

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE ORIGINS OF
TENANT UNREST IN JAPAN OF THE 1920s.

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an investigation of the origins of the tenant farmer movement prevalent in Japan in the 1920 and '30s. This movement was a social movement of considerable importance. Accordingly, much research, both Japanese and Western, has been done on the movement. The concern of this thesis is with the origins of the movement at the rice-shoot level. The question addressed is; Why did the movement develop at this time in Japan's history? Events on the village level are investigated in search for the answer to this query. I have concerned myself with the 1920s alone since the developments in the 1930s merely represent an extension of those of the previous decade.

The sociologist James Scott has recently developed a theoretical framework for investigating the origins of tenant unrest as a universal historical phenomenon. This framework was first published in an article in the Journal of Asian Studies entitled "The Erosion of Patron-Client Bonds and Social Change in South East Asia" I have found this framework to provide a useful means of organizing the material relating to the origins of tenant unrest in Japan.

The basic premise of Scott's theory is that the vertical ties of loyalty binding the client to his patron are based on the receipt of basic goods and services from the patron. The client's minimum demands are subsistence guarantee and

protection. This bond can lose its legitimacy if the patron no longer supplies the goods and services expected by the client. Under these conditions the potential for tenant unrest is created. This potential, however, is not always realized. Whether the patron loses his legitimacy without a client reaction or not depends on several factors. Three of the more important factors that are investigated herein are the state of the client's economy, the means for the client to mobilize, and influences beyond the village that either encourage or discourage the expression of his discontent.

I argue herein that the landlord-tenant relationship in Japan is a patron-client relationship and that changes in Japanese society generally and Japanese rural society specifically led to the loss of legitimacy of that relationship. Four specific changes contributed to that development. The increase in absentee landlordism, the increasing tendency for landlords to invest their money outside of the rural sector, the steady decline in the number of cultivating landlords and the increasing political identification of the landlord with the prefectural bureaucracy all combined to alter the quality of landlord-tenant relations and gradually divided the village along class lines.

It was this loss of legitimacy of the landlord-tenant relationship that created the potential for tenant unrest. The realization of this potential in the form of organized tenant farmer movement depended primarily on three factors.

First, the economic conditions prevailing in Japan in the 1920s were such that the tenant desperately needed the goods and services traditionally provided by the landlord. In the absence of an alternate source of supply the tenant was forced to react against the loss of the services. Second, the existence of a village level tenant farmer union enabled the tenants to successfully mobilize their resources and confront the landlords with their demands in form of a collective bargaining unit. Finally, in order for the movement to have developed it was also necessary that the tenant farmer's traditional attitude toward his landlord change. This change was fostered in large part by the breakdown in the traditional landlord-tenant relationship, but other political changes in Japanese society were not without effect. The labor movement and tenant participation within it was particularly important in fostering changes in tenant farmer consciousness and the development of a class conscious tenant farmer movement. These three conditions are the factors crucial to the realization of the potential for tenant unrest that led to the development of the tenant farmer movement in the 1920s.

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CHAPTER I

OVERVIEW OF THE RURAL CRISIS

The decade following World War I was a time of great social, economic and political upheaval in rural Japan. The rural crisis gripping the nation was so extensive and highly visible that even the foreign observer was able to trace its contours accurately. In the mid 1920s, one such observer wrote,

Agriculture in Japan is greatly disturbed. The daily press bears witness to the widespread discontent. There is trouble between farmer and government, between landlord and tenant. Farmers refuse to pay taxes to local governments; they withdraw their children from public schools in protest against official actions. They fight over the water and over the rents. There are riots and demonstrations. There are many arrests. A tenant farmer movement has taken up the fight for the rights of the tenants. Landlords have associated together to combat the movement. The basic industry of Japan is in considerable disorder.¹

The Japanese government, also aware of the disorder in rural society, regarded the situation with an air of crisis.²

Events that animated the small village of Kisasi, located on the Japan Sea in the prefecture of Niigata, reflect the nature of this rural crisis. They are not untypical of events all over Japan in the troubled 1920s. In Kisasi, early in the winter of 1922, a series of developments destined to effect profoundly the character of the tenant farmers of the village began to unfold. On the 23rd of November the 120 tenants of Katsuyanagi and Yokoi buraku, two of the village's seven hamlets, formed a tenants' union, collectively confronting six of their landlords and demanding a 25% reduction in their rent. Five of these six landlords

complied with the demands but the sixth, the largest landholder, refused to do so. When the tenants, in turn, refused to pay rent, this sixth landlord took them to court. He obtained a court injunction to prevent his tenants from entering the fields. This injunction was quickly withdrawn under pressure from public opinion. The tenants, however, did not withdraw their demands and when the landlord again refused to grant a reduction in rent the tenants retaliated by withholding payment. A four year court battle ensued. Finally on April 14th, 1926, the court issued a decree in favour of the landlord, and the tenants' case was lost. The landlords immediately followed this favourable settlement by obtaining an injunction to prevent recalcitrant tenants from entering their fields. To prevent this injunction from being implemented, 600 members of the tenants' union confronted the representative of the landlords and the police on May 5th, 1926. The tenants' lawyer was soon ordered to withdraw with the tenants, and when the tenants refused to do so, 340 of them were arrested. Thus began the famed 'Kisaki incident'. The events of May 5th, 1926, earned the village a permanent place in the history of rural Japan.

Temporarily routed by the arrests and evictions, the tenants changed their tactics. In protest over their treatment, they withdrew their children from the local school and refused to pay either taxes or rent. Defied

by the local landlords on the school council, the tenants decided to build their own school. In this endeavor they met constant harrassment. Their first attempt was blocked by an injunction against the use of the chosen site for that purpose. When the site was changed and the school finally built, the Department of Education declared the school unfit for the government's educational requirements. This declaration was followed by a police order that the teachers return to their place of registered domicile. Agitation by means of mass meetings, and demonstrations by the tenants of Kisasi and the neighbouring villages finally resulted in permission from the authorities to operate the school as a supplement to public education. Mass meetings were frequent. Not only Kisasi villagers but also tenants from miles around attended. The police, too, were in attendance and frequently ordered the speeches stopped or the speaker changed. They often forced changes in the meeting-place five or six times in the course of a single meeting. Despite this constant harrassment the tenants did not give up but continued to struggle with their landlords throughout the 1920s and into the 1930s.³

Admittedly, Kisasi is one of the more spectacular tenant disputes of the 1920's, but in rough outline it is typical of the disputes of the decade. A number of universal characteristics in disputes are clearly recognizable in the Kisasi dispute. First, there is the initial formation of a

tenants' union and the great break with tradition in the attempt to implement collective bargaining with landlords. The demand for rent reduction figures highly in almost all disputes. Further, the withholding of rent is a typical tenant tactic in disputes. Likewise, the use of a court injunction to prevent tenants from entering the fields is a common landlord counter-strategy. In fact, what distinguishes Kisasi from other disputes is the scale and intensity of the dispute. There were few disputes so long in the courts and few where the villagers were so determined to set up their own schools and create a 'counter culture' in the village.

Kisasi was just one of thousands of villages torn by strife between landlord and tenant. The Japanese authorities were deeply alarmed by the frequency and geographic extent of these tenant disputes. It was not merely the frequency of these events that disturbed the authorities. Something much more threatening to national stability was also cause for alarm. The Japanese Government had long regarded the rural sector as a bastion of stability and had taken great care from early Meiji times to ensure that the village was isolated from social and political conflict. Now it seemed the very thing to be feared - discontent in the villages - was growing. One writer expressed the import of the development of widespread dispute:

Not only were tenancy disputes more frequent than industrial labour disputes, they revealed

the existence of discontent in that very part of Japanese society, the rural village, long regarded as the ultimate guarantee of social stability.⁴

The Japanese government was distressed and an aura of hysteria is noticeable in even the most academic of government documents on the matter.

Indeed, the situation could not be ignored; it was serious. A look at a few statistics soon confirms this. In 1917, only 85 tenancy disputes were recorded. By 1920, this had climbed to 408, and then leapt dramatically to 1,680 disputes the following year. This is more than a four-fold increase. The trend for disputes to increase, though never again of such epic proportions, did not stop. The number of disputes on a yearly basis rose steadily year after year until it reached the peak of 6,170 incidents in 1937. In 1941, the last year for which disputes are recorded, 3,308 disputes occurred.⁵

These figures are even more meaningful when the extent of the population and cultivated area involved in the disputes is known. It is soon apparent that these disputes were small-scale in neither population nor acreage. On the contrary, during the 1920s an average 1,823 disputes per annum involved 27,740 landlords with 114,441 tenants. This is an average of 1.5 landlords and 65 tenants per dispute. The area involved, on a yearly average, was 75,794 chō (one chō is nearly 2.5 acres, so this amounts to approximately 189,485

acres) or an average 44 chō (approx. 110 acres) per dispute.⁶

The men and women who were involved in these disputes were part or full tenant farmers. The full tenants rented all the land they cultivated while the part-tenant farmer rented land to cultivate along with that which he owned. In 1921 tenant farmers comprised 28.5% of all cultivators while the part-tenants comprised yet another 40.9%.⁷ These full and part tenants and their families represented one third of Japan's population.

The tenancy system was not only extensive demographically; geographically it covered 47% of all Japan's cultivated land. While the area of tenanted land was extensive, the individual tenant's plot was not. The average size of a farm was 2 1/2 acres, scattered here and there throughout the village in a number of small plots.⁸ These millions of men and women, toiling on tiny farms within the framework of a tenancy system embodying many elements of feudal Japan, were the active participants in the formation of tenants' unions and in the confrontation with landlords in rural Japan. Their efforts in that direction were saluted by some as, "the most significant social development in Japan at the present time."⁹

The tenant farmer movement has long been recognized as an important part of the Japanese reality in the 1920s and 1930s. Accordingly, much research, Western and Japanese, has been done on

the phenomenon. This scholarship, however, is conspicuous in its concentration on matters somewhat removed from the rice-shoot level. Professor B. Waswo, particularly active in this research field, has recently commented on the nature of the existing research to the effect that, "a considerable body of material exists on the development of the tenant movement in the 1920s - on the creation of the national unions, their connections with the proletarian parties and the urban labor movement, and the doctrinal and tactical disputes among national leaders."¹⁰ She points out that rather less attention has been given to the origins of tenant unrest and the important question of why the tenant, ordinarily so indisposed to actively challenging village authority and landlords, was as militant as he was in the 1920s. Waswo's own research has been very much directed to just this question. This paper, too, will concentrate on developments on the rice-shoot level in a modest attempt to redress the imbalance in the field.

Waswo's research is not the only attempt by a western scholar to come to grips with the origins of tenant unrest in the 1920s. Professor G. Totten, author of several books and articles on Japanese political and labour history, has also turned his attention to the origins of tenant unrest. Research in the same vein is currently popular among Japanese scholars and, though the field is still underworked, new work frequently appears. I have drawn extensively on the

available English language sources but less on the Japanese sources. Since much of Japanese scholarship is descriptive rather than analytical it has been difficult to use as much Japanese language material as I would have liked. With those Japanese sources I have been able to use, I have brought new material into the discussion, especially in the area of political changes in the landlord class on the prefectural political level. This paper also provides a somewhat wider discussion of the economic background than Professor Waswo's work, and the inclusion of the findings of Professor Totten's research into the influence of the labour movement on the tenant farmer permits me to bring into sharper focus an aspect largely ignored by Professor Waswo. Her work, being the only major study of the origins of tenant unrest, has provided me with a wealth of easy-to-utilize material.

This paper attempts to make a new contribution by dealing with the topic at hand through using a recently developed social science theory on the origins of tenant protest as a universal historical phenomenon. This theory, outlined in the Journal of Asian Studies under the title "The Erosion of Patron-Client Bonds and Social Change in South East Asia", is the work of James Scott. It is fully outlined in the following chapter. I have used Scott's theoretical insights to focus on the Japanese experience and have drawn conclusions from my data in a way consistent with Scott's theory. I do not claim that his explanation, or

the conclusions I have reached, are the only ones possible. Scott's theory has allowed me to do what I think badly needed to be done, namely, focus in a systematic manner on the somewhat piecemeal, scattered and largely descriptive material that exists on several aspects of the tenant farmers' experience in the 1920s. Further, I have found Scott's theory to be an invaluable tool for refining the insights provided by other current research.

Scott's theory was helpful in determining which aspects of the tenant experience were fruitful areas to search for the origins of tenant unrest. Although this unrest is a phenomenon of both the 1920s and 1930s, I am primarily concerned with the earlier decade. The tenant movement and disputes of the 1930s are largely a regional development of the earlier phenomenon, the outlines of which are made clear by the examination of the preceding decade.

The paper falls into three sections. The first considers the changes that occurred in the traditional landlord-tenant relationship during the Meiji and early Taisho periods and then explores the implications of these changes for the development of tenant unrest and protest. The second section considers the economic changes and changes in social relationships since the Meiji Restoration, emphasizing changes in this century; the implications of these changes are likewise analyzed in relation to the development of tenant unrest.

The final section examines the origins, nature and activity of the tenants' unions which were formed as instruments to translate tenant grievances into action; here the importance of the tenant farmers' experience with the labour movement is discussed. The paper will conclude with an evaluation of Professor Waswo's work in the light of new information included herein and the insights facilitated by using Scott's patron-client theory as a theoretical framework for the investigation of the origins of tenant unrest in Japan.

CHAPTER II

THE SOCIAL BACKGROUND TO TENANT UNREST

The relationship with his landlord was the single most important social, economic and political relationship in the tenant's life. The hierarchical tie with the landlord was much stronger than horizontal ties with fellow tenants.¹¹ This relationship and the landlord domination it entailed was at the center of the life of village Japan. Fukutake Tadashi, the noted rural sociologist, contends that "it is a fairly safe assertion that there was hardly a single hamlet in Japan from which landlord domination was absent".¹²

Given the enormous importance of the landlord-tenant relationship in the life of the tenant and the rural community generally, it is not surprising that the changes it underwent in the post-Restoration period have long been considered as an important source of tenant unrest. Indeed, Japanese Government reports of tenancy disputes compiled in the 1920's make pointed reference to the changes in the landlord-tenant relationship, as a major cause of dispute.¹³ Contemporary research by Japanese scholars continues to focus on changes in the landlord-tenant relationship while discussing causes of tenant unrest.¹⁴ In Barbara Waswo's work, "The Origins of Tenant Unrest", she too offers changes in the behaviour of landlords as the single most important source of tenancy disputes. She writes,

It was not status inequality in itself which prompted disputes, but rather the failure of

landlords to perform those time-honoured and useful functions in rural society that had justified their superior status in the past.¹⁵

Not only does the role of the landlord-tenant relationship draw considerable attention as a source of tenant unrest in Japanese historical studies, but current social science theory is also turning concentrated attention to this factor in the search for an understanding of the universal historical phenomenon of tenant unrest. One of the more recent and sophisticated works of this nature is James Scott's lengthy article "The Erosion of Patron-Client Bonds and Rural Social Change in South East Asia". The explanatory framework developed in this article will be used as an aid to sharpen our understanding of the role of the landlord-tenant bond in the rural unrest of Japan of the 1920's.

Scott's article elaborates on the nature of the patron-client bond. In particular, he is concerned with how that relationship gains its legitimacy and conversely, how it may lose legitimacy. Further, he is concerned with the consequences for rural stability that may ensue in the event that the relationship loses its legitimacy. In very simple terms, Scott views the legitimacy of the patron-client bond as resting on an exchange of goods and services that is tacitly agreed upon by parties in a recognizable bargain. This exchange is composed of both quantifiable

and unquantifiable goods and services. If the patron fails to provide the goods and services traditionally expected by the client, the relationship can lose its legitimacy. One possible consequence is that rural stability will be jeopardized, since the client, no longer regarding the relationship with the patron as legitimate, will have a 'moral basis' for action against the patron. The patron, seen by Scott as a constituent of the agrarian elite in S.E. Asian countries, was, in the Japanese case, the landlord. Scott summarizes an elaborate discussion of these ideas in the following way:

1. It is instructive to view the relations between peasants and agrarian elites as vertical exchange relationships in which changes in the legitimacy of elites, both collectively and individually, are directly related both to changes in the balance of all goods and services transferred - the terms of trade - between them to the comprehensiveness of the exchange. While the balance of exchange is not precisely quantifiable inasmuch as it includes non-equivalent goods and services and some indivisible services such as defense, it is generally possible to determine over a period of time in which direction the balance of exchange is moving and to distinguish marginal from major shifts.
2. The legitimacy of the patron is not simply a linear function of the balance of exchange; there are certain thresholds or 'sticking points' in the balance. In particular, the irreducible minimum terms traditionally demanded by the peasant client are physical security and a subsistence livelihood. This expectation is at the root of the peasantry's 'paternalist moral' economy - the basis of justice and equity. A breach of these minimum requirements in the exchange relationship serves to undermine the legitimacy of the patron class and to provide the peasantry with a moral basis for action against agrarian elites.¹⁶

In applying Scott's ideas to the Japanese landlord-tenant relationship we will proceed through three stages. First, we will examine the landlord-tenant relationship as it existed in early Meiji and determine the balance of goods and services - the 'terms of trade' - contained in that relationship. Next, an examination of the changes in the relationship through Meiji into Taisho will allow us to determine the scale and direction of changes in the balance of exchange found therein. Finally it will be possible to determine if there are grounds to expect a change in the tenants' view of the legitimacy of the relationships and whether changes in the tenants' behaviour reflect changes in the role played by landlords.

