural Land Reform in Nagano-Prefecture*, op.cit., vol. 2, p.77, table 18.
9. *History of the Non-Military Activities of the Occupation of Japan, 1945-1951*, op.cit., pp. 76 and 77.
10. Owner-Farmer Establishment Special Measures Law, Law No.43, October 21st, 1946, art. 6. The Law says :
" In the case where there is available the rental value of the lands concerned as fixed under the Land Register Law, the consolidation mentioned in the preceding paragraph shall be determined within the extent of the amount which represents 40 times the said rental value for paddy fields and 48 times for ordinary fields " ; (omitted for the rest of Art. 6).
11. See *History of the Rural Land Reform in Nagano-Prefecture*, op.cit., vol. 2, p.90, table 30.
12. *ibid.* p.89.

III Land Transfer Proceeded in Hongo-District, Matsumoto-City

We have so far treated how the Rural Land Reform, as a whole, was proceeded in Nagano-Prefecture as well as in Japan Proper, devoting no special attention to actual examples found in the phase or level of local villages. Dealing with the case found in Asama-Area and Misayama-Area both of which were parts of Hongo-Village (Matsumoto-City's part today) in the prewar time, a vivid example of transfer of land ownership caused by the Rural Land Reform is to be given hereafter.

1. PURCHASE PLAN

Implementation of the Rural Land Reform started with planning of land transfer which was led by purchase plan naturally, and it is, in general, supposed to have taken nearly two years during which purchase and sale was proceeded in nine times altogether, as mentioned above. Examining the case of Hongo-District, however, shows us that according to circumstances of each district it took more than two years, even four years, although the implementation in the last years cannot help giving the impression of additional one because of the smallness of area purchased and sold.¹

During the whole period of the Rural Land Reform, as far as Hongo-District is concerned, total purchased area of tenanted land amounted, at least, to 157 *cho* which consisted of 72 *cho* of paddy lands and 85 *cho* of uplands.² As can be seen from the **TABLE III** below, the land commission had purchased 86 % of the whole area planned to purchase till the 10th purchase. Counting the fact that only tiny area had been targetted to purchase since the 11th purchase to the last one, the implementation of the Rural Land Reform in Hongo-District, virtually, had ended as far as the end of 1948, which was supposed to be the official time-limit set by SCAP/GHQ. Situation as follows made those additional purchases happen.

After land transfer was substantially completed and the main action in connection with the reform had been accomplished, the serious matter of a realistic pricing policy for the future had to be considered. Widespread illegal dealing in agricultural land could not be overlooked. Successful prosecution of violation was rare, and it was easily seen that no enforcement program could possibly abolish unauthorized transactions when the difference between the legal price and the price which reflected public opinion of productive value was so great. SCAP was in favor of abandoning agricultural land price control. To the objection that such a measure would, through increased demand, cause the price of land to jump to irrational heights, SCAP insisted that such a demand could not be considered effective demand inasmuch as the farmers, even if they were otherwise able to buy the land, would not only have the purchase money, but limiting retention rates would prevent any large-scale acquisition by a single individual.

TABLE III

PURCHASE PLAN BY THE LOCAL LAND COMMISSION OF HONGO-MURA
(tan)

No. of Record	Paddy Land	%	Upland	%	Total	Date of Purchase	Date of Planning
1	160.8	63.5	92.3	36.5	253.2		5 Mar. '47
2	97.3	50.4	95.6	49.6	192.9		15 May '47
3	31.8	46.8	36.1	53.1	68.0		15 Oct. '47
4	55.9	39.7	84.9	60.3	140.9	2 Dec. '47	
5	54.1	66.3	27.5	33.7	81.5	2 Feb. '48	
6	127.3	50.6	124.5	49.4	251.8		13 Feb. '48
7	42.1	38.5	67.4	61.5	109.5	2 Jul. '48	
8	40.0	33.2	80.4	66.8	120.4	2 Oct. '48	
9	50.9	39.3	78.1	60.3	129.5	2 Dec. '48	
10							10 Oct. '48
11	8.2	29.0	20.1	71.0	28.3		31 Jan. '49
12	1.0	4.3	22.1	95.7	23.1	2 Jul. '49	
13		0.0	2.7	100.0	2.7	2 Oct. '49	
14	2.0	10.1	17.8	89.9	19.8	2 Dec. '49	
15	9.6	41.2	13.7	58.8	23.3	2 Dec. '50	
16	1.7	55.2	1.4	44.8	3.1		
17	1.6	100.0		0.0	1.6		12 Nov. '50
18	2.7	44.5	3.3	54.4	6.1	2 Mar. '51	
19		0.0	4.3	100.0	4.3	2 Jul. '51	
20	1.7	47.3	1.9	52.7	3.6	1 Nov. '51	
21(1)	0.2	7.7	2.4	89.7	2.7		10 Mar. '52
21(2)		0.0	71.5	100.0	71.5	31 Mar. '52	
22	1.6	5.8	1.1	4.0	28.0	1 Jul. '52	
25	1.0	62.8	0.5	32.9	1.6	15 Oct. '52	
Total	691.7		849.8		1,567.7		