The traditional Japanese landlord-tenant relationship was paternalistic. The most extreme manifestation of this paternalism is found in the nago or 'name-child' system of tenancy. This was a form of tenancy where a fictive or real kinship bound the landlord and tenant more tightly than the usual economic and social bonds found in tenancy contracts. This form of tenancy is centuries old and continued to exist in the more isolated rural areas of Japan as late as the World War II period. The relationship was an integral part of the traditional patrilineal extended family. This extended family, known as dozoku, was a loose grouping of related families tied hierarchically to a recognized head family. Although this system, in the extent of its application, varied from region to region, it is

none-the-less the archetype for the vast majority of landlord-tenant relationships found in early modern Japan. Fukutake points out that the nago system, "typically found in districts where there were old-style local magnates, with tenants who had only in recent centuries evolved from a more direct form of serfdom, represented only a more exaggerated form of the landlord-tenant relationship typical of the whole of Japan."¹⁷

A closer look at the nago system of tenancy will illustrate some of the goods and services that passed between the landlord-patron and the tenant-client. The stability and depth of this relationship becomes clear when it is understood that a real or fictive kinship relationship was involved. The terminology of the relationship highlights the kinship feature. The landlord was called ji-oya (land-parent), oyasaku (cultivator parent), or simply oyakata (parent person). The tenant was called kosaku (small cultivator), kokata (child person) or nago (name-child).

Two case studies of landlords in late Meiji provide a valuable source of details concerning the landlord-tenant relationship. The first of these is a case study of the tenancy relations of Saito Zensuke, representative of the traditional nago system in northern Honshu, done by the Japanese sociologist Ariga Kizaemon. The second is R.P. Dore's brief account of the tenancy relations of the Otaki

family presented in his book, Land Reform in Japan. The tenancy relationships of the Otaki family, living in Yamaga village in the broad coastal rice plain of the Shonai, do not contain an actual or ritual kinship relationship but this is still simply a variation of the more ritualistic nago system.

The major benefit that the tenant received from the patronage of the landlord was access to land. Patronage was important in this respect since the granting of land was as much a matter of custom as a matter of decision and independant action on the part of the landlord. Although it is doubtful that the landlord often overturned custom and revoked the tenancy of a traditional tenant, theoretically the power to do so was his. The strength of the landlord's patronage and sense of responsibility was guarantee against this unlikely but possible course of events. The relationship between the degree of patronization and the quality of goods and services flowing from the patron to client is evident in the Saito instance. Saito dealt with two kinds of tenants, nago and sakugo. In the former a kinship relationship was involved but in the latter this was absent. The difference in the status of nago and sakugo determined the extent of the exchange between landlord and tenant. The relationship with the sakugo was largely contractual and exchanges were limited to the instrumental ones of land on the one hand and labor and crops on the other.¹⁸ The

majority of Saito's tenants, however, were nago, sixteen out of eighteen in fact. To these, land was provided as well as houses. In this relationship the role of the "father providing for his sons" was an important element of Saito's patronage. It seems anomolous, however, that sons should have to pay rent!

Access to land can be considered the basic condition for subsistence - what Scott calls one of the minimum terms demanded by the tenant. Other goods related to maintaining a subsistence livelihood included tools, seed and fertilizer frequently provided for in the tenancy contract. Access to village common land, again provided through the patronage of the landlord (only those registered as landowners had legal rights to use of common land), was also an important contribution to the maintenance of a subsistence livelihood.¹⁹ Further, there was a standard provision for rent reduction in times of poor harvest or crop failure. There are records of landlords lending rice or money, at below market prices, to their tenants during hard times.²⁰

The above-mentioned 'benefits' are most easily quantifiable. They represent, however, but a part of the total exchange from the landlord side. There are other goods and services, not so easily quantifiable, that fall under the rubric of 'social and ceremonial exchanges'. Generally these exchanges were an important means of maintaining

stability in the face of the basic economic reality that the tenant was poorer, often very much poorer, than the landlord. Such exchanges, together with the sharing of common values that landlords took care to foster, "played a part in allaying hostility and in softening the blow, so to speak, of economic hardship."²¹ The pains that both Saito and Otaki took to be part of the village and to avoid setting themselves apart in any obvious personal way is highly noticeable. Dore writes of the Otakis:

They accepted peasant values and found the source of their pride not in dissociating themselves from the peasant, but in exhibiting the peasant values in their heightened and ideal form; they eschewed bribes and extravagances and devoted themselves to keeping intact, and if possible, increasing the property of their ancestors.²²

The 'social and ceremonial' exchanges, together with the active concern of the landlords to exhibit a system of values that would not alienate the tenants, played an important role in maintaining rural stability.

The social and ceremonial exchanges were most in evidence at births, deaths and marriages. On those occasions the subsistence budget of the tenant was under unusual strain. Both Otaki and Saito played an important role as father figures assisting the tenants at these times. At births the tenant would seek the landlord's help in naming the child. In this way the landlord's help was enlisted to defray some of the cost of the ceremonies attending the

birth of a child, and the landlord was enlisted as guarantor of the child's future. Gifts were exchanged between the landlord and tenant in the event of a birth in the home of either. The gift of the landlord to the tenant was, of course, the larger of the two. Although these gifts were a contribution to the tenant's economy they were more important as 'social cement' in the relationship between landlord and tenant.

Marriage was another occasion when these exchanges were noticeable. The landlord was deeply involved in the marriages of his tenants. Frequently he would seek marriage partners for them and also provide the room in which the marriage ceremony took place. In the case of Saito, he himself paid for the cost of the trousseau for the woman servants, usually daughters of his nago. These marriage-related activities were an extension of Saito's role of ritual parent to these girls. The landlord's wife, too, played a role in the wedding procedures; she took care of the many small details surrounding the ceremony and supplied the necessary appurtenances. At the wedding, as at births, there was an exchange of gifts between the landlord and tenant.²³

Death provided yet another instance for these social and ceremonial exchanges. The landlord Saito paid for the services of a priest and for the burial on the death of one

of his tenants. He also provided the bereaved family with a gift to tide them over the unhappy time. This, again, was an expression of his role as a ritual parent.²⁴

Other exchanges of a social and ceremonial nature were institutionalized in the ceremonial calendar of the village. The landlord paid for the ceremonies, entertainment and feasting accompanying the village festivals. In Saito's case, he covered the expenses of the monthly Hachiman-to festival of Ishigami village as well as the more special festivities of January and August. Perhaps the most outstanding institutional symbol of solidarity and the landlord's paternal role was provided during the New Year festivities. On New Year's Day, Saito's tenants would come to his home to feast and worship at the family shrine. This religious observance was most important in maintaining stability in the landlord-tenant relationship. The full import of this mutual religious bond has been pointed out by Ariga.

The fact that the unrelated nago worshipped the dozoku patron deity indicated the extent to which their ritual kin ties were recognized as symbolic evidence of their membership in the group, poverty or no poverty.²⁵

There were also important ceremonial observations at rent payment time that emphasized the kinship nature of the landlord-tenant relationship. Further, as important and wealthy men of the village, the landlords provided leadership and the funds for important village projects. They also used their influence to obtain jobs for the children of

their tenants when necessary. There is also a record of the landlord Otaki, securing the release of a tenant in trouble with the police on one occasion, and a record of his grandfather walking miles in inclement weather to secure a loan for a tenant in financial trouble on another.²⁶ These instances of using personal influence to aid the tenant, as well as the above-mentioned political, economic and social functions discharged by landlords, has led Prof. Waswo to conclude that the landlords were "the host plants of the land; tenants, like ivy, coil around (them) and are protected from the weather."²⁷

There can be no doubt that the landlords did perform important personal, political, economic and social roles in the village. In retrospect we can identify a number of important goods and services flowing from the landlord to the tenant. Using a categorization developed by Scott we can identify these as follows: 1) Provision of the basic means of subsistence; here we can include the provision of land to cultivate, tools, fertilizer and, in some instances, a home. 2) Subsistence crisis insurance: this includes rent reduction in times of poor crop or crop failure, work to supplement farm income, loans in time of need and the ritual gifts. 3) Protection: because of the nature of Japanese society this is not an important landlord-tenant flow. Perhaps isolated instances of the landlord protecting the tenant from the police can be included here but not

much else. 4) Brokerage and influence: finding jobs and marriage partners, acting as guarantor of children's futures and related activities are representative of landlord-tenant flows here. 5) Patron services: these include provision for village festivals, and help at births, deaths and marriages. Further, we can include the funding of public works and, in Meiji and Taisho, the attraction of government money to the village ~~in this~~ in this category.²⁸

The above goods and services that the landlord supplied to the tenant were his part in the bargain contained in the patron-client relationship. The tenant, too, had his part to play in the bargain and the cost to him of these goods and services was a dear one. In return for the patronage he received he was kept in a state of near-complete economic and personal dependence and subordination. The rent he paid the landlord represented, on an average, fully 50% of his crop. This rent was paid in kind or labor and sometimes a mixture of both. The surplus with which he was left was a bare minimum to meet his needs. He was dirt poor and there were frequent occasions when even the best of patronage could not save him from famine, flood, high infant mortality, sickness and a premature death - the by-products of a life of uncertainty and poverty. One report describes tenants of pre W.W.II Japan as having, "a spade, a hand plow, and a sickle for tools, with the most primitive fertilizers, with hardly a beast of burden

to ease their labour...Debt-ridden, tax-burdened, under-nourished, miserably housed, their wretchedness defies comparison."²⁹

Besides laboring on their own behalf, the tenants also had to supply labor for the landlords. Saito utilized his tenants to work as laborers on his own farm and as assistants for the craftsmen in the wood and lacquer industries. Further, they gave a total of forty days a year hard labor for timber cutting and collecting firewood. The women were used for labor in seri-culture, general cleanup, maintenance of the farm and certain household and cattle-breeding activities. It has been noted that these obligations and others of a similar nature, along with the value system of the landlord-tenant relationship, tended to turn economic dependence into "intense personal subordination" and further that "many of these obligations on the tenants' part seem more significant of personal dependence than of economic payment."³⁰

The tenant's contract, where such a thing existed, was one-sided and illustrates the delicacy of his tenure. One typical contract included the following provisions:

- (1) The tenant must make at least 1 chō of paddy every year.
- (2) Rent rice must be the best of the harvest, but the tenant may pay in money.
- (3) In the following cases the owners will give orders to the tenant: (a) If tenants do not use enough manure. (b) If there is disease of

- plants or insect pests. (c) If the tenant neglects to mend the road or other necessary work is neglected.
- (4) The owner will dismiss a tenant: (a) If the tenant does not pay his rent without reason. (b) If the tenant is neglectful of his work or is idle. (c) If the tenant is not obedient to the owner and does not keep his contract faithfully. (d) If the tenant is punished by law.
- (5) When tenants leave without permission of absence more than twenty days the owner can treat as he will crops or buildings.
- (6) In the following cases the tenant must provide two labourers to the owner: mending roads, drainage canals, or bridges; mending water gate and irrigation canal; when necessary public works must be undertaken.³¹

This contract was in use during 1915, the year Robertson Scott, who recorded it for posterity, was travelling in the Japanese countryside. Tenancy contracts were rare; it is estimated that a mere 30% of tenancy agreements involved written contracts.³² The majority were oral agreements.

In the provisions of the above tenancy contract the tenant's part of the bargain in the landlord-tenant relationship can be seen clearly. Rent, labor and obedience are most apparent. The landlord's power over the tenant's livelihood and possessions is equally clear. Clause 4(c) is particularly illustrative of the claim that many of the tenants' obligations seem more significant of personal dependance than of economic payment. Clauses such as No.5 are more suggestive of conditions of slavery rather than rental. Further, it seems that not a few of the conditions for which a tenant could be dismissed invited a highly sub-

jective judgment and no doubt provided landlords with an unchallenged means of ridding themselves of a troublesome tenant. The tenant payed dearly in personal, social and economic coin for the services of his landlord.

Despite the obvious inequalities in the flow of goods and services between landlord and tenant, the legitimacy of the relationship rested on this flow. We must realize that this reflects the relative strength in Japan, as elsewhere, of the bargaining position of the respective parties. There was, however, a minimum set of demands beneath which the tenant neither could nor would descend. This was the guarantee of subsistence and security of livelihood. James Scott makes this clear when he writes,

For the client, the basic purpose of the patron-client bond, and therefore the cornerstone of its legitimacy, is the provision of the basic social guarantees of subsistence and security.³³

The legitimacy of the landlord-tenant relationship is dependant on the continuation of these guarantees. If the content of the patron-client flow changes in certain critical ways, the relationship can lose its legitimacy. Scott hypothesizes that changes threatening the guarantee of the tenants' subsistence can lead to a loss of the legitimacy of the patron-client bond.

If and when the terms of trade deteriorate sufficiently to threaten these social rights (subsistence and security), which were the original basis for attachment and deference,

one can anticipate that clients will consider the relationship unjust and exploitive.³⁴

It must not be assumed that the terms of trade will always deteriorate to the detriment of the client but, in Japan after mid-Meiji, the changes in the parton-client flow were almost always detrimental to the tenant.

Our task now is to identify the qualitative and quantitative changes that occurred in the flow of 'goods and services' from the Japanese landlord to his tenant during the period 1868 - 1919. Prof. Waswo suggests that three trends among Japanese landlords are clearly evident and relevant. She admits that the absence of source material is such that only 'fragmentary evidence' can be marshalled to document these changes. Nonetheless, evidence does suggest that the following three trends were apparent among Japanese in the period under study here.

- 1) There was a steady decline in the number of landlords who cultivated part of their holdings themselves.
- 2) There was growing involvement of landlords in non-agricultural affairs, indicated by greater landlord investment in urban and rural industry.
- 3) There was a gradual increase in absentee ownership.³⁵

Research I have done in Japanese sources, notably Taisho Demokurashi No Shakai Teki Keisel, suggests that a fourth trend among landlords has an important bearing on the changes in the traditional landlord-tenant relationship. This trend is the gradual increase in the identification of landlords, both

consciously and institutionally, with the Prefectural bureaucratic management structure.

Turning to examine our first trend, then, we find that the number of cultivating landlords declined throughout Meiji and Taisho. In the early Meiji period it is reported that most landlords were cultivating landlords; that is, they worked at least a small part of their land themselves.³⁶ A number of changes in Meiji, however, promoted a shift to non-cultivation among landlords. One of the more important changes was a decrease in the number of farm laborers available and an increase in the cost of hiring farm labor. Both these changes were, of course, closely related. In early Meiji, farm laborers' wages were very low; in fact, only the work of maid and man-servant paid less. Thus, in the last decade of the 19th century the competition from new land in Hokkaido and increased opportunities for more highly paid employment in the industrial and service sectors created a shortage of farm laborers. Gradually, under pressure of this situation, farm laborers' wages rose, and by 1912 they were two and even three times as high as they had been in the 1890s. While these changes did not change the unfavorable population-to-land ratio, they did keep the situation from shifting drastically in favor of the landlord. At the same time other changes made it more profitable to rent land rather than farm it alone or with the help of farm laborers. First, farming had become more stable

as crop failures and other disasters grew less likely as a result of improved agricultural techniques. Thus the landlord was more certain of rent rice than before. Further, the rising cost of fertilizer and tools, together with the possibility of the tenant shouldering these costs, added to the profitability of putting land into tenantry rather than cultivating it oneself.³⁷

The following table illustrates the increase in non-cultivating landlords and captures the regional nature of this trend - a factor that will be commented on later.

Table I: Non-cultivating Landlords in Tohoku and Kinki
1908 - 1919.

Year	Tohoku		Kinki	
	#	%	#	%
<u>1908</u>				
Owners 5 cho+	20,914	100.0	7,951	100.0
Cultivators 5 cho+	12,692	60.7	1,000	12.6
Non-cult. landlords	8,222	<u>39.3</u>	6,951	<u>87.4</u>
<u>1915</u>				
Owners 5 cho+	20,645	100.0	7,793	100.0
Cultivators 5 cho+	9,844	47.7	369	4.7
Non-cult. landlords	10,801	<u>52.3</u>	7,424	<u>95.3</u>
<u>1919</u>				
Owners 5 cho+	21,868	100.0	7,546	100.0
Cultivators 5 cho+	9,295	42.5	243	3.1
Non-cult. landlords	12,572	<u>57.5</u>	7,303	<u>96.9</u>

Source: B.A. Waswo, Landlords and Social Change in Post-War-Japan, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Stanford U. 1969 p.89.

Unfortunately, no figures exist to show the pace of the increase in non-cultivating landlords up to 1908. We can only assume that in order to reach fully 87.4% in Kinki and 39.3% in Tohoku, the yearly increases must have been quite dramatic. At any rate, by 1915 the non-cultivating landlord was clearly the norm in Tohoku and almost the rule in Kinki where apparently one would have had to search hard indeed to find a landlord with soil on his hands.