Note : For the No.10, area planned to purchase is unknown because the 10th record is missing.
As for period of purchase there are some records in which date is not written. Date of plan is listed on the table in such a case.

Source: Hongo-Mura Land Commission, "Purchase Plan", 1st to 25th, kept in the Archives of Matsumoto-City.

As a necessary stop-gap, on 1 August 1950 the Government issued temporary instructions to prefectural governors and other officials, ordering them to withhold permission for transfer of agricultural land.³ The action resulted in temporary suspension of all transfer of agricultural land. Facing such a situation as illustrated, SCAP issued the Potsdam cabinet order on 11 September 1950. The outline of this order was existing price control to remain and later purchase of lands subject to the former price ceiling. Implementation of land transfer, thus, was still to last two more years since 1950.

Some of those records of purchase plan gives us an information what was the ratio of purchased area formerly owned by resident landlords, absentee landlords, and even corporations or juridical persons. At a glance at TABLE IV, there seems

to be no authentic interrelation between the resident, absentee and corporations, except that the target was clearly aimed for each purchase plan. It could only be concluded, therefore, that the local land commission of Hongo-Mura concentrated on tenanted and cultivated land owned by resident owner-cultivators at the beginning, then dealt with tenanted land owned by absentee landlords mainly. Land owned by corporations or juridical persons apparently came last. In other words, as the time went by the main target of the local land commission shifted from the resident to the absentee and corporations as a whole.

TABLE IV

PURCHASE PLAN BY LOCAL LAND COMMISSION OF
HONGO-MURA SORTED BY CATEGORY OF OWNER
(tan)

No. of Record	Resident	%	Absentee	%	Corporation	%	Total
3	124.8	100					124.8
4			117.8	84	23.1	16	140.9
5	52.0	64	20.1	25	9.5	12	81.6
6	231.2	92	20.6	8			251.8
7	57.8	53	42.4	39	9.4	9	109.7
8	57.9	48	25.6	21	36.9	31	120.4

Source: Hongo-Mura Land Commission, "Purchase Plan", 3rd to 8th, kept in the Archives of Matsumoto-City.

2. SALE PLAN

Notwithstanding such a situation concerning the schedule of land transfer as described above, it was the delay of completion of land transfer that SCAP/GHQ had misgivings about, now that the Japanese was facing the serious food crisis and it was the most preferential problem to solve. The memorandum of GHQ titled, " NR 313 (2 Jul. '48) A, MEMORANDUM FOR : Chief, NR, SUBJECT : Action taken to Expedite Sale Phase of Land Reform Program " , for instance, shows how nervous SCAP was of schedule of land transfer, through the expression, " The following steps have been taken to remedy the unsatisfactory progress of the sale phase of the land reform program." ⁴

On the contrary of purchase plan, there is only a defective series of records regarding sale plan which consists of 1st to 3rd, 6th and 8th (see TABLE V). Comparing those two tables (TABLE III and TABLE V), it is quite easy to find correspondence between the dates of purchase plan and those of sale plan. Their clear correspondence means that implementation of land transfer was proceeded as a set made of purchase and sale, as the reader may easily presume. The outstanding specification, however, should be the difference of area between purchase and sale. For instance, area of the first sale exceeds the first purchase by some 5 *cho* as well as respectively the second approximately 2 *cho* and the

third 3 *cho*, while the 6th and 8th are short respectively by some 6 *cho* and by 4 *cho*. In the case of excess, we should assume that actual purchase was proceeded very successfully and proceeded more thoroughly than expected, though shortage was accompanied with the matter of consolidation.