The second trend, that of increased landlord investment outside the agricultural sector, was stimulated by the gradual decrease in the profitability of land as an investment. As late as the 1890s land had been the most secure and profitable investment, but this soon changed with the increased economic stability of the decade. The completion of legal codes governing business investments, as well as the increased familiarity of landlords with national economic affairs that came with the granting of political rights in the 1880s and the opening of the Diet in 1890, all helped to overcome the landlords' reluctance to invest outside the agricultural sector.³⁸

The extent of landlord investment in the non-agricultural sector is difficult to document extensively since there are few records available. Waswo reports that landlords were generally reluctant to make the extent of their investment known. The following summary by Prof. Waswo of her

research provides some insight into the extent of this trend.

Finally, although the evidence is inconclusive, the shift away from investment in land was probably greatest among landlords in the Kinki and Chugoku districts and smallest among landlords in the Tohoku. Over half the landlords owning 50 cho or more in the Kinki and Chugoku who were listed by name in the registers of large landlords compiled in 1890 and '98 were not included in the register of 1924; less than one third of the landlords in the Tohoku were not included. Some of these landlords had been forced to sell all or part of their land to cover business losses; others had done so voluntarily to generate the capital for industrial investment.³⁹

While many landlords sold their land in the switch to investment outside of agriculture, others continued to expand their holdings even though their income from outside investment continued to increase. The Fujita of Okayama is a case in point. In 1887, they held 88 cho of land, and of their total yearly income of 1,230 yen, 66% was from tenant rent. In 1926, they held slightly more than 100 cho of land but received only 52% of their income from their tenants' rent. The balance came from non-agricultural sources, primarily dividends. Government bonds, income from factories, and salaries from positions in the non-agricultural sector gradually replaced or supplemented income from land in the budgets of other landlord families.⁴⁰

The third trend Prof. Waswo documents - increasing absentee ownership - is not an entirely new phenomenon

in rural Japan. It existed to a small degree in pre-Restoration Japan. However, in mid-Meiji absentee landlordism began to increase. Comprehensive surveys of absentee landlordism are scarce. A survey conducted in nine villages throughout the nation in early Taisho is one of the very few available. Its results are tabled below.

Table 2: Percentage of Village Land Owned by Non-residents

Year	Paddy	Dry
1890	14.8%	1.7%
1899	14.2%	3.4%
1908	15.8%	3.2%
1911	16.6%	4.5%

Source: B.A. Waswo, "Landlords and Social Change in PreWar Japan", p.108.

In these years there is an identifiable trend but it is, in itself, too slight to be of major importance. One must admit, however, that the absolute percentage of land owned in absentee in 1911 is significant. By 1924, the trend to increased absentee ownership had sharpened. In that year the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry conducted a nationwide survey that found 4% of landlords surveyed living outside the prefecture in which their land was located and another 26% living in another county. In Kinki the county figure was 52%, while in Tohoku it was 17%. The survey found almost all large landlords had land in several villages and were therefore regarded as absentee landowners in at

least a few of the villages in which they owned land.⁴¹

By 1924, then, the percentage of absentee landlords was as high as 52% in Kinki and, even in Tohoku, 17%.

The figures for actual absentee landlords are significant in themselves but there is an additional increase to take into account - the increase in the number of 'functionally absent' landlords. There are, for obvious reasons, no figures on these. But it is generally agreed that many landlords, due to changes in tenant management practices, enjoyed less and less contact with their tenants until they "had little left to do themselves but pocket their profits."⁴² This situation resulted from the practice of hiring professional managers to select tenants, draw up contracts, supervise farming, collect rent and sell the rent rice. Other landlords attempted to rent land to tenants from other villages in order to escape personalized relationships. Local police and officials, as well as government agencies, took over responsibility for traditional landlord functions such as dispute settlement, crop insurance, and famine relief.⁴³ Waswo succinctly summarizes the cumulative effect of both actual and functional absenteeism on the village when she writes,

Only when both parties made a special effort to preserve the personal ties of the past, or in remote villages relatively untouched by change, did old ideas of harmony and cooperation between landlords and tenants remain in force. In most cases, however, the lines dividing them became

more sharply drawn, the different interests and activities of the two groups more clearly defined.⁴⁴

It can be seen, then, that the trend to increased absentee landlordism, both actual and functional, was one with major implications for the village and traditional landlord-tenant relationships.

The last trend to be considered, the increasing identification of the landlord with the prefectural bureaucracy and the central government, is evident from the mid 1880s. It was then that the political nature of the Japanese landlord began to change. After the initial opposition to the Meiji government through the Popular Rights Movement, most landlords became conservative upholders of the status quo. It is from this time too that the objective role of maintaining the semi feudal base of Japanese society was taken over by the landlord and feudal tax was replaced by high rents for the cultivator.⁴⁵

There seems to have been little research done on the increasing organizations of landlords, as a class, and the delegation to them of responsibility in the management structure of rural society. The noted Japanese scholar, Kinbara Samon in his book Taisho Demokurashi No Skaki Teki Keisel (The Social Formation of Taisho Democracy) offers a case study of these developments in Niigata prefecture. This study is one of the few illustrations of this trend available and is worth looking at in detail.

Important political changes began to take place in Niigata prefecture, at the prefectural administrative level, when the move to organize landlords in the service of the bureaucracy began early in the year 1902. The prefectural landlord association was formalized in late 1902 and increased in size following the Russo-Japanese war in 1905. The need to organize the landlords to insure the security and stability of agricultural production in order to meet the demands of the market was foremost but there was more to the rationale of the founders than economic motivation. Membership in the organization was compulsory; therefore, it insured class solidarity and provided an effective organization through which the bureaucracy could utilize the landlords and share authority with them in the management of the countryside. The organization of the Prefectural Landlord Association further assured the political prominence of the landlords. This association was the means through which the landlords gained the right to exercise leadership in agricultural production and preserve order in rural society. It has been described as providing for "a transfer of power to lead and manage rural society from the bureaucracy to the landlords."⁴⁶

In order to see the nature of this organization clearly and the terms of the transfer of power to the landlords, it is helpful to trace the development of the Prefectural Landlords Association. The first move in Niigata was made

in February of 1902 when the prefectural head called the large landowners of the prefecture together and discussed the prospect of forming such an association. Consequently, in October 1902, the first general meeting of the association was convened. There, the principles of the association were laid out, and the officers elected. The fostering of the spirit of friendship and harmony in rural society, the improvement of rice seedlings, the regulation, adjustment and protection of cultivated land and sundry other concerns dealing with the improvement of agriculture were adopted as principles. The prefectural head addressed the assembled landlords and urged them to adopt a social consciousness that would enhance the well-being of their villages and pointed to the importance of their roles in leading agricultures' advance/ along with commerce and industry.

The concern of the bureaucracy with this association is clear in its beginnings but it is even clearer when the internal structure of the association is examined. The executive and membership was so constituted as to have one association head, 17 trustees and 1000 councillors. The head was to have wide executive and legislative powers. At the first meeting the prefectural Governor himself was elected to this prime position and thus the link with the prefectural bureaucracy is scarcely deniable. The structure of the association has been described as "pyramidal, authoritarian and having a chain of leadership that was a

one-way street".⁴⁷ Thus it is clear that the landlord association would not function independent of the prefectural bureaucracy.

This landlord association exercised its influence in the countryside through utilizing a number of village organizations as well as those on the county, city and prefectural level. In cooperation with these organizations, and professing agricultural reform as a central concern, the association tried to foster a spirit of 'class co-operation' and undertook a program of 'basic social education' to ensure stability in the countryside. They tried to establish a means of conciliating village disputes over such things as rents. They also took charge of the co-operative distribution of fertilizer, the establishment of savings programs, rural agricultural competitions and exhibits and the improvement of agricultural technology. Thus the landlords participated in and coordinated on a prefecture-wide scale and under the direction of the bureaucracy a series of activities that were an important part of the management of the countryside.

There were other ways in which the landlords, together with the bureaucracy, extended their influence throughout rural society. The graduates of the prefectural agricultural schools developed ties with the village agricultural societies. These schools were administered by the prefectural bureaucracy

and therefore reflected bureaucratic views and policies to a great extent. Further, the village friendly societies had intimate connections with the Prefectural Landlord Association and the village agricultural associations. In other instances the Prefectural Landlord Association used youth organizations of the village comprising the children of self-cultivators and tenants as an important force in carrying out projects of agricultural reform. It is clear that the management of rural society was carried out through interlocking structures with the Prefectural Landlord Association, with its close links with the bureaucracy, at the apex.

The Niigata Association under discussion had a bureaucratic hue insofar as its executive officer was the prefectural head. Further, it was partly financed by prefectural taxes and many of its members were bureaucrats. The most fundamental ties between the bureaucratic and landlord management systems, however, were made on the village level. The village administrative leaders took their orders directly from the district government which in turn was subordinate to the prefectural authority. It was through links between landlords and village officials (indeed village leaders and landlords were often the same men) that conditions for cooperation were created. Through personal ties with the village leaders the landlords, at the most basic level of rural society, had an internal tie with the

bureaucratic management structure. Thus, "through such an intimate organic tie the landlords strengthened their ability to regulate village society."⁴⁸

In the initiative taken by the prefectural bureaucracy to organize the landlords the "dawn of the realization of a bureaucratic rural society and the transfer of authority to the landlords and the development of an institutional connection between the landlords and bureaucrats can be seen."⁴⁹ The landlords thus strengthened their own position through sharing this authority and increased their political power relative to the bureaucracy. Their right to lead the rural sector, regulate village society, preserve the existing order and cultivate the village in the manner they chose was thus assured. This is not to suggest that the landlords developed as a new ruling class; they had long been one. As Thomas Smith points out,

...the Japanese landlords of modern times, taken as a whole, were not a new and precariously dominant group thrown up by the impact of capitalism on the village but a class whose habit of power goes back to the formative period of Japanese capitalism.⁵⁰

What the close ties between the landlords and the bureaucrats do suggest is that their authority was legitimized and focused. Further, while landlords had traditionally dominated village politics, they were now able, given that their interests did not clash with the bureaucrats, to turn administrative structures above the village level to

their own interests.

This development among the landlords made the distinctions between them and their tenants progressively clearer. They frequently abused the power given to them and utilized village organizations, supposedly established on government initiative for all the villagers, for their own purposes. Indeed, organizations formed with famine relief and agricultural reforms as central concerns proved to be "essentially means for the landlord to maintain rice quality and guarantee payment in times of default with the funds provided for famine relief and agricultural improvement."⁵¹ Moreover, tenants were coerced economically and socially to join village organizations such as agricultural improvement societies that worked primarily for landlord interests. The leaders of these associations acted as rent collectors and mediated tenancy disputes; in short, they were managers of landlord affairs.

The full import of the development of a new management structure in the countryside lies in the way in which the once collaborative landlord-tenant relationship began to change. The landlords utilized, as we have noted, the transfer of authority from the bureaucracy to their own benefit, advancing the interests of their own class. As a result the contradictions between the landlord and the tenant could not help but surface. As Kinbara concludes,

Through the development of the new management structure in the village, the contradictions between the landlord living on tenant rent and tenant bearing the burden of agricultural production and reform became quite public.⁵²

Although it may seem an apparent contradiction to speak of landlord withdrawal from the village on the one hand and greater participation in village management on the other, it is not in fact so. In speaking of these problems we are talking of two different kinds of landlords, large and small, and two distinctly different kinds of participation in village life, cultivation and bureaucratic management. The actual physical withdrawal from the village concerned mainly large landlords, while small landlords withdrew not from the village but rather from their role as cultivators; in both cases the change caused considerable discontent among tenants. Although the smaller landlord remained in the village, his influence changed from that of a fellow cultivator to that of administrator who represented an extension of the bureaucratic presence from the prefectural level. Thus both the withdrawal from cultivation of the landlord and his assumption of the role of village administrator with interests still further removed from the tenants were sources of tenant unrest.

What then, was the full impact of the four trends we have discussed on the traditional landlord-tenant relationship? First, withdrawing from cultivation, the landlord

no doubt found it increasingly difficult to retain peasant values and preserve his previously high degree of integration with the village. Secondly, the trend to increasing investment outside of agriculture reinforced the growing divergence in values and loyalties. It is as difficult to assess the effect of a growing divergence in values between landlord and tenant as it is to measure this change or know how common it was. But it can be surmised that the cultivators did not look favorably on the new values of landlords. There is evidence that in at least one case the behaviour of non-cultivating landlords met with strong disapproval and it is not unlikely that this attitude was common. Robertson Scott reports that one tenant, when asked how the men in the village who owned land but did not work it spent their time, replied,

They are chattering of many things, very trivial things, and they disturb the village. They drink too much and they have concubines or women elsewhere.⁵³

We may question whether it was the possession of concubines and women or having them outside the village that irked this man, but we cannot fail to recognize the displeasure the behaviour of these non-cultivating landowners aroused in this particular instance.

It is the trend to absenteeism, however, that did greatest violence to the traditional landlord-tenant relationship. Many of the patron services began to disappear with this development. First, absentee landlords could not be taxed

as residents of the village and thus no longer contributed financially to village services. The remaining landlords, faced with higher taxes, could not afford to help their tenants as easily in time of need. Further, absentee landlordism removed much of the familiarity from landlord-tenant relations and although they returned to the village on occasion, habitual ceremonies in which the landlord took part were devoid of past familiarity. In fact, many landlords "became increasingly impatient with the elaborate rituals of gift giving and the many demands on their time and wealth". The end result was the absence of any conspicuous role, aside from rent collection, for the landlord in village society. The role of the landlord was more and more frequently a purely economic one in the village. The social intimacy and the wide range of interaction between tenant and landlord was consequently reduced. The effect of the trends discussed herein was such that the nature of the landlord was transformed; now, writes Waswo,

To their tenants, they became distant figures, with great power over their lives but little involvement in or understanding of local affairs.⁵⁴

The landlord-tenant relationship was steadily eroded across the five decades from the Restoration to the 1920s. Year by year the distinction between landlord and tenant became more apparent. In prefectures such as Niigata, where

where the landlords and bureaucracy shared authority in the management of the countryside, the division in the village was obvious in the social superstructure. One by one the strands of a once diffuse relationship were snapping. The landlord was more often viewed as exploitive; if he were to disappear the tenant would merely be free of his obligation to pay rent. This change can be gleaned from a comment on landlords made to Robertson Scott. He reports that an ex-Daimyo's son told him,

Many landlords treat their tenants cruelly. The rent is too high. In the place of the intimate relations of former days the relations are now that of cat and dog. The ignorance of the landlords is the cause of this state of affairs. It is very important that the landlord's son should go to the agricultural school where there is plenty of practical work which will bring the perspiration from him.⁵⁵

If this is the view of a man whose background suggests he would be both well off and conservative, one can only imagine that the attitude of the tenant farmer must have been even more damning.

There is reason to believe that the Japanese tenant's view of the legitimacy of his relationship with the landlord changed. When the position of rural elites is no longer considered legitimate, the vertical ties of loyalty binding the peasantry to them collapses. This collapse has far-reaching implications for tenant behaviour. James Scott asserts that this breakdown creates a potential for peasant

protest and class-based action.⁵⁶ The important question that arises now is whether there is concrete evidence to suggest that the breakdown in the landlord-tenant relationship was in any way a source of the militancy of the Japanese tenant in the 1920s.

There is much evidence to suggest that the answer to the above question is affirmative. In 1922, a report on tenancy disputes issued by the Agricultural Office of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, "The Survey Concerning Tenancy Disputes", included a number of pointed references to the issue of the landlord-tenant relationship as a cause of dispute. In Hyogo prefecture, it found that "the corruptness of the landlord is cause for dispute"; in Ehime it found that "the method of landlord land-management is cause for dispute." The report further notes that in Okayama prefecture, "the lack of any kind of intimate feelings on the part of the absentee for his tenants" caused disputes. In Shizuoka it was the "higher rate of tenancy fee charged by absentee landlords and their lack of unobtrusive charity" that caused disputes. In Oita prefecture the report found that the "oppression of the tenants by the absentee landlords' managers" was a cause of dispute.⁵⁷

A close look at the demands of the tenants in tenancy disputes reveals the extent to which they were directed at obtaining services that had previously been an expected part

of the patron-client relationship. The issue of rent reduction in times of poor crop or crop failure is a case in point. The landlord had traditionally granted this reduction, with some reluctance no doubt, but without full-scale resistance and disputes with tenants. In 1923, fully 65% of tenancy disputes were over the issue of rent reduction and in 1926 it was as high as 78%. Throughout the 1920s this demand was found in no less than 50% of disputes. There were also demands for permanent reduction in rent - 30% of disputes in 1923 and fluctuating between 7% and 22% in other years of the 1920s. The demand for permanent reduction of rent suggests that the tenant was attempting to have the loss of traditional landlord 'goods and services' compensated for by a reduction in the rent expected. Absentee landlords, of course, were more frequently targets of tenancy disputes since it was here that the most extensive erosion of the traditional landlord-tenant bond had taken place. Professor Waswo relates that, "Sugiyama Motojiro, founder and head of the Japan Farmers' Union, observed in 1926 that more disputes occurred on land owned by absentee landlords than on land owned by village residents."⁵⁸

Finally, the geographic distribution of tenancy disputes suggests the importance of the erosion of patron-client bonds in creating conditions leading to tenancy disputes.