TABLE V

SALE PLAN BY THE LOCAL LAND COMMISSION OF HONGO-MURA
(tan)

No. of Record	Paddy Land	%	Upland	%	Total	Date of Purchase	Date of Planning
1(1)	159.4	62.8	94.4	37.2	253.9		5 Mar. '47
1(2)	19.6	61.8	12.1	38.2	31.7	17 Mar. '47	
1(3)	6.9	47.9	7.5	52.1	14.4	18 Mar. '47	
2	100.4	51.0	96.3	48.9	196.8	16 Jun. '47	
2(2)	6.1	37.6	10.1	62.4	16.2	27 Jun '47	
3	26.4	28.0	34.8	36.9	94.3	24 Oct. '47	
6	94.9	49.3	97.7	50.7	192.6	24 Feb. '48	
8	20.5	24.2	65.6	77.5	84.6	20 Aug. '48	
Total	434.3		418.6		884.7		

Source: Hongo-Mura Land Commission, "Sale Plan", 1st to 3rd, 6th and 8th kept in the Archives of Matsumoto-City.

On consolidation projects undertaken by land commission, an area came under consideration when its survey was proposed by prefectural authorities, two or more promoters, or by the local land commission.⁵ If half of those to be affected by the project voted to approve its consideration, the local land commission drafted a preliminary consolidation plan. Acceptance of the plan drafted by the commission required the approval of two thirds of those to be affected by the project. Upon acceptance the plan was publicly displayed for 60 days and any objections regarding it were heard by the local land commission. Within the next 60 days the local land commission decided whether or not to adjust the plan in accordance with the objections raised. The approval of the prefectural governor on the plan validated it, and actual operation to effect the plan were undertaken. Each consolidation project needed such a long period and rather complexed procedure that purchased area could not be saled as smooth as expected.

3. PURCHASE AND SALE PRICE

Let us stop and take a different sort of look around the phase of land transfer proceeded in Hongo-District. Inquiry from the viewpoint of price and subsidy definitely gives us another vivid circumstances of the Rural Land Reform.

The Law provided, as mentioned above, that the price for paddy land should be 40 times the 1938 rental value and for upland 48 times the rental value, with an

additional subsidy of 220 yen per tan of paddy land and 130 yen per tan of upland. The provision also limited maximum area for subsidy to be paid which was three *cho* in Japan Proper.

In the first place, the price provision was applied severely as can be seen from TABLE VI, the data of which submits price of exactly 40 times the rental value for paddy land and price of exactly 48 times for upland, although the data is extracted only from the third record.

Secondly, sale price was almost equal to that of purchase price. Regarding the price of purchase and sale, in general, the price at which the Government sold the land to eligible buyers was fixed at the base rate paid the landlord, in actual price it averaged 750 yen per tan of paddy land and 465 yen per tan of upland. Although there are few records purchase price and sale price of which can be compared at the same time, the price of the 6th purchase was 813 yen per tan of paddy land on average while the sale price of the 6th was 826 yen, and for the 8th respectively 702 yen of purchase price to 323 yen of sale price, as far as Hongo-District was concerned. Accordingly a tendency of rather higher price than the average of the whole country for paddy land and lower price than the whole country for upland can be extracted from the records. The tendency that price tended to fall as the time went by for both of paddy land and upland should also be noted.

Thirdly, in spite that the subsidy was limited to an amount of land, 20 % to 30 % of the whole price was always to be paid to landlords, mainly because the limitation of three *cho* for subsidy was too high for a district like Hongo where area owned by landlords was too small to make it sensible.

TABLE VI

PURCHASE PRICE SORTED BY CATEGORY OF LAND, AND AMOUNT OF SUBSIDY
(yen)

No. of Record	Paddy Land Price(A)	Rental Value(B)	A/B	Amount of Subsidy	Upland Price(A)	Rental Value(B)	A/B	Amount of Subsidy	Total Price	Total Subsidy
3	57,628	40.69	40	15,848	23,411	488	48	6,828	81,039	22,676
4	45,540			0	37,019			0	82,559	0
5	36,937			8,375	14,954			2,413	51,891	10,788
6	103,554			26,671	42,248			10,758	145,802	37,429
7	36,284			7,634	29,466			3,122	65,750	10,757
8	28,072			3,223	26,011			5,834	54,083	9,056
Total	434.3				434.3					

Note : Rental value is available only in the third record, though in other records the values are missing.