Tenant militancy in the 1920s was concentrated in the areas of Japan that were economically advanced. It is precisely these areas where the most extensive breakdown in traditional landlord-tenant relationship had occurred. Further, with the deepening agricultural crisis in the 1930s the patron-client bonds were eroded in the outlying areas and disputes consequently developed there as well. The developed areas of Japan - Kinki, Chubu and Kanto - show 68.3% of all recorded disputes in the years 1917 to 1931. For the years 1932 to 1941, 44.5% of all disputes occurred in these areas, while Tohoku, Kyushu, Chugoku, Shikoku and Hokkaido experienced 55.5% of all disputes.⁵⁹ There is no doubt, then, that changes in the traditional landlord-tenant relationship played an important role in the origins of tenant unrest in Japan.

There is yet another important question to be answered, however, and this relates to the matter of timing. Since most of the trends among landlords considered above as contributing to the breakdown of the traditional landlord-tenant relationship were well advanced at least a decade before 1920, disputes might be expected to have occurred before 1920, but this is not the case. Why? The answer to this puzzle lies in understanding what Scott's theory does not do. It is not a simple equation of the loss of legitimacy in the landlord-tenant relationship followed by tenant action against the landlord. Scott suggests that the erosion of social bonds between agrarian elites and peasants

merely creates a potential for such action. He writes,

The collapse of vertical ties of loyalty is, at best, a precondition - a latent potential - for peasant protest and class based organization.⁶⁰

He suggests that the realization of this potential depends on several variables. Two of the more important of these will be discussed in the following two chapters. The first important variable he suggests is the economic effect of the shift in the balance of exchange on the tenant. There are, he submits, changes which are more painful than others. If the peasant's welfare is not adversely affected by the loss of certain patron-client services, the potential for peasant protest may not be realized. Scott expands on this:

When the peasant's welfare has not declined, when social links, say to politicians and bureaucrats, offer alternative mechanisms of security, when urbanization and industrialization provide real opportunities for those who can no longer be accommodated within the village, agrarian elites may lose legitimacy more or less peacefully. A buoyant economy, rural development programs, and electoral party patronage thus represent for the peasant opportunities and services which make the worsening terms of trade with agrarian elites less painful. If, on the other hand, the peasant's welfare is declining, if his subsistence is threatened, and if few alternatives are open, the process may be vastly more explosive.⁶¹

It is possible to argue, in the Japanese case, that the shift in the balance of exchange was not critical until after 1920, when the tenant's subsistence was threatened on a massive scale. Until this time, particularly in the decade

preceding 1920, there was sufficient prosperity in rural Japan to enable the tenant to maintain his subsistence despite declining patron services. The conditions after 1920, however, threatened his subsistence and created a situation that was 'vastly more explosive' and under which agrarian elites in Japan became the object of widespread tenant protest. In the next chapter I will examine the degree of rural prosperity that existed in the years before 1920, especially during the five war years, and the extent to which events after 1920 reduced this prosperity.

CHAPTER III

THE ECONOMIC BACKGROUND TO TENANT UNREST

In this chapter I will argue that the decade preceding 1920, particularly the years embracing the First World War, saw sufficient prosperity in the countryside to guarantee the tenants' subsistence. This prosperity, however, was a false prosperity insofar as it was primarily based on an increase in productivity and on good agricultural prices as well as the economic boost of W.W.I - conditions that could not be expected to continue indefinitely. Further, at the same time a number of structural changes occurring in Japanese agriculture ultimately made the tenants' economic position insecure and, just as importantly, greatly weakened his bargaining position vis-a-vis the landlord, making it more difficult to ensure receipt of patron services. The abrupt end of prosperity in 1920 revealed the weakness of his position vis-a-vis the landlord and brought a massive threat to his subsistence, exposing the economic insecurity created by the structural changes transforming the nature of his economic environment for the last fifty years.

The terms of trade in the landlord-tenant exchange of goods and services are not static. They depend in large part on the relative strength of each party's bargaining position. Each party's bargaining position is affected by structural changes in the society. Scott writes,

In aggregate terms, the balance of reciprocity seems to depend largely on the relative bargaining position of the two parties; how much more does the client need the patron than the patron needs him. The relative bargaining position of each party is in turn greatly influenced by structural changes such as the scarcity of land, shift to commercial agriculture, the expansion of state power and the growth of population.⁶²

Throughout Meiji and early Taisho structural changes greatly weakened the tenants' bargaining position and at the same time made his subsistence less secure and his need of patron services more acute. Scott provides a useful schema for understanding the effect of certain structural changes on the balance of patron-client exchange. Using this it is possible to show that despite the prosperity in the countryside, the tenants' position was growing less secure. It is useful to reproduce Scott's schema in full below.

The Commercialization of Agriculture and the Balance of Patron-Client Exchange

Nature of Change	Effect on Patron-Client Relations
1. Growing inequality in landholding.	Control of land becomes key basis of patronage; landholder's position strengthened in dealing with clients who seek access to narrowly-held land.
2. Population growth	Landholder's position strengthened in bargaining with a growing peasantry seeking access to land.
3. Fluctuations of producer and consumer prices under commercial agriculture.	Landholder's position strengthened as peasants increasingly need credit relief, marketing assistance etc.

Nature of Change	Effect on Patron-Client Relations
4. Loss of "Slack resources" (uncleared land, common pasturage, free fuel etc.)	Weakening of alternative security mechanisms weakens peasant-clients' bargaining position with elites.
5. Deterioration of village leveling mechanisms.	Weakening of alternative village security mechanism again weakens bargaining position with elites.
6. Colonial state protects property rights of land-owning elites.	Landowners less in need of loyal local clientele; hence less incentive to maintain a balance of exchange that engenders legitimacy.

Source: James C. Scott, "The Erosion of Patron-Client Bonds and Social Change in Rural South East Asia," Journal of Asian Studies, Vol. XXXII, #1 Nov. 1972, 0.39.

Change #6 is obviously not applicable to Japan as it stands, but replacing colonial state with modern centralized state we have an analogous situation. The remaining changes, however, all occurred in Japan from early Meiji through Taisho. It is worth examining each of these structural changes in turn.

Throughout Meiji the area of tenanted land steadily increased as landownership was concentrated in the hands of fewer and fewer people. The most dramatic increases occurred in the 1880s and '90s. The following table illustrates this trend.

Table 3 Percentage of Tenanted Land 1872 - 1934

1872	1883	1887	1892	1908	1934
31%	30.75%	39.34%	39.39%	45%	46%

Source: Adapted from R. Dore, Land Reform in Japan.

Table #3 alone does not give a complete picture of the inequality in landholding. Changes in the numerical strength of the three types of cultivators, as tabled below, complete the picture.

Table 4 Percentage of cultivator type, 1883 - 1908

	1883	1892	1908
Owner cultivator	39.63%	31.12%	33.27%
Part tenant	38.45%	45.14%	40.25%
Tenant	21.92%	23.74%	27.58%

Source: K. Wakakawa, "The Japanese Farm Tenancy System" in D.G. Haring ed., Japan's Prospects. Cambridge, Mass., 1946, pp.25-73.

From the table it can be seen that the number of tenants and part tenants increased across the 15 year period. Thus by 1908 fully two-thirds of all cultivators were involved in one form of tenancy or another.⁶³

By the 1920s the distribution of land was unequal in

the extreme. The following table illustrates this inequality:

Table 5 Inequality in Landholding in 1920

Percentage of landholders	Percentage of land held
6%	54%
33%	39%
38%	7%

Source: Farley, "Japan's Unsolved Tenancy Problem", Far Eastern Survey, Vol. 6 #14, 1937 I.P.R., New York, p.158.

There were still further inequalities which this table does not reveal. Within the group of 6% holding 54% of the land, a mere 8% held half of that 54%. In addition, an estimated million and a half peasants, or 23% of the agricultural population, owned no land.⁶⁴ Landholding in Japan was increasingly narrowed so that by Taisho some two-thirds of Japan's farm families were involved in some form of tenancy on 45% of the nation's farm land. Such conditions favored the landlord who held greater amounts of land as the ranks of those who were obliged to rent land was swelling. The tenant's bargaining position was thus weakened.

The steady increase in population growth further strengthened the landlord's hand in dealing with the peasantry. Each increase in the number of those who needed land secured his position of control over an increasingly scarce commodity.

Cultivated land did increase by roughly 3% across Meiji and Taisho but this hardly offset the population pressure on the land.⁶⁵ The pressure on land was considerable; between 1872 and 1920 the population grew from 34,806,000 to 55,473,000. While some of this population was absorbed by the urban sector, the majority was absorbed on the already-crowded land. It was not until W.W.I that the population engaged in agriculture and forestry dropped both absolutely and relative to other sectors. With the important exception of the areas adjacent to the industrial centers during the war years, the tenant-to-land ratio was strongly in the landlord's favor.⁶⁶

Yet another of Scott's structural changes working against the tenant was the loss of slack resources, notably common land. These resources, consisting of uncleared land and village common lands, diminished under increasing population pressure and the legal restrictions on use initiated by the Meiji agricultural settlement. After the Restoration, the Meiji government claimed title to all land without proven ownership, regardless of customary usage. The tenant found that he lost easy access to lands he had used as a source of timber, fuel, fertilizer, fodder and grazing land. The loss of these important resources had a substantial effect on the tenant's economy; his economic self-sufficiency was undermined as he was forced to go to market to buy these items with cash. Thus the tenant was drawn further into

commercial relationships beyond the paddy.⁶⁷

There were further changes at work to undermine the tenant's self-sufficiency. The growing commercialization of agriculture, apparent even in late Tokugawa, was vastly accelerated as Japan moved into the Meiji era. Large-scale imports of foreign goods that followed the Restoration began to slowly undermine native cottage industries. The important spinning and weaving industry is a good example. The import of cotton yarn and fabric became extensive. Between 1868 and 1887 the imports averaged 30% of the national consumption. The price of these imports averaged roughly two-thirds of the Japanese counterpart.⁶⁸ Sugarcane is another case in point. Imports of cheap sugarcane forced a 75% reduction in land devoted to sugarcane cultivation between 1877 and 1882. The import of cheap kerosene was instrumental in destroying cottage industries producing lighting fuels from animal fats and charcoal. Further, the handmade paper industry suffered greatly as the new Western-style tabloids, newspapers, and magazines brought changes in the quality of paper required.⁶⁹

The destruction of cottage industries made the tenant farmer more dependant on grain and food cultivation alone for subsistence and forced him to buy goods on the market that he had traditionally manufactured himself. The prices of goods he purchased on the market were likely to be fixed

while, paradoxically, his main source of cash - the rice crop - was subject to great price fluctuations. While this could work in his favor, it often did not, since lacking either storage facilities or a sufficient surplus to wait for favorable conditions to sell, he had to sell at harvest time when the price was lowest. The fluctuation in rice prices was marked. With the 1874 price as an index of 100, the price rose and fell between 100 and 221 through the years to 1894.⁷⁰ The Japanese landlord, who could afford to wait for the best market conditions to sell, continued to take a constant share of the tenant's produce as rent, while the tenant was left to shoulder more and more of the risks of commercial agriculture. Thus the tenant came to have a 'split personality': part entrepreneur, part farm laborer.

E.H. Norman describes the Japanese tenant farmer of Meiji and Taisho as manifesting the "double nature of the capitalist-farmer (who takes the risks of the entrepreneur) and the agricultural proletarian (inasmuch as the landlord, by nature of high rent, takes a large part of the profits of the enterprise.)"⁷¹ The nature of this schizophrenia was such that while the tenant was assuming more and more of the risks of agriculture he could enjoy neither its benefits nor protection from its dangers since his profit was skimmed off by an increasingly disinterested landlord.

At a time when the tenant most needed the guarantees of subsistence provided by the traditional landlord-tenant relationship the landlord, as argued in chapter 2, was becoming less disposed to grant them. This shift in the risk of agriculture represents a serious breach in the traditional landlord-tenant pact. Scott submits that,

In effect the traditional landlord-tenant exchange entitled the landlord to a surplus only after he had made provisions for his tenants' subsistence requirements. This arrangement placed a floor under the real income of peasants and shielded them from the more severe fluctuations in ~~production of prices~~. With the commercialization of agriculture, an increased share of the risk is pushed on the tenant who is least able to absorb this fluctuation.⁷²

This statement preemphasizes the idea that the tenant's minimum demand is the guarantee of his subsistence. When this threshold is breached, the tenant will consider the relation to have lost its legitimacy. The structural changes that had occurred throughout Meiji and Taisho and the commercialization of agriculture, pushing the risks of cultivation entirely onto the tenant, had created conditions wherein his subsistence was less and less secure. Add to this the withdrawal of many patron services as discussed in the preceding chapter and it can be seen that there was a situation created wherein the tenants' subsistence was no longer guaranteed by the landlord.

That no wide-spread tenant unrest occurred in the years before 1920 seems due to the existence of a level of prosperity in the countryside that guaranteed the tenants'

subsistence, thus providing an alternative to the guarantees provided in the traditional landlord-tenant relationship. This prosperity is a condition that Scott cites as one allowing rural elites to lose legitimacy without serious consequences. The relationship between the decline in rural prosperity and the rise of tenant unions and tenancy disputes, both beginning in 1920, strongly suggests that Scott's concept of elites losing legitimacy with more violent repercussions when alternate forms of subsistence guarantees are unavailable, is valid for understanding the occurrence of tenant unrest in Japan. It is therefore useful in testing the above assumption to examine the economic trends up to 1920 and those of the 1920s in relation to trends in the development of tenant protest. I do not propose to examine economic trends in detail but rather to sketch them in broad brush strokes and try to gauge their effects on the tenant farmers' economic position by examining some tenant farmer household budgets.

The First World War was a powerful stimulus to all sectors of the Japanese economy. Munitions contracts from Europe flooded into Japan and the reduction of imports from Europe stimulated the growth of industries for home supply. Moreover, Japanese exports to Asia, the Americas and Africa expanded to fill the gap created by the decline in European exports. As a result the industrial sphere expanded and

for the first time industrial production outstripped agricultural. The increased demand for goods invited an increase in prices and this in turn spurred investment. Prices in general increased rapidly; in the 40 years preceding the war prices had risen by 25.8% but during the five war years rose 125%. Profits were also remarkable; in 1914 a survey of 68 important large businesses showed an average profit of 15% and dividends of 10% but by 1919 this had risen to profits of 85% and dividends of 30%.⁷³

The agricultural sphere shared in this prosperity in two ways; prices for agricultural goods rose and employment opportunities for the surplus population increased as well. Prices for all farm products went up and at their peak in 1919 were more than three times as high as they had been in 1915.⁷⁴ The rise in the rice price was particularly steep. In 1914 it was 13 yen 17 sen per koku but rose to nearly 46 yen by 1919 - a three and half fold increase. Partly this increase in price was the result of increased demand and partly the result of a decline in the volume of imported rice due to the diversion of freight vessels to other purposes. Spurred on by these war-time conditions, the increase in productivity too was notable: 10% between 1914 and 1920.⁷⁵ This too added a further measure of prosperity to the rural sector.

The expansion of the urban industrial sphere supplied

opportunities for migration from the countryside for the rural population surplus while the increase in rural light industry gave part-time work to those remaining in the villages. The sons and daughters of the farmers received employment in the new industries and left the farm. In 1914 the industrial labor force had been 1,800,000 but this rose to 2,800,000 by 1919. At least 1,000,000 of this is estimated to have come from farm families.⁷⁶ Their wages continued to be an important supplement to the income of their families left behind in the village. This supplement was essential to farm families who could no longer subsist on farming alone.

The prosperity of the villages in the war years was such that phrases like 'village boom' and 'peasant nouveau riche' were coined. One economist has called those years a "Golden Age unknown in the memories of contemporary farmers."⁷⁷ This metaphor is an exaggeration of reality. While it is true that there was prosperity and that many tenant farmers, at the bottom of the rural economic scale, shared in its benefits, those tenants producing nothing for sale beyond their rent and consumption needs did not enjoy the benefits of price increases in agricultural goods and further, were actually put under greater economic strain by the increased price of non-agricultural goods. There were also tenants who had to purchase rice on the market and the high price

of the very grain they produced became an economic burden.⁷⁸ Samples of tenant farmer budgets, however, suggest that some were enjoying a small surplus, though it was not much greater than in the years before 1916. A look at some tenant farmer household budgets before the crisis of 1920 can give us an idea of the effect of the macro-economic trends discussed above on the tenants' economy.

Unfortunately, detailed budget surveys are rare for the years before 1920. The Japanese government did not begin to conduct such surveys until the early 1920s but fortunately we have the surveys that were carried out, in a private capacity, by an employee of the Ministry of Forestry and Agriculture. These surveys of more than 100 owner-farmers and tenants in different regions throughout Japan were taken at scattered intervals up to 1920. A comparison of budgets for 1912 and 1920 can yield an insight into the real economic position of the tenant farmer across those years. It is unfortunate that a survey for 1919 does not exist, since the budget for 1920 is likely to show the initial effects of the economic decline beginning in that year. The obviously small surplus of that year, therefore, should be interpreted carefully. The budgets for 1912 and 1920 are tabled on the following page.

TABLE 6
SUMMARY OF FARM HOUSEHOLD ECONOMIES (IN YEN)

	Tenants	
	1912	1920
Scale of management (size of land under operation in tan)	14.0	13.0
Number of family members (heads)	6	6
INCOME:		
Rice	450	1,041
Other cereals	123	136
Cocoon and others	57	130
Forestry income	-	-
Wages	35	61
Miscellaneous income	40	48
Total:	705	1,415
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Manure and fertilizers	56	163
Land rent	253	522
Wages	-	-
Other operating expenses	-	50
Interest payable for debts	7	20
Total:	316	755
GROSS INCOME	389.0	660.0
HOUSEHOLD EXPENSES:		
Food and drink	256	427
Clothing	24	54
Fuel and light	17	28
Housing expenses	10	16
Educational expenses	-	-
Sundry expenses and incidentals	43	108
Taxes and assessments	8	22
Total:	358	655
NET SURPLUS	31	5

Source: Ouchi Tsutomu, "Agricultural Depression and the Japanese Villages", in The Developing Economies, Vol. 5, number 1-4, Tokyo, 1967, p.600.

Ouchi Tsutomu, the Japanese economist who recorded these budget surveys, has drawn three simple but useful conclusions from them. He suggests that the following trends are apparent:

- 1) With the scale of farm management near constant, farm income increased two times for the tenant.
- 2) The increase in operating expenses was 2.4 times for the tenant. This well exceeds the rate of increase in income.
- 3) Gross income grew by 1.7 times for the tenants but their net surpluses suffered a remarkable decrease.⁷⁹

The increase in farm income is no doubt due to the increase in productivity and the rise in farm product prices. The increase in operating costs reflects some of the changes discussed earlier in this section, specifically, the increasing need to purchase fertilizer, fodder and various household items once produced at home or available from alternate sources. The decrease in surplus is difficult to interpret. It could be due to the effects of the recession beginning in 1920 or barring that, it could be claimed that the tenant farmer used some of his greater income to enhance his standard of living; it could also be a combination of both. Ouchi argues that there was such an enhancement and points to the increase in household expenses as evidence. He claims that the 1.8 times increase in household expenses can be interpreted as representative of a nominal increase in individual consumption. Further, he submits that,

On balance we may conclude that there was a substantial improvement in the farmers' livelihood and that their standards of living were raised, while on the other hand, we may conclude that the fact that their improved livelihood was not necessarily supported by a corresponding increase in their incomes helped make the farmers' lives less stable.⁸⁰

Although it must be qualified, the conclusion that the years 1912 to 1920 were prosperous ones for the tenant farmer, insofar as his income increased and his standard of living improved, seems valid. It seems equally true that this prosperity was based on temporary economic conditions incapable of being sustained, a fact reflected in the observation that his improved livelihood was not supported by a corresponding increase in net income. Further, the structural changes mentioned at the beginning of the chapter had undermined his basic economic position making it unlikely that a long-term stable increase in his standard of living could be sustained by his own efforts.

In fact, the end of the war saw the complete collapse of village prosperity. This crisis was related to the business panic and recession that gripped the country as a whole. Prices quickly dropped off from the 1919 peak. Rice that had sold at 50 yen a koku from September 1919 to March 1920 dropped to 40 yen a koku by August and to 26 yen 30 sen by December - a near 50% drop in one year. The price of silk cocoons, an important rural industry, fell from the Spring 1919 price of 20 yen 93 sen per kanme (8 3/4 lb. measure) to a Fall price of 20 yen 12 sen. This was

the beginning of a serious decline. In the Spring of 1920, the price per kanme was down to 7 yen 59 sen and in the Summer and Fall of that year was down again to 5 yen 12 sen. This represents a drop of nearly 75% in a little more than a year.⁸¹ The prices of rice and silk cocoons as well as other agriculture produce were thereafter subject to yearly fluctuations, 1925 being noteworthy as a recovery peak, but the overall trend was for agricultural prices to decline; they did not return to the 1919 peak until after the Second World War.⁸²

The layoff of factory workers after the war was also a blow to the villages for they lost ~~both~~ an important source of revenue and were now burdened with more surplus population. Further, the gap between the falling prices of agricultural goods and the less rapidly falling prices of manufactured goods reduced the purchasing power of the agricultural yen. Taxes, interest and in some cases cash rents remained fixed, placing a further burden on the farmer. It was a dilemma from which, writes one Japanese scholar, they desperately had to break~~put~~.⁸³ Unfortunately, it was a dilemma impossible to escape from. In the end, the collapse of the industrial boom, the very source of earlier prosperity, left the farmer, with his decreased income, faced with an inflated price structure that did not decrease when the boom collapsed.

Returning to agricultural prices, we see them con-

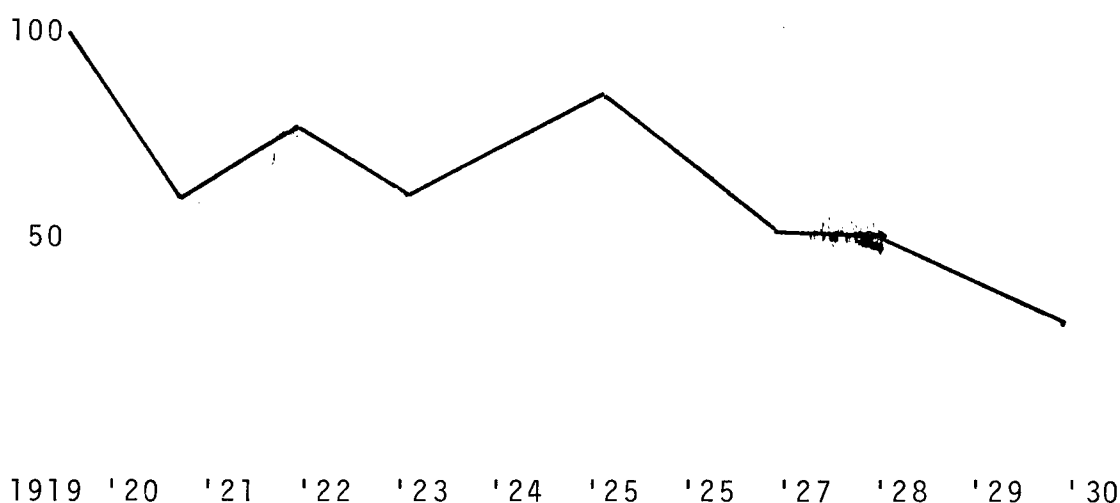
tinuing to drop throughout the 1920s and 1930s. As in Meiji, an increase in foreign imports, at the end of the war, had a debilitating effect on the home rural economy. This time the imports struck largely at the very mainstay of the rural economy - rice production. Rice prices fell after the war, largely due to the tremendous increase in imports of cheap rice from Japan's colonies, Korea and Taiwan. In 1914 only 300,000 tons of Korean and Taiwanese rice was imported but by 1922 this figure had risen to 456,000 tons. This trend continued unabated and in the next three years rice imports nearly doubled again to reach 771,086 tons in 1925. The trend did not stop there; it continued, and by 1934 rice imports were a staggering 7 times as great as they had been in 1920.⁸⁴ Domestic rice prices reeled under this onslaught and the tenants' rice income declined drastically in competition with foreign rice which was 20% to 30% cheaper than the native product.⁸⁵

Yet another contributing factor to the fall in agricultural prices was the slideoff from the mid-twenties of the prices of agricultural goods on the world market. For Japan, the silk trade was a lucrative export, and sericulture was a major activity of a great percentage of Japanese farm families. It is difficult to overplay the importance of the collapse of silk prices on the tenant economy since "over 2,000 families or 30% of the total of

farm families engage in sericulture, and in some provinces such as Nagano and Gumma in central Japan, the farmers depend almost wholly on this for a living."⁸⁶ The decrease in silk price was severe and jeopardized these families' subsistence. In the period 1925 to 1929 the price declined by 33% and in the interval till 1930 by another third.

The decline in the general aggregate farm product price is graphed below.

Table 7 General Aggregate Farm Product Prices



Source: Ouchi Tsutomu, "Agricultural Depression and the Japanese Village", Developing Economies, Vol.5, #1-4, Tokyo, 1967, p.609, Fig.4.

This sharp decline in prices in the aftermath of the war and again with the blow to sericulture is particularly striking. The further plunge with the great depression in 1929 again catches our eye.

The world-wide economic crisis of 1929, by placing restrictions on Japanese exports, notably silk, proved the death blow to the Japanese rural economy. By 1930 the condition of Japanese agriculture was grave; "with rural output virtually constant, farm prices depressed, and village economies stagnant, Japanese agriculture was obviously confronted with crisis conditions by 1930."⁸⁷

Again it is not possible to document the effects of these trends on the tenant farmers' budget in detail since budget surveys do not exist for the years 1921, '22 or '23; however, they do exist for the years after that. A comparison of budget surveys for 1924 and 1930 can serve to reveal the effects of the economic trends of the 1920s on the tenant farmers' economy. For the years 1920 to 1924 we can speculate that the following tendencies could be expected. First, the fall off in farm product prices would reduce tenant income. Second, since the general commodity prices did not drop as fast as farm product prices, the relative purchasing power of the tenant's income would have declined. Related to this, a third trend, namely, the fixed nature of charges such as tax, rent and interest would place an even greater strain on the tenant's

reduced income. Ouchi has written that the result of these factors was that "many farm households were reduced to economic distress and even upper class farmers' account books were marked with red ink."⁸⁸ The budget surveys for 1924 and '30, tabled below, show an acceleration of these trends.

Table 8 Summary of Farm Household Economies - Tenant farmers.

	1924	1930
Scale of farm in <u>tan</u>	14.5	16.2
Number of family members	5.8	6.9
<u>Agricultural Receipts and Disbursements</u>		
Receipts	1,928	1,285
<u>Operating expenses</u>		
Total	1,176	1,867
Rent only	463	278
<u>Farm Income</u>	753	418
Non-agricultural income	246	195
To be deducted		
Taxes and assessments	35	29
Interest payable	8	13
Disposable Income	956	571
Household expenditure	867	654
Net surplus	149	▲ 83

Source: Ouchi Tsutomu[†], Developing Economies, Vol. 5, p. 611, Fig. 6.

▲ denotes deficit..

The following conclusions of Ouchi, based on the budget surveys, are important to us here:

- 1) At the nadir of the depression (1930), the gross income suffered from extraordinary

decline but net farm income was affected with an even greater deficit. Gross farm income in 1930, when compared to that of 1924, stood in 67% for tenants, while a similar comparison at net farm income turned out to be 55.5%

- 2) The decline in the non-agricultural income, or part-time income, was also responsible for declining net farm income. Tenants were unable to cover their household costs, by farm income, even in the year 1924, when the situation was not yet devastating.
- 3) While farm income was dropping drastically, taxes and other public charges remained constant. Interest on debts and liabilities continued to increase as the farmers' borrowings grew bigger and bigger. The disposable income of the farmers was thus shied away by one means or another.
- 4) The farmers' livelihood expenditure was reduced considerably through the processes described in (2) and (3). While general commodity prices declined by nearly one half, this remained relatively moderate and, as it is usually hard to curtail one's expenses when income drops, the farm family budget as a whole turned to deficit.⁸⁹

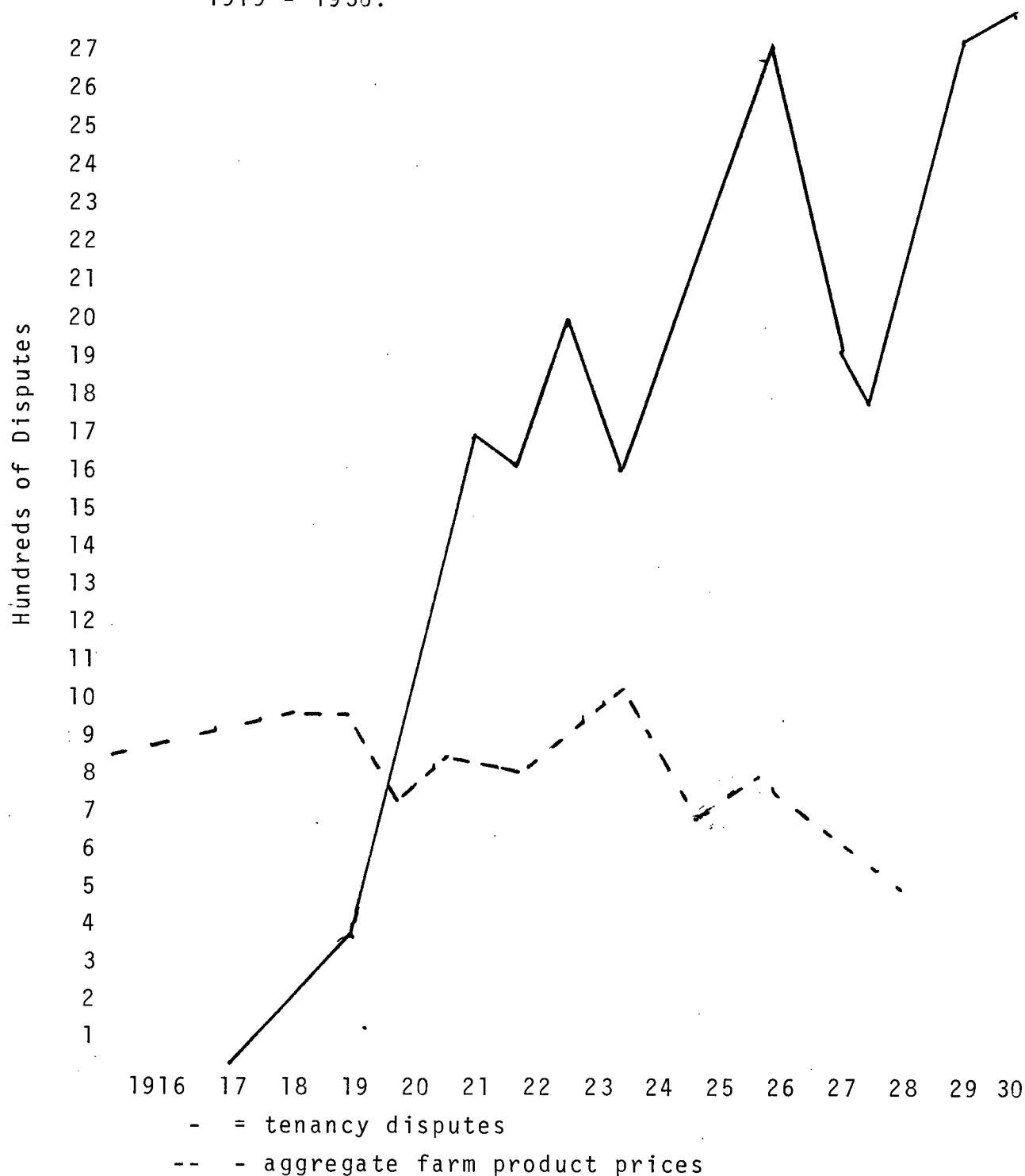
I have tried to demonstrate that the tenant farmers' subsistence was threatened by economic developments of the twenties. We have seen how from 1924 on tenants could not cover their household expenses from farm income so that by 1930 many became destitute. At this point they were merely working for the landlord. This decline must have started from 1920. We know that in 1920 tenant budgets were already in the red. We have further supporting evidence for this assumption in the fluctuation in farm product prices. The fact that they were lower from 1920 to 1924 than they were in 1924 suggests an even greater strain on tenants' budgets in the four years preceding 1924.

We can conclude then that the decade before 1920 was a period of prosperity, particularly marked in the so-called 'Golden Age' of the War years, but ending rather abruptly in 1920. In that year, economic trends began to reduce tenants' income and standard of living and to set the rural sector "adrift on the lowest economic tide that it had known until it was engulfed in the depression". These trends, exacerbated by the imports of foreign rice and the collapse of the silk industry, and finally the world-wide economic crisis of 1929, brought tenants to a state of destitution by 1930.

The question now confronts us: Is there a relationship between these economic trends and the outbreak of tenancy disputes in rural Japan? A simple graph plotting trends in tenancy disputes against trends in the economy, measured by the aggregate farm product price index will be helpful in answering this question. This graph is presented on the following page.

The graph is revealing. The correlation between the two factors is unmistakable. It appears that at precisely the point of turn-around in the rural economy, with the subsequent threat to the tenants' standard of living and livelihood, the phenomenon of tenant unrest becomes visible. There is a continuing correlation between deepening economic crisis and increasing tenant unrest across the whole decade.

Table 9 Tenant disputes and aggregate farm product prices
1919 - 1930.



Source: Compiled from Dore, Land Reform in Japan. Table 2, p.72 and Ouchi Tsutomu, "Agricultural Depression and the Japanese Village" Developing Economies, Vol.5, #1-4, Tokyo, 1967. p.609, Fig. 4..