Source: Hongo-Mura Land Commission, "Purchase Plan", 3rd to 8th, kept in the Archives of Matsumoto-City.

4. ACTUAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF LAND TRANSFER

The most tangible changes brought about by the execution of the Rural Land Reform program can generally be summarized regarding accomplishments of the program,⁶

- (1) Almost 2 million hectares of land, or about one third of the cultivated area of Japan, was transferred from tenancy to owner operation.
- (2) The amount of land cultivated by tenants had been reduced by 34 %.
- (3) Almost two thirds of all farm households in Japan purchase land ; nearly 4 million farmers were established as owner-cultivators.
- (4) Absentee landlordism or parasitic landlordism which before the purchase of lands was begun comprised 11.2 % of all landownership, had disappeared entirely.
- (5) The number of large owners was greatly reduced ; the family size farm had become the rule.

Among those mentioned above, No.(5), that is how the number of large owners was reduced and how the family size farm had become the rule, shall be examined in this section. The former Asama-Mura and Misayama-Mura (only written as Asama and Misayama henceforth) are supposed to be dealt with for the examination, though Hongo-Mura consisted of districts formerly called O-Mura, Hora-Mura, Hara-Mura, Soza-Mura, Mizukuma-Mura, Yokota-Mura and Inakura-Mura apart from the two villages.⁷

Firstly, in this district purchase and sale of tenanted land had already begun until February 1947, although implementation of the Rural Land Reform was supposed to start officially from March 1947. A record of investigation of each tract dated February 1947 that was immediately before the first official implementation of transfer of lands, offers some information about the then situation of purchase and sale executed in Asama.⁸ The local land commission had already purchased and sold 15.5 *cho* of tenanted land formerly owned by absentee landlords and 9.5 *cho* of resident-landlords-owned land, the sum of which meets 60 percent of all tenanted land of Asama in 1945. Undoubtedly substantial transfer of tenanted lands had proceeded more than half the way, with only the task of official registration left.

Secondly, non-cultivating landlords as well as through tenant farmers were not the main phase of Hongo-District. As for the status of Asama's farmers in 1947, prior to implementation, there were, except for 31 persons who were non-agrarian residents, 162 cultivators listed on the record, among whom 55 farmers owned tenanted lands of totally 18 *cho* within Asama. The area of land tenanted by those resident landlords, as far as Asama is concerned, varied more than 4 *cho* to 0.1 *cho*, with only one non-cultivating landlord, on average of 0.3 *cho* which seems rather small, while the number of tenants owning none amounted to 40 whose area of tenanted land was approximately 0.3 *cho*. On the contrary, there were 67 owner-tenant cultivators whose own land amounted to 14 *cho* of area altogether and tenanted land area amounted to 13.5 *cho*. Summing it up, in Asama the farmers were divided almost evenly in number into three groups, the first one of which was resident landlords leasing small lands, second one of which was tenant

cultivators owning no lands, and the last one of which was owner-tenant cultivators with roughly one half of self-owned land and another half of tenanted land.

In Misayama there were 128 cultivators listed altogether on the record dated February 1947, 45 of which were owner-cultivators with leasing land and 70 of which were tenanted cultivators with no own land. Area leased by those 45 within Misayama amounted to about 22 *cho* and that of land tenanted by no-land-owner cultivators was as small as 4 *cho*. Regarding the owner-tenanted cultivators, the ratio of area owned by themselves and area tenanted by them is two to one, in real quantity 4.3 *cho* to 2.1 *cho*. It must be the characteristic aspect of Misayama as compared with Asama that there were, among 128 farmers, as many as 70 owner-tenant farmers, whose own area reached as much as 43 *cho* against 21 *cho* of tenanted area. Consequently, putting all this together, in Misayama the core of landholdings status was owner-tenanted one, and moreover, the nucleus of those part-owners' farming was steadfastly based on owner-operated lands. It is rather easy to assume that the Rural Land Reform did not change the landholdings status as dramatically as found in other parts of Japan, due to the fewness of thorough tenant farmers and the large proportion of owner-operated land to the whole part-owners' land. It is also a feasible viewpoint that the Rural Land Reform was preceded almost thoroughly, in another word, pushed forward up to the ultimate point.

Thirdly, and concerning with the second viewpoint, Hongo-District's land reform resulted in extremely small area of tenanted lands left, as a whole. Tenanted land was holding 28 percent of all cultivated lands in Asama at the time of February 1947 while 72 percent for owner-operated land. Since the ratio of owner-operated land and tenanted land before the Land Reform was approximately 6 to 4 in the whole country as well as in Nagano-Prefecture, high standard of owner-operated land's weight in Asama can not help attracting our attention. After all the Land Reform brought about extreme smallness of tenanted land area such as 0.6 percent to the whole cultivated lands in 1951. Speaking of Misayama, situation of farming viewed from the point of landholdings was more unique and even more extreme than Asama. At the time of 1945 Misayama's proportion of owner-operated lands was 81 percent while 19 percent for tenanted lands, which was an outstanding level as compared with the whole country and even Nagano-Prefecture on average. Owner-Operated land area reached as much as 95 percent after the Land Reform in Misayama, whereas tenanted lands held only 5 percent naturally. Considering the standard of 10 % for tenanted land in the whole country and 14 % for Nagano-Prefecture which was one of the highest level of all prefectures, the Land Reform led Misayama to almost perfect establishment of owner-farmers as the Law requested.⁹

The concrete process of land transfer is shown very clearly in the following table (TABLE VII). During four years from 1947 to 1951, the core of landholdings list shifted from 0.1 *cho* to around 0.5 *cho* in Asama whereas any drastic change can not be found in Misayama except that landholdings status tend to centralize to around 1 *cho*. As for individual increase and decrease of holdings scale in Asama, there were 74 farmers who lost area of cultivated lands, 70 farmers who

increased it and 18 of no change, while in Misayama there were respectively 48, 79 and only one. The average area lost during the years was 3.2 *cho* in Asama and 6.3 *cho* in Misayama while the average area of newly acquired land was 3 *cho* in Asama and 3.1 *cho* in Misayama.

TABLE VII
DISTRIBUTION OF HOLDING SCALE, 1947
AND 1951
(household)

	ASAMA		MISAYAMA	
	1947	1951	1947	1951
≥ 4 cho	1		2	
≥ 3 cho			2	
≥ 2 cho	1		11	3
≥ 1 cho	8	4	21	44
≥ 0.8cho	8	10	19	22
≥ 0.6cho	9	14	19	17
≥ 0.4cho	19	25	18	18
≥ 0.2cho	20	34	10	17
≥ 0.1cho	57	12	13	4
0	39	63	13	3
TOTAL	162	162	128	128

Note : There are twenty more landholders in both villages.
They are excluded in the table because they are not farmers at all.

Source: Hongo-Mura Land Commission, "List of Investigation for Cultivated Lands."

What this fact and the table indicating holdings-scale distribution obedient to time suggest is simply standardization of holdings scale in both blocks, Asama and Misayama. Then, how deeply did the Rural Land Reform affect the district? It is not easy to answer such a question, except that both blocks did not experience too drastic a change but established only standardized owner-cultivators. A few landlords, however, lost vast area of cultivated land the maximum of which was 4 *cho* in Asama and surprisingly 5.1 *cho* in Misayama. We are able to count 5 landlords who lost more than 1 *cho* in Asama and 9 in Misayama including the biggest landlord losing about 5 *cho*. The change must have been drastic only to those landowners.

Notes

1. In Hongo-District purchase and sale were not completed until even 1950, even if estimated at the earliest. As a matter of fact, records of purchase plans made by the local land commission of Hongo-District began with the first purchase plan dated 15 March 1947 and ended with the 25th dated October