The geographic distribution of disputes also suggests that the sharp threat to tenant's subsistence was most certainly a factor that activated the potential for peasant protest created by the breakdown in the vertical ties of loyalty between the tenant and landlord. It was the areas closest to the industrial centers that were hardest hit by the economic developments of the 1920s. It is in these very areas that the commercialization of agriculture was most advanced. Here both the tenant's relationship with his landlord had been most eroded and his economic self-sufficiency and security most strongly undermined by the structural changes that had occurred in the countryside since the Restoration. The first recorded disputes, those of 1917, first illuminate the geographic correlation between dispute and the economic and social character of the tenant's position in the areas adjacent to industrialized centers of Japan. The first disputes occurred "in Gifu and Aichi, where the price of agricultural produce was especially sensitive to money fluctuation, and then spread to the Shizuoka plain."⁹⁰ In the 1920s this pattern continued to predominate. The Chubu, Kansai and Kanto areas showed the highest concentration of tenancy disputes. These areas included the major industrial centers of Osaka, Nagoya and Tokyo, in short, the economically advanced areas of the nation.⁹¹ The areas of Kinki and Chubu alone account for 50% of all disputes, and with the inclusion of disputes

in Kanto, the industrialized, economically advanced regions show fully 68.3% of all disputes.⁹²

The outlying areas, less sensitive to market forces, were somewhat isolated from the immediate threat to subsistence presented by the deteriorating economic situation. In the 1930s, when the livelihood of tenants in those areas was threatened by the deepening rural economic crisis, tenancy disputes spread out beyond the economically advanced regions to the less advanced hinterland.

In general terms, the phenomenon of unrest occurring after a sharp decline in the standard of living of a given group is not rare. The sharp reversal of a trend to increased prosperity provides not only objective economic reasons for protest but also an important psychological stimulus. The following observation on the phenomenon of revolution is an interesting argument in support of the above assertion.

Revolutions are most likely to occur when a prolonged period of objective and economic social improvement is followed by a period of sharp reversal. The all-important effect on the minds of the people is to produce, during the former period, an expectation of continued ability to satisfy needs, which continue to rise, and during the latter, a mental state of anxiety and frustration when manifest reality breaks away from anticipated reality. The actual state of socio-economic development is less significant than the idea that past progress can and must continue in the future.⁹³

Although the objective economic conditions of the Japanese tenant alone were cause for a 'mental state of anxiety and

frustration', there is reason to believe that his expectations of what his standard of living should be had risen and the subsequent failure to achieve this standard did reinforce his feelings of alienation. Waswo alludes to this when she observes that "the desire for improved tenancy conditions arose not from despair or desperation, but from prosperity, however slight and fleeting, which gave the tenants the economic ability to engage in disputes and which raised not only their standard of living but expectations of what that standard should be." The experience of some tenants with factory wage labor also led to an expectation of a higher standard of living. During the wartime boom, many tenants and their families experienced work both easier and more highly paid than their farm labor. One official, investigating tenancy disputes in the 1920s, wrote that "the basic cause of most disputes is the awareness among tenants that agricultural labor is much more troublesome than other kinds of labor and that farming itself is much less profitable than other occupations." He continued, "Poor harvests merely provide tenants with an immediate excuse for expressing their grievances."⁹⁴

We can conclude then that it is at least partially true that tenant militancy is rooted in frustrated expectations for achieving a higher standard of living. The danger in accepting this thesis fully is that the basic threat to tenant subsistence is ignored. For many tenants,

especially as the decade wore on, the struggle was not for an improved standard of livelihood but for any standard at all. The surplus of the war years did provide the financial means to wage the struggle but it must be realized that the financial commitment is indicative of deeper factors, not a natural reaction to a surplus. It must also be borne in mind that the satisfaction of basic economic needs releases energy for other activities. The important realization is that the equation is much more complex than simply relating an economic surplus and its depletion with tenant unrest. Japanese scholarship generally views economic conditions as important background influences to tenant disputes rather than as direct causes of disputes; contributing factors rather than the *raison d'être* of dispute. We must not forget the point that the increase in productive power and the constant surplus of farm family economies during the boom years (1916-1920) gave the tenant the financial strength to fight tenancy disputes and that this forms the background to the main growth of the tenant movement.⁹⁵

In accordance with Scott's theory, I have treated the economic conditions discussed in this chapter as a trigger that ignited the potential for tenant protest which had been created by the breakdown in the traditional landlord-tenant relationship. This conclusion seems consistent with the evidence presented next. Scott suggests

that a further factor relating to the realization of this potential is the means of mobilization and action available to the tenant. He writes,

Secondly, it seems necessary to link the level of 'distress' which peasants experience with the means available for them to act. This seems to be the most important distinction between the rural proletariat outside the village context and village-based tenants or labourers. The former are perhaps the most hard-pressed sector of the peasantry and thus highly volatile - but they are usually disorganized and thus 'demobilized'. Village-based groups who, by contrast, may be materially somewhat better off, often have the village itself available to them as a pre-existing structure for cooperation and action. For such peasants, then, the 'little tradition' and the village are the functional equivalents of the pubs, chapels, and friendly societies which helped create and underwrite the gradual formation of class consciousness among the nineteenth century English worker.⁹⁶

In the next chapter I will examine one of the means available to the Japanese tenant to act - the village institution of tenant unions. I will concern myself with this as an organization for mobilizing the tenants in their struggles against the landlords. I will also discuss the extent to which these unions became class conscious and the ways in which they in turn created and maintained class consciousness.

Scott does not propose that the above 'mobilization' variable and the economic variable are the only factors involved in activating the potential for peasant protest and class-based action. But they are the main ones which

he discusses, though he admits that a large number of variables exist. The Japanese case suggests that ~~more~~ further important variables may be first, the existence of a labor movement with which the tenants more or less constantly interact, second, the existence of new patterns of thought which provide an alternative to the values and behaviour associated with the old order and finally, help from outside organizers familiar with and dedicated to the tenant cause. The following excerpt from Japanese scholarship highlights the importance of these factors to the development of tenant protest in Japan.

We know that the tenant movement received an important influence from the numerous situations created by the recurring productive cycles of capitalism. But we cannot say that the movement was born of the business panic of 1920/21 and the recession. The economic basis for the birth of the movement was created between 1916 and 1920. Beyond this the farmers' change in mentality and the influence of the labour movement stimulated the fundamental growth of the tenant movement. At a time when this influence was a briskly boiling ferment the peasants suddenly received the blow of the business panic and crop failures. Then, in the breast of the stolid, unorganized, conservative peasant, the fire of class conflict was lit.⁹⁷

Some of the factors contributing to the farmers' change in mental outlook and the influence of the labor movement will be treated in relation to the development and nature of the tenant unions in the following chapter.

CHAPTER IV

THE ROLE OF THE TENANT UNIONS IN THE EXPRESSION OF TENANT UNREST

Scott submits that the actualization of the potential for peasant protest created by the erosion of vertical ties of loyalty between peasant and rural elite is, in part, dependant on the presence of a means to mobilize. In Japan, where ties between tenant and landlord had weakened over the preceding decades, the tenant unions provided this means in the 1920s. This chapter explores the origins of these unions, their professed aims, and their actual functions in the organized struggle against the landlord. Two further questions are of particular interest: The extent to which class consciousness developed among the tenants and, the factors beyond the village which had an influence on the development of that class consciousness, and the organization of the tenant unions and their involvement in confrontation with the landlords.

The plethora of militant, class-conscious tenant farmer unions in the 1920s represents an expansion and transformation of a village tenant farmer institution that had existed for more than forty years. The numerical expansion and the transformed nature of these unions in the 1920s was a response to the declining patronage of the landlord and the weakened bargaining position of the tenant vis-a-vis the landlord. The new experience of the tenant farmer, created by the erosion of the traditional landlord-tenant

relationship, fostered the development of class consciousness which was in turn expressed by and reinforced in the tenant unions. A variety of forces outside the village, notably the labor movement, but also the wider democracy movement, the Rice Riots, the Russian Revolution, developments in the League of Nations and the student movement, all had an influence on the development of a class consciousness among the tenants and the increasing tendency for them to organize and engage in a struggle against the landlord.

Before discussing the expansion and transformation of the tenant unions in the 1920s a sketch of their development in the previous 45 years is helpful in understanding the changes in that decade. The first tenant union was organized in 1875 by a group of tenants from Kutsui village in Gifu prefecture. It is interesting to note that this union, unlike the majority of subsequently formed unions, was organized for the purpose of wresting a concession from the landlord. The Kutsui tenant union was formed when several of the tenants agreed to collectively confront their landlords, by what means is not clear, to prevent a scheduled increase in the okitemai, the part of the rent that went towards the tenant's share of the tax paid by the landlord. The tenants involved signed a mutual agreement affirming they would support one another in this endeavor. The landlords refused the demand and the union, not strong enough to achieve it's purpose, disbanded.⁹⁸

From 1875 on, a variety of tenant unions were formed. These unions were organized for various purposes, most unconcerned with landlord-tenant conflicts. In fact, these early unions are conspicuous in their lack of militancy. In 1917, a survey of the existing tenant unions found that only 51 of 239 unions recorded had been formed to oppose landlords and engage in disputes.⁹⁹ In late 1918, the Home Ministry conducted another survey, finding that of 280 unions formed only 118 unions reflected strictly tenant interests as opposed to village interests. Most of these early unions were temporary organizations that met for the purpose of providing mutual aid or taking care of specific village concerns. They were based on the smaller units of village organization - the village council, hamlet council and religious associations.¹⁰⁰ They bore names like "tenant friendship society", "tenant mutual aid society", or "agricultural improvement society". Their purposes and platforms variously included:

1. The improvement of tenancy conditions.
2. The improvement and maintenance of tenancy conditions and the development of agricultural improvements.
3. Prevention of competition for tenant land (presumably among tenants in times of poor tenant-to-land ratios).
4. The development of improvements in agriculture.
5. Cooperation between landlords and tenants and the development of agricultural improvement.¹⁰¹

The nature of the early tenant unions is clearly expressed in the above points. Although points 1 and 2 imply negotiation and perhaps even confrontation with the landlord most of the points deal with broader tenant and village concerns.

The non-militant appearance of the tenant unions before 1920 should be interpreted carefully. Although this lack of militancy could be considered evidence of a lack of disparity of interests between landlord and tenant, it more likely reflects the fact that the tenant knew he had to appear submissive in face of the greater power of the landlord.¹⁰² The early tenant unions were often covertly militant, that is, they served to camouflage more militant concerns. The tenants used these unions to take collective action against the landlord if he raised rent or revoked tenancy. At times, the tenants would collectively refuse to cultivate the land or return the land, declining to take up tenancy again until their demands were met. The tenant union was a structure through which they could provide each other with aid and maintain the solidarity that was necessary to make their tactics effective. There were severe penalties for those who, disobeying the decisions of the union membership, placed tenant solidarity in jeopardy. Recalcitrant members could be fined or, in case of a severe breach with the union, punished by mura hachibu, the practice of denying a village member the mutual aid services that were common.¹⁰³ The contradiction between the non-militant

appearance and the actual militancy of some of the early unions was such that tenant unions were regarded by some as a kind of secret society.¹⁰⁴

In the period 1917 - 1920 certain changes in the overt nature of tenant unions augur the coming of a multitude of unions which openly professed militant goals. In May 1920, the Ministry of Agriculture again published a survey of tenant unions. This time there is an important addition to the list of tenant union purposes. The survey records that some unions openly professed having the purpose of maintaining tenancy conditions by opposing or confronting landlords. The period before 1917 shows an almost complete absence of this kind of union but the period 1917 to 1920 lists 13.¹⁰⁵ The trend is slow between those years but suddenly in 1920 there is a dramatic increase in the number of tenant unions which continues steadily until it peaks in 1927. The number of tenancy disputes also increase dramatically from 1920. The following table illustrates the intensification of disputes and the increase in the number of tenant unions.

Table 10 Number of Disputes, Tenant Unions and Membership

Year	# of disputes	# tenant unions	#members 000
1917	85	-	-
18	256	-	-
19	326	-	-
20	408	352	-
21	1,680	681	-
22	1,578	1,115	-
23	1,917	1,530	164
24	1,532	2,337	232
25	2,206	3,496	307
26	2,751	3,936	347
27	2,053	4,452	365
28	1,866	4,353	330
29	2,434	4,156	316
30	2,478	4,208	301

Source: R.P. Dore, Land Reform in Japan, Oxford University Press, 1959, Table 2 p.72.

The unions of the earlier period provided the organizational precedent for the unions of the 1920s and 1930s. Some of these earlier unions also supplied precedents for the tactics widely used in disputes during the latter period. The erosion of patronage and vertical ties previously binding them to their landlord, together with the major threat to their subsistence in the 1920s, made it necessary to confront the landlord and wrest from him rent reductions and a more secure tenure in order to guarantee that threatened subsistence.

The landlords were reluctant to meet their demands and it was only logical that the weakened tenant bargaining position deriving from forty years of adverse structural change led to new forms of confrontation. The collective bargaining made possible by the tenant unions obviously strengthened their position vis-a-vis the landlord. Thus did the organization of tenant unions largely concerned with confronting the landlord become a widespread phenomenon. These new unions were different in other important ways as well: they were organized on a more permanent basis and in units larger than the previous comparatively small-scale units of social organization. The oaza, the largest unit of a village, became the basic unit of organization, and in some prefectures such as Gumma and Tottori, the gun (district) became the unit for federations of unions.¹⁰⁶

The relationship between the increases in tenant unions and the increase in the number of tenancy disputes was a two-way street. The tenant unions did engage in dispute after their formation, but most often the resistance of landlords to tenant demands, leading to a dispute, stimulated the development of unions.

Most tenant unions were the direct products of disputes with the landlords; some were the work of outside organizers who prepared the ground for dispute.¹⁰⁷

Organizing by outsiders was prevalent as early as 1920 when there was a concerted effort to organize unions throughout

Japan under the slogan, "Peasants of the Country, Unite!". In 1922 the Japan Farmers' Union, a national political party representing the interests of the tenants, was founded. This party and other national organizations that professed to represent tenant interests avowed that their chief functions were to "assist tenants engaged in disputes, to encourage the formation of local tenant unions in districts hitherto unorganized, and to direct and coordinate the formulation of tenant demands."¹⁰⁸ It remains true, however, that most tenant unions were organized where a dispute had developed and further that the tenants themselves were usually the organizers.

These tenant unions were not a quickly passing phenomenon. They were organizationally stable, existing between disputes as well as during them. George Totten has written that early in periods of vigorous growth of strife, organizations such as tenant unions disappear on the settlement of dispute, but he continues to the effect that "a greater number of unions than disputes at any given time may be taken as a sign of greater organizational stability."¹⁰⁹ In Japan the tenant unions were more numerous than disputes from 1924 on.

The tenant unions formed after 1920 were primarily organized to strengthen the tenants' position vis-a-vis the landlords and to serve as effective collective bargaining units. To ensure solidarity, members were required to

pledge adherence to rules that were typically as follows:

1. Never to attempt to obtain tenancy rights of land already cultivated by another member by offering a higher rent.
2. Never to accept a landlord's demand to return land without consulting the union.
3. Never to relinquish tenancy rights without first informing the union and arranging for another member to take over the land.
4. Never to take over the tenancy of the land from another member without his agreement.
5. On purchasing land currently leased to another member, not to attempt to terminate the tenancy for at least one year.¹¹⁰

These rules, essential to maintenance of solidarity, were enforced through a series of punishments including fines and actions such as the previously mentioned practice of mura hachibu.

Using the union as a collective bargaining unit, the tenants would confront the landlords with their demands. Since most of these demands related to matters concerning rent, the tenants negotiated them between October and December when rents were due. There is no way of knowing how often these demands were met through negotiation, for only disputes are recorded. The demands leading most frequently to dispute are tabled on the following page.

Table 11 Principal Demands of Tenants, 1923 - 1940

Year	# Disputes	Rent Reduction				Continuation of tenancy or compensation	
		temporary		permanent			
1923	1,917	1,249	65.0%	582	30.3%	15	0.8%
24	1,532	1,044	67.0%	358	22.2%	35	2.8%
25	2,206	1,444	64.0%	475	21.0%	173	7.7%
26	2,751	2,011	78.0%	272	9.8%	318	11.8%
27	2,052	1,206	59.0%	253	12.4%	444	21.5%
28	1,886	1,014	50.0%	177	9.5%	484	26.0%
29	2,434	1,339	55.0%	151	6.2%	728	29.8%
30	2,478	1,042	42.0%	192	7.8%	1,030	41.6%

Source: Adapted from B. Waswo, "The Origins of Tenant Dispute" in Japan in Crisis, ed. H.D. Harootunian, 1974, p.383, table 9.

There was a notable change in the principal demands of tenants as the decade wore on. From 1927 on, the tenants appear to be on the defensive while the landlords more frequently used the tactic of revoking tenancy to end disputes. The tenants' demands reflect this in their switch from matters concerning rent reduction, both permanent and temporary, to matters concerning continuation of tenancy or compensation when it was revoked. The tactics used by the tenants in the struggle against the landlord demanded a high degree of solidarity for success. Tenants refused, in some cases, to harvest the crop and in others to cultivate the land until their demands were met. Another popular tactic was to return the land en-masse to the landlord, refusing to take up cultivation until the demands were met.

For success in a tactic like this, where one tenant was apt to offer to cultivate land returned by another, solidarity in tenant ranks was especially essential. Tenants not only employed tactics designed to interrupt production but they also refused outright to pay rent and taxes, petitioned the government, or took their landlords to court if circumstances permitted.¹¹¹ On occasion it is reported that violent demonstrations and even looting were used as means of protest to achieve demands.¹¹²

While the functions of providing a structure for collectively confronting the landlord and maintaining solidarity in disputes were central to the tenant unions, it would be incorrect to suppose that these were the sole functions. The tenant unions were more broadly conceived. One of the leaders of the tenant movement is reported to have commented that a tenant union, "must be sometimes a barracks of warriors who fight against other classes, sometimes a school of village culture, a club for amusement, a temple, a shrine."¹¹³ In practice, tenant unions did fill these and other functions. In some instances they engaged in the cooperative purchase of tools and fertilizers. They also enjoyed some success in establishing schools to teach basic social science and agricultural techniques.¹¹⁴ There is no reason to believe that the provision of mutual aid and the concern with specific village issues like roads and

irrigation, so prevalent in the early unions, ceased to be functions of the more militant unions.

As the expressed need for a tenant union to be "sometimes a barracks of warriors to fight other classes" suggests, these unions were class conscious. The following excerpt from R.P. Dore's work indicates the extent to which class consciousness took root in the tenant's life.

The old folk songs of the Bon dances gave way to the internationale; red flags appeared at the head of peasant demonstrations with anti-capitalist slogans proclaiming death to the exploiters of the proletariat. Divisions within the village tended to become more ideological and class conscious.¹¹⁵

It is necessary to reflect on what 'class' and 'class consciousness' is to fully understand how and why the developments in Japan's rural history discussed in this paper spawned a class-conscious tenant movement. The British scholar E.P. Thompson expresses a concept of class and class consciousness that allows an insight into the dynamics of the creation of this phenomenon. He claims that class is neither a structure nor a category but rather a historical phenomenon, something which happens to men providing a unity to seemingly disparate and unconnected experiences. It is necessary to quote him at length to accurately develop this thought further.

More than this, the notion of class entails the notion of historical relationship....The relation-

ship must always be embodied in real people and in a real context. Moreover we cannot have two distinct classes, each with an independent being, and then bring them into relationship with each other. We cannot have love without lovers, nor deference without squires and labourers. And class happens when some men, as a result of common experience (inherited or shared), feel and articulate their identity as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs. The class experience is largely determined by the productive relations into which men are born - or enter involuntarily. Class-consciousness is the way in which these experiences are handled in cultural terms: embodied in traditions, value systems, ideas, and institutional forms. 116

Class solidarity then, develops when a group of men interpret their experiences as common to themselves as against other men whose interests are different from and possibly opposed to theirs.

In Japan, the withdrawal of the landlord from his traditional place in the village and the increasing divergence of landlord and tenant interests created a situation where the tenant could see that this experience was not shared by the landlord and, further, that his interests were different from those of his landlord. Thus class became a reality among the tenants, it is not something that can be measured but rather a relationship that developed between two groups of men whose experience, largely determined by their productive relations, and interests diverged. Class consciousness is the response to this

experience. It is the product of men actively coping with their experience, not something which automatically arises.

Thompson says of this:

We can see a logic in the responses of similar occupational groups undergoing similar experiences, but we cannot predicate any law. Consciousness of class arises in different times and places, but never in just the same way. 117

In the songs of the tenant unions the identification of the tenant's experience and interests as something unique to him and opposed to those of the landlord can be most clearly seen. The following song from Taguchi village in Osaka Fu is a case in point.

With our Imperial succession continuing without equal
Japan is the jewel of the world.
If you ask of the source (of this nation)
In Japan, their fame is high.
It is us, the working farmers,
70% of this nation!

We, without sin, suffer.
The violent, tyrannical landlords
bask in the sunshine, while even the trees and grass
try not to flutter.
Rise up, Japan's farmers!
Rise up, Japan's farmers!

It is interesting to note the national chauvinism expressed as well as the tenants' justifiable pride in the important role they shouldered in Japan. It is clear from this song that their attitudes towards their landlords had changed and that they now identified themselves as a group apart. In the following two songs this identification of their experiences and interests as different from and opposed to those of their landlords is even stronger.

Why are we destitute, we who labour?
 Those who produce rice should eat rice.
 Please do not think we do not eat because we hoard.
 We do not eat rice because we are destitute.
 What of our ruddy complexions!
 What of our gnarled hands!
 What of our hairless shins!
 When we swing we have strength.

We who receive rice shoots of unbearable beauty,
 Are broken-hearted by the drought
 and pained by the wind.
 While gazing happily at the autumn fields,
 We do not understand that these are not our children.
 There is sadness.
 There is nostalgia.
 There is joy.
 There is gratefulness.
 The golden waves are full some but the harvest sees
 the last of it.
 We give our crop to the landlord and weep.

This idiocy, this stupidity,
 It is an irritating job with no self-respect.

They say, 'Poverty runs from the shadow of hard work' but
 We have been deceived!

We build the storehouses,
 We appreciate the land.

Our clothes are in tatters,
 Our houses lean.
 Our backs are bent and
 The rain comes through our roofs.

Ah, Ah, this is tragic.
 We were wrung by the landlords,
 But now we have awakened!
 Now we can see!

We sustain the landlord,
 We are the parents who sustain the country.
 We, the tenants, are the benefactors
 We, the peasants, alone are the parents of life!

* * *

The rice shoots burned.
 Our fortunes are bad.
 Every year it is eaten completely.
 Where is the worth of rice burnt brown to the top?

What bastards!
 It is unbearable, these conditions.
 Look at our arms; they have strength
 But in reaping we cannot get sustenance.
 Emperor, what have you done?
 The landlord fattens,
 Our stomachs are empty.
 Bastards!
 The persimmons ripen, the chestnuts fall,
 This hungry ghost,
 This eternal throne,
 Do we have to support you?
 The landlords' warehouses are stuffed to bursting,
 Our stomachs are empty! 116

* * *

These songs are certainly evidence that the tenant regarded himself as a class apart from the landlord. The songs are an expression of class consciousness, a tangible reflection of the division in the village. There is also a crude ideology expressed, one that is anti-landlord and, to the extent that it demands that wealth be distributed among producers, anti-capitalist; most remarkable, it is also anti-Imperial, in at least one instance.

The tenant unions were the institutional expression of this class consciousness. The extent of class consciousness among tenants cannot be measured by the numerical strength of the tenant unions alone. The tenants were not entirely free to organize as they chose. Often, through either coercion or court action, tenants were prevented from organizing unions involving only themselves and giving expression to their own needs. In this way class consciousness was suppressed or averted, though often only

temporarily. The manifesto adopted by the Japanese Landowner's Association in 1926 clearly reveals the landlords' alarm at the development of class struggle in the village and the measures to contain it. The manifesto in part reads:

Remembering the splendid tradition of our nation, with sovereign and subjects forming one whole, and reflecting on the glorious history of our national development in the past, let us emphasize the harmonious relations between capital and labour, and especially cultivate peace between capital and labour, farmers and landlords, and thus contribute to the development of our agricultural villages. What sort of devils are they who furiously strike fire bells when there is no fire and incite to class struggle, provoking animosity against landlords by exciting tenant farmers? If these malicious designs go unrestricted, what will become of our national existence? ¹¹⁹

The landlords plan to defeat the 'malicious designs' of tenant organizers and stem the growth of class consciousness and class struggle in the village involved organizing the tenants into village unions including both tenants and landlords as an alternative to the tenant unions. These unions were known as Kyocho kumiai, or conciliation unions. In a village institution including both landlord and tenant, the landlord could work to extinguish class consciousness and circumscribe tenant activities. These unions correspond to the 'yellow' or company unions of the labor movement.¹²⁰ These conciliation unions, initiated by the landlords, were the forum for emphasizing the virtues of harmonious relations between

classes and peace in the village - virtues which are deeply rooted in feudal rural philosophies. Most of these unions were formed on settlement of a particular dispute, generally at the initiative of landlords but frequently on the initiative of the police or village authorities.¹²¹ The government too, especially after 1924, played a significant role in encouraging and establishing these unions. After that year, most tenancy disputes were settled under the provisions of the Tenancy Conciliation Law and as a condition of settlement the conciliators frequently demanded that the tenants switch membership from local tenant unions to the conciliation union in their village. The decline of tenant unions from 1927 on is largely the result of increasing pressure on tenants to abandon their own unions for membership in the conciliation unions.¹²²

The distribution patterns of the conciliation unions is further evidence of the extent to which they were 'yellow' unions. Jumping ahead to 1934, we find these unions concentrated in relatively few prefectures. Gumma prefecture has 45,433 members in 825 unions, Saitama prefecture has 37,663 members in 81 unions, and Kagawa, Hyogo, Aichi, Chiba and Niigata prefectures combined have more than 15,000 members. In 7 of Japan's 42 prefectures we find concentrated 1,405 unions, fully 61% of the national total. In terms of the national membership, these unions 149,164 members represent 54% of the total. It is no accident

that these very prefectures were also the areas of heaviest tenant union organizing and dispute in the 1920's. It is here that the efforts to avert or suppress class consciousness and class struggle were most intensive. One must conclude that the action taken to circumvent tenants' class-based organizations was vigorous and resulted in diverting considerable numbers of tenants from tenant unions to the 'yellow' conciliation unions.

The combined figures for both tenant union membership and conciliation union membership and the number of units of each institution give us an accurate picture of how widespread the change in tenant consciousness was. Taking the figures for 1927, the peak year for the number of tenant unions, the membership of tenant and conciliation unions comes to 539,306. The 365,000 members in the tenant unions represent roughly 27% of all tenants, while the 174,000 in the conciliation unions represent roughly 12%. Thus roughly 40% of all tenants were organized in some sort of institution that either expressed class consciousness or was designed to suppress or avert such consciousness. It is undeniable that this represents a change in tenant farmer consciousness of considerable importance and reveals the emergence of divisions in the Japanese village hitherto non-existent or muted.

While it is clear that the change in the consciousness

of the tenant farmer and the increasing division of the village along class and ideological lines was largely the product of changes within the village, particularly the nature of the landlord-tenant relationship, influences outside the village reinforced these developments. The major influences commonly cited as fostering the change in tenant farmer consciousness and their increasing tendency to join in organized struggle with the landlord are the increase of labor strikes and union organization, the proclamation by the League of Nation's International Labour Organization that the tenant farmer had the right to organize in his own interests, the democratic and student movements, the Russian Revolution and the Rice Riots. It is difficult to document the manner in which these factors influenced the tenant or their extent and importance in shaping tenant consciousness and behaviour. Since very little research has yet been done on these questions, the account of these influences that follows will be brief.

The influence of the 'Democracy Movement' that flourished in Japan from shortly after the outbreak of the First World War contributed in a small way to breaking submissive patterns of thought among tenants and preparing the way for a change in consciousness. The allied nations rallied the world to their cause through describing their war efforts as the struggle of democracy against militarism, and this had a particularly wide appeal in Japan. Political develop-

ments within Japan at that time were reinforced by the prestige given to democracy overseas. Together with the rapid development of political parties in Taisho, the tendency to oppose the clannish military and bureaucratic government of Japan had increased. The movement to safeguard constitutional government is representative of this trend. At the same time populist politicians were beginning to form links with the increasingly politically conscious citizenry in demanding universal suffrage. The net result of these trends was that between 1916 and 1920 democratic thought dominated Japan's intellectual world and a variety of popular movements were born, the tenant union movement being a notable example.¹²³

The 'Democracy Movement' was centered in the universities and its most eloquent spokesmen were university professors using academic publications as a forum. This activity did filter down to the common people who came to understand democracy as meaning social and economic equality. The economic problems of the country soon provided a situation where this understanding could be employed. The existence of democratic thought in the labor strikes, rice riots of 1918, and farmers' disputes was a natural development. The influence of the 'Democratic Movement' on the tenants' movement can be seen in two developments. First, the conviction of the justice of human and social equality took root strongly in the villages. Second, the student intelligentsia was deeply affected by the thought of the

academics who expounded the virtues of democracy. Many of these students were from the villages and were later found in leadership positions in the tenant movement.¹²⁴

The influence of the Russian Revolution of 1917 was not nearly as striking in Japanese society as it was in Europe. The influence on a small number of socialists, labor leaders and radical students was considerable and stimulated the growth of fledgling social movements. More importantly, the Russian Revolution stimulated the commitment of radical students to Marxism and these students later played an active leadership role in the labor and peasant movements. There are also records of Japanese soldiers sent to Siberia, returning home to the villages and leading tenant unions in struggles against the village landlords.¹²⁵ The excitement that the Russian Revolution stirred among Japan's leftists is best illustrated by the following story. On the first anniversary of the Revolution, a group of employees of the Kanto Federation and Economic Production Survey Bureau of the Japan Farmers' Union were asked by one of their number to write down on a piece of paper unseen by the others the number of years it would take for a revolution to occur in Japan; the average guess was three years.¹²⁶ It is difficult to determine just how much the Russian Revolution influenced the tenants in the villages. While the most honest answer is that it likely did not influence the villagers very much, the enthusiasm for social revolution inspired

among the leadership by the revolution in Russia must have infected the villagers to at least a small degree.

The third annual meeting of the League of Nations' International Labour Organization influenced the tenants of Japan with the solution of a long-standing internal problem relating to the right of tenants to organize in their own interests. The Japanese government had long taken the position that the tenant was a kind of small entrepreneur and thus bore complete responsibility for his own economic condition. He could not expect the law to guarantee his working conditions in the same way that the ILO sought to guarantee conditions for laborers. The Government further claimed that the tenant had nothing to gain by being granted the right to organize in defense of his own interests. This problem was taken up by the Japanese delegates to the International Labour Organization in Geneva. At the third annual meeting the Organization ruled that the tenant was a laborer and did have the right to organize in his own interests. This decision was soon passed on to the villages through the mass media. The popular rural magazine Tochi to Jiyu (Land and Freedom) published an article entitled "The Tenant is a Labourer" on January 27, 1922, explaining the decision taken in Geneva and urging the tenants to organize tenant unions.¹²⁷

Of much greater influence than the factors mentioned

above were the Rice Riots of 1918. These riots, engulfing hundreds of villages, were part of the tenant's direct experience, unlike the previously mentioned factors. The Rice Riots occurred when the need to equip and supply a Japanese military expedition to Siberia aggravated a rice shortage due to the poor harvest of that year and drove rice prices to treble the usual price. In August of that year, a group of housewives in Toyama prefecture tried to prevent the export of rice from the village. News of their action spread and for the next 57 days throughout 32 of Japan's 41 prefectures, hundreds of thousands of laborers, farmers and citizens attacked rice merchants, wealthy people and the police while demanding that the price of rice be reduced by half. There were riots among the villages in Osaka, Okayama, Yamagata, Yamaguchi, Shimane and Fukushima prefectures. 810,000 people participated in these riots and over 8,000 were arrested. The riots ended when the price of rice was reduced and the army brought in to restore peace. It is not known how many of the participants were tenants nor how many among those arrested came from tenant ranks, but it must be assumed the numbers were not inconsiderable. The legacy of the rice riots was twofold: the provision of an example of the power of mass movements and lingering tensions in the villages throughout the land.¹²⁸ The influence of the Rice Riots was not immediately apparent in the phenomenon of tenant disputes, as it was in labor

strikes, but it is often speculated that the undercurrent created by the riots worked in the villages to provide the groundwork for the organized struggle soon to come.¹²⁹

It is the influence of the formation of labor unions and their activities that is easiest to link to tenant thought and behaviour. The findings of the 1925 Survey Concerning Tenancy Disputes afford a number of insights into the nature of the trade union influence on the tenants. The survey reads in part,

Under the influence of the European War, prosperity was experienced as the industrial world developed vigorously in the prefectures along the southern coast. From the many prefectures of the adjacent areas younger sons of agricultural labourers went out to work in the factories. There they associated with the industrial labourers. They ate and roomed together. It was an education for them; ideas concerning freedom and equality were infectious. They carried these ideas and thoughts back to the village. There they preached these ideas and stimulated the self awareness of tenants. Moreover, the influence of the propaganda of newspapers and magazines as well as the decisive action of the July 1921 Kobe Kawasaki Dockyard strike in fostering the 'blindly-follow-the-crowd mood' of the tenant is clearly apparent. In the prefectures affected by this mood, tenancy disputes have a chronic quality. In the disputes we encountered, the tenants employ such rational measures as putting their budget books under the nose of the landlord. We can call this proof of the influence of labour on the tenants' thought and 'self awareness' becoming one cause of dispute.¹³⁰