- 195 even as far as they can be confirmed. See TABLE III.
2. The record of 10th purchase is missing from the documents kept in the Archive, and it is the reason for the expression " at least " .
 3. *History of the Non-Military Activities of the Occupation of Japan, 1945-1951*, op.cit., pp. 109 and 111.
 4. *Collection of Materials Relating to The Rural Land Reform*, op.cit., vol.14, p. 499. What follows the sentence is ;
 - a. On 28 February 1948, NR informed a Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry representative that 50 percent of all land purchased under land reform program should be sold by 31 March 1948, and a major portion of the sale program completed by 31 July 1948. Further stated that unless this schedule was met, there would be danger of noncompletion of the program by 31 December 1948.
 - b. On 5 April 1948, NR informed Chief, Agricultural Land Division, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry that the Ministry's proposed schedule of land reform operations, including sale of land, was inadequate.
 - c. On 16 April 1948, NR informed Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry that March 1948 land sale report indicated a thoroughly unsatisfactory current condition of the program. (the rest omitted for "c")
 - d. On 20 April 1948, NR favorably considered a bureau notice to all prefectural governors to be issued by Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry strongly urging virtual completion of the sale phase of the land reform program by 2 July 1948.
 - e. On 4 June 1948, Itr, GHQ, SCAP, to CG, Eighth Army, AG 602 (4 Jun. '48) NR/A, subj.: Resale of Agricultural Land, stated that the Japanese Government must sell 1,000,000 cho of arable land by 1 August 1948 to insure completion of the land transfer phase of the land reform program by 31 December 1948 and requesting surveillance of the execution of the schedule.
 5. *History of the Non-Military Activities of the Occupation of Japan, 1945-1951*, op.cit., pp. 81 and 82.
 6. *History of the Non-Military Activities of the Occupation of Japan, 1945-1951*, op.cit., pp. 81
 7. In our feudalistic times, that is Edo Era actually, there were nine villages in the area called Hongo-District which, in Meiji Era, became a big village named Hongo-Mura. See H.Kimura, A Historical Inquiry into Transition of Individual Holdings and Family Size in Rural Community, op. cit.
 8. The record is a list of investigation of each tract and it is named " Nochi-Chosa Hyo" by Land Commission of Asama-Mura. It is preserved in the Archives of Matsumoto-City. In this study two of them, record of Asama and that of Misayama, are used though other seven records are also available.
 - 9.-a The highest standard of proportion of tenanted land was 15.4 percent for Shiga-Prefecture, and second highest was 14.4 percent for Nara-Prefecture. Nagano-Prefecture's level was ranked the third of all prefectures. See *History of the Rural Land Reform in Nagano-Prefecture*, op.cit., vol. 2, p.77, table 19,

based on the data of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

- 9.-b See Owner-Farmer Establishment Special Measures Law, Law No. 43, October 21st 1946, *History of the Non-Military Activities of the Occupation of Japan, 1945-1951*, op.cit., pp. 38 and 87, Appendix 4.

Conclusion

As matters now stand, we have no other conclusion than that the Rural Land Reform fundamentally exterminated absentee-landlordism or parasitic landowner system in Japan which had lasted for nearly 80 years since the establishment of land tax, called " Chiso-Kaisei ", or which had substantially lasted for approximately 170 years since the middle of Tokugawa Era when the tenant system was supposed to begin the spread.

SCAP assessed the Rural Land Reform as having had an effect on the income distribution of farms, and GHQ affirmed that the effect of income shift from a small class of landowners to large groups of owner-cultivators would ultimately be a net decrease in total capital accumulation but an increase in the accumulation of agricultural capital. What is more and probably more important from the viewpoint of this study, SCAP insists that another achievement of the land reform program was its impact on the social structure of the Japanese villages, pointing out that the emergence of a new group of peasant proprietors constituted a challenge to the traditional influence and prestige of the former landlords. What the challenge of the new group was, according to SCAP, the new group of peasant proprietors' participation in matters which vitally concerned them. Each community is supposed to have accomplished the reform literally, more concretely speaking, by deciding for itself through its commission representatives of local land commission the new group is supposed to commit itself to the reform. Socio-Economic effects of the kind, however, should be examined and judged much more circumspectly, because many other factors except for the Land Reform, for instance, establishment of agricultural cooperatives, election reform, development of legislative responsibilities and local government reform, should have contributed to their acquisition of ability for participation of that kind.

What we can extract much more clearly from the circumstances described so far is an economic effect on agriculture in rural villages of Japan, though. Regarding an economic effect of the Rural Land Reform on our agriculture, especially effect on landholdings status, my former study conclusively says, " The fact that till the end of the latest war the largest landholder of Asama 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 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 (used to mean the same as the Rural Land Reform) to our feudalistic status. Therefore, it is a reasonable conclusion that the agrarian

reform (the same as the Rural Land Reform) played a role to bring the landholding system in rural communities back to the status quo of at least one hundred years ago."1 In the former work detailed circumstances of the Rural Land Reform was not submitted yet, therefore the question of the circumstances has been left unanswered. Although such an inquiry into the actual circumstances of the Rural Land Reform as described so far definitely fail to bring out the socio-economic peculiarities of the reform, the whole description of this study should be nothing but the answer.

Notes

1. See H.Kimura, 'A Historical Inquiry into Transition of Individual Holdings and Family Size in Rural Community' , op. cit., p 178, Summary.