It was not until the war years, then, that the Japanese labor movement became a major social force capable of influencing the tenants. The rapid expansion of the labor force

during the war years was not only a turning point for the labor movement itself but many of the new members added to the industrial work force were from the villages, and were in a position to take that experience back to them later. In the five years of the war, the labor force doubled and reached 2,777,177 members. The increases in prices, work speedups, and the influence of the Russian Revolution drove labor to greater union activity and self awareness.¹³¹ The Rice Riots of 1918 added fuel to the fire, and labor disputes and union organizing increased rapidly. In 1918, 417 labor disputes were recorded; this rose to 497 by the following year and continued to rise annually across the next decade. Labor unions likewise increased, the 40 unions of 1911 nearly trebling to 107 in 1918, rising again to 187 the following year, and by 1920 there were 273 labor unions in Japan. In 1919 a milestone was marked when the Friendly Society (Yuai-kai), formerly a workers' mutual aid society, was transformed into a trade union federation openly dedicated to the fight against capital in labor's interest.¹³² The large numbers of workers from the villages were undoubtedly influenced by these developments, especially the growing confidence with which workers fought management to protect and advance their interests. The popular notions of class, freedom and equality also had an appeal among rural workers in labor's ranks. It is an interesting question whether the internal organization of trade unions was reflected in that of tenant unions but unfortunately

there is no data to answer this. The influence of the labor movement was clearly visible in tenancy disputes of the time. A typical source records that budding socialistic ideas of class, freedom and equality due to the increasing association with the laborers and the influence of the Kawasaki dockyard strike, a representative example of the explosive labor movement of the day, can be recognized in any number of patterns in the belt where disputes were frequent.¹³³

The influence of the labor movement is more easily accepted when one is aware of some of the activities that accompanied labor strikes. For instance, during the Kobe Kawasaki Dockyard strike of 1919, leaflets were distributed among tenants in the neighbouring rural areas arguing that tenants too should organize in their own interests since the landlord was to them what the capitalist was to the worker. This particular strike and the activities that accompanied it had so great an impact on the tenant that it was dubbed "the matins for awakening sleepy farmers".¹³⁴ There were other attempts to develop a sense of common cause between worker and tenant. George Totten writes of one way in which this was done:

The tenant farmers were encouraged to believe that they had the support of the working class, while the worker's sympathy was appealed to by descriptions of the plight of their country cousins. In this manner, even those disputes in which the workers or tenant farmers lost could be utilized to develop 'class consciousness' transcending urban-rural boundaries.¹³⁵

Not only were there conscious attempts to make the tenant aware of labor's struggle and the common cause they shared with each other, but the sheer explosive drama of some of the labor disputes must certainly have had some influence. A case in point is the second Kawasaki Dockyard strike where 30,000 workers marched and clashed with police before the army was brought in. A further case in point was the disturbance of February 1921, when the 30,000 striking workers of Yatsushiro heavy industry plant in Kobe rioted during a strike.¹³⁶ Strikes on such a scale were not uncommon. Many strikes were of considerable duration and resulted in severe hardships for the workers. The Noda Soy Sauce Company strike illustrates these hardships well. It lasted for 208 days in 1927-'28 and resulted in the dismissal of 745 workers subsequently blacklisted for their participation. The list of strikes could go on and on, but the important point is that which Totten makes, namely, "it is inconceivable that people's lives were not changed by involvement in such strikes."¹³⁷ It seems merely a natural development that the men involved in these strikes would provide leadership and direction when they returned to the villages where conditions were ripe for class struggle. It is also inconceivable that news of such strikes, spreading to a deeply troubled countryside, would not give tenants food for thought and lessons for their own struggles.

The role of men adapting their experience in the organized labor movement to the tenant unions and tenant movement is not inconspicuous. Totten has uncovered a number of examples of men active in both the labor and tenant movements.

For example Yukimasa Chogo, one of the original founders of the Japan Farmers' Union in 1922, had been a caster in an iron factory and in 1920 had led a dispute for which he was fired. Another example was Kiyokawa Seikichi who had been a worker in the Tokyo arsenal and a leader in the Koishikawa Labour Association until October 1919. In 1920 he became a leader of a tenant farmer dispute in Hokkaido. Likewise Asano Unokichi, who became a leader in the Osaka Federation of the Japan Farmers' Union, had been a worker in an arsenal. Again, Sasaki Ryutaro, who became well known for his leadership in farm disputes, as a union secretary in the Sanin Federation of the Japan Farmers' Union, had earlier been a worker in a Kyoto textile mill and a leader in the Japan General Federation of Labour.¹³⁸

These examples can be multiplied many times over to illustrate the participation of workers or former workers in the tenant movement and tenancy disputes.¹³⁹

Although much of the influence demonstrated above is on the leadership level, influence at other levels can also be observed. The Noda Soy Sauce Company strike can again serve as a good example. This strike took place in Chiba prefecture and most of the workers were drawn from the surrounding rural areas. Until 1928, Chiba prefecture had been a relatively quiet prefecture in terms of the incidence of tenancy disputes. Before that year, the 12 disputes of 1923 were the peak. After 1928, however, things are quite

different. The strike ended in that year with the many workers who had been fired returning to their villages and agricultural pursuits. In that very year 38 disputes occurred in the countryside around the factory in Chiba. In the following year 105 disputes occurred and even in 1930, two years after the strike, there were 57 disputes. The increase in disputes in Chiba after the strike provides a good example of what Totten calls the 'diffusion of influence below the leadership level'.¹⁴⁰

It has been mentioned earlier that tenancy disputes were first prevalent in the more economically advanced regions of Japan. It was suggested then that this reflected the fact that these areas were most sensitive to the vicissitudes of the market and further, that in these areas the breakdown of the traditional landlord-tenant relationship was most advanced. It also seems likely that the regional distribution of tenancy disputes reflects the influence of the labor movement to some extent. It is more than coincidental that those areas in which labor disputes were most numerous. Examining the interaction between tenancy disputes and labor disputes by location, Totten found a loose correlation between the degree of industrialization and the number of disputes. The areas where this correlation was especially noticeable were the commercial and industrial centers of Osaka, Kobe and Kyoto. In particular,

Osaka led the nation in both labor and tenant disputes during the period between 1925 and '30. Unfortunately, data is not available for the five year period before 1925, but since we know that disputes were concentrated in the areas adjacent to the industrialized centers from the very outbreak of tenancy disputes, we can expect a similar correlation for the years 1919 to 1925. Totten's thesis that tenancy disputes were stimulated by nearby labor disputes and union activity is valid and supported by other observers. The 'Survey Concerning Tenancy Disputes' points to a similar conclusion in explaining the heavy concentration of tenancy disputes in areas adjacent to high concentrations of labor disputes. The recognition of the influence of labor's ideology on the tenants can also be seen in the words of the Minister of Agriculture in 1920, lamenting the "particularly deplorable tendency for various ideologies to spread from the towns to infect the countryside".¹⁴¹ Certainly some of the influence of the labor movement was 'carried in the air' but the bulk of that influence was transmitted through tenants who had participated in the movement and saw the implications of that experience for a course of action to solve their own problems in the village. One popular history of the Japanese tenant movement sums up the tenant movement as follows:

It was a natural development that the workers of rural origin, baptized in the labour movement and awakened to class consciousness, tempered by labour's

severe struggles, should on returning to the villages and witnessing the devastation of the tenants there, dedicate themselves to organizing to preserve the livelihood of the tenants. The early expansion of the tenant movement was carried by the energies of men who had had connections with labourers to no small degree.¹⁴²

Although the influence of the labor movement can be observed, the tenant unions provided a discrete institutional means for mobilizing tenants thus activating the potential for protest created by the breakdown in the traditional landlord-tenant relationship. The tenant unions themselves had a tradition of nearly forty years as non-militant village institutions exhibiting little expression of class consciousness. (They had been tied to and solicitous towards landlord interests). Developments in rural Japan throughout Meiji and Taisho, however, slowly created greater divisions between landlord and tenant and, from 1920 on, the tenant unions became more militant and grew to become the institutional expression of class consciousness that was developing among the tenants. Events outside of the village reinforced the growing division inside the village and stimulated the growth of tenant class consciousness, the organization of tenant unions, and the increasing incidence of tenancy disputes in the village. The most noted of these outside influences was that of the labor movement; the Rice Riots of 1918 were also of considerable import and the influence of the Russian Revolution, democratic movement and the International Labour Organization's declaration

of the tenant's right to organize cannot be discounted. There was in Japan, during the war years, a rapid growth of left-wing thought and sentiment, particularly among the leadership in the social movements that developed at that time, some of which filtered through to the villages or was carried there more directly by men who assumed leadership roles in tenant unions on the village level and in political parties dedicated to fight for tenant's interests on the national level. The existence of these influences from outside the village and the positive role they played in supporting tenant protest suggests that consideration of the factors necessary to activate tenant protest must include some mention of a sympathetic and supportive political climate beyond the villages, a climate which affects villagers and may inspire them to action.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

I have argued that the potential for tenant unrest in the 1920s was created in the breakdown of the traditional landlord-tenant relationship over the preceding decades. It was not inevitable that this should lead to widespread tenant unrest; indeed, the relative absence of tenant discord in rural Japan in the first two decades of this century suggests that landlords were withdrawing from the traditional relationship with little trouble from their tenants. This withdrawal, however, did not go unnoticed, and the divisions between tenant and landlord interests and experience became increasingly obvious, and were not without effect on the tenant. Tenants began to see themselves as a class apart from landlords. The stirrings of class consciousness later blossomed forth in the widespread formation of tenant unions protecting and advancing tenant interests in opposition to landlords. It was the economic collapse of the 1920s that made changes among the landlords a source of unrest. The massive threat to tenant subsistence in that decade made it imperative that some alternative be found for that part of the traditional guarantees to tenant subsistence provided by the landlord which did not remain in force. In the economically depressed 1920s the traditional functions of the landlords assumed a critical role in the tenant's life unknown to the previous decade when a degree of rural prosperity, of itself, guaranteed the tenant's subsistence.

Economic conditions thus made it essential that the tenant require of the landlord some kind of subsistence guarantee; the reluctance of the landlord to resume his traditional role led tenants to strengthen their bargaining position by forming unions, allowing them to collectively confront the landlord and apply collective tactics to wrest concessions necessary to maintain their subsistence. It was at this point the village institution of the tenant unions became important. These unions provided the tenants with an organization through which they could mobilize their resources and coordinate an organized struggle with the landlord. As the 1920s wore on tenants increasingly organized and confronted their landlords in these unions. It was increasingly obvious that considerable changes in the tenant's mental outlook were occurring. In part this was the product of developments on the village level and in part the product of a certain kind of interaction with the world beyond the village. Certainly large scale social and political movements in the greater society had some effect but more importantly it was tenant participation in the political and social life of the community beyond the village that had the greater effect. The labor movement particularly was a source of stimulus, practical experience and moral support to the tenants organizing and struggling against the village landlords.

My conclusions differ from Professor Waswo's conclusions

on the origins of tenant unrest in a number of important ways. First, my interpretation of the role of economic factors is quite different. Further my understanding of the nature and inevitability of the breakdown in the traditional landlord-tenant relationship is also different. Unlike Waswo, I do not think that tenant unrest was inevitable. To clarify these differences it is necessary to quote Waswo's position at length.

Tenant unrest in Japan in the 1920s appears to have originated in two principal sources, economic growth and changes among landlords, both more pronounced in south western Japan than in the outlying areas. The desire for improved tenancy conditions arose not from despair or desperation but from prosperity, however slight and fleeting, which gave tenants the economic ability to engage in disputes which raised not only their standard of living but also their expectations of what that standard should be.

The disruption of traditional landlord-tenant relations, caused in large part by the landlords' positive response to modernization, was an additional source of unrest. It was not status inequality itself which prompted disputes, but the failure of landlords to perform those time-honored and useful functions in rural society which had justified their superior status in the past. Ironically, had landlords in southwestern Japan remained more traditional, had they conformed more closely to the stereotype of landed elites in modernizing societies, shunning commerce and resisting the temptations of urban styles of life, they might have avoided, or at least postponed, the tenant challenge to their authority.¹⁴³

While the fleeting prosperity before 1920 did raise tenant expectations and provide the surplus necessary to engage in the initial dispute it seems incorrect to conclude

that these were the primary economic rationales for dispute. Although it is undeniable that the era of prosperity preceding the outbreak of wide-spread tenant dispute did have the effects Waswo claims, the import of the economic and political events following that period of prosperity is far greater as a source of tenant unrest. The sharp decline in the tenant's standard of living is more important as a threat to his subsistence than a source of frustration of his expectations. The rent reduction that the tenants demanded was necessary to maintain tenant farming as a subsistence livelihood. At least by 1924, conditions had deteriorated to the extent that given current levels of rent the tenant could not earn a living without an outside source of income. There was nothing new in this demand for rent reduction. Traditionally, in times of economic distress it had been granted. What was new were the tactics that the tenant was forced to use in order to win concession. Faced with the economic conditions of the twenties, the tenant certainly needed improved tenancy conditions to maintain the same standard of living which he had seen in the years 1914-1919 but more importantly, he needed them to guarantee his subsistence. The economic decline after 1920 is important further in that it created conditions where the peaceful withdrawal of landlords from their traditional role could no longer continue. The lack of alternate sources of subsistence guarantee forced the tenant to demand that the landlord assume a role he was

less prepared to shoulder. In short, the tenant was demanding that the landlord take his share of the risks in agriculture and provide subsistence insurance for the tenant.

The failure of the landlords to perform the traditional functions in the village created the potential for tenant unrest. Waswo's suggestion that a continuation of the landlord's traditional role is a condition under which tenant unrest might have been avoided is less than true. It is important to understand that the change in the landlord's traditional role does not lead inevitably to tenant unrest but is a necessary prerequisite to tenant unrest. There are conditions under which they can abandon their traditional role in rural society without an adverse effect on rural stability. One of these conditions is, as Scott points out, the existence of a level of prosperity sufficient to maintain the tenants' standard of living without the goods and services traditionally provided by the landlord; this condition existed in the decade before 1920 but not in the decade following it. It is possible that if the same degree of prosperity had been present in the 1920s the phenomenon of tenant protest would not have developed.

Further, it is important to relate the origin of tenant unrest to the existence of a means available to the tenant to act. Waswo's failure to consider the success of the tenant union in organizing the tenants and directing tenant unrest is a serious inadequacy for without the means

to mobilize, tenant unrest would never have become so visible a historical phenomenon. The failure to relate the experience of other groups in Japan involved in struggles not dissimilar to the tenants also detracts from Waswo's conclusions on the origins of tenant unrest. It is difficult to document precisely the way in which the events in the villages reflect undercurrents at work at large in Japanese society but some attempt must be made if the origins of tenant unrest are to be fully understood. It is important to emphasize that the collapse of the vertical ties of loyalty binding tenant and landlord ^{is} a prelude to the formation of horizontal ties between the tenants and it is this latter development that is of critical importance in Japanese rural history in 1920.

I have tried to bring into discussion outside influences that fostered the creation of horizontal ties among the tenants and led to action to preserve and advance their own class interests rather than those of another class. In doing so I hope I have made a small advance beyond existing English language scholarship and afforded some insight into the politicization of the Japanese village.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Dorothy Orchard, "Agrarian Problems of Modern Japan-Part II", The Journal of Political Economy, Vol. 37, No. 2, June 1929, p.285.

² Barbara Ann Waswo, "The Origin of Tenant Unrest", Japan in Crisis: Essays on Taisho Democracy, ed. Silberman and Harutoonian, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1974, p.23.

³ Seidan Watanabe, Interview with Ishida, Yusen in Agriculture Farmer, (Nogyo Nomin), Vol.8, #1, Jan. 1976, pp.31-36.

⁴ Waswo, Loc.cit.

⁵ R.P. Dore, Land Reform in Japan, Oxford University Press, 1959, Table 2, p.72.

⁶ These figures were calculated from tables VI-3 and VI-4, pp.175 and 56 in Waswo, "Landlords and Social Change in Prewar Japan," unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Stanford University, Stanford, California, 1969. Available from University Microfilms Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan, #69-17.459.

⁷ Miriam S. Farley, "Japan's Unsolved Tenancy Problem", Far Eastern Survey, Vol. 6, #14, 1937, I.P.R., New York, p.158.

⁸ Loc.cit.

⁹ Orchard, op.cit., p.389.

¹⁰ Barbara Waswo, "Origin of Tenant Unrest", op.cit., p.320.

¹¹ Barbara Waswo, "Landlords and Social Change in Prewar Japan", op.cit., p.32.

¹² Fukutake Tadashi, Japanese Rural Society, Cornell University Press, 1972, p.12.

¹³ See the Department of Agriculture and Commerce's Agricultural Office's Survey concerning the causes of tenant disputes of 1922.

¹⁴ Nihon Nomin Undo Kenkyu Kai (Peasant Movement Research Conference) ed. Nihon Nomin Undo Shi (History of the Japanese Peasant Movement) Tokyo 1961, p. 131.

¹⁵ Waswo, "Origins of Tenant Unrest", op.cit., p.397.

¹⁶ James Scott, "The Erosion of Patron-Client Bonds and Social Change in South East Asia" in the Journal of Asian Studies, Vol. XXXII, #1, Nov. 1972, pp.6-7.

¹⁷ Fukutake, Japanese Rural Society, Cornell University Press, 1972, p.22.

¹⁸ Bennett and Ishino, Paternalism and the Japanese Economy, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1963, p.210.

¹⁹ T.C. Smith, "The Japanese Village in the 17th Century", in Imperial Japan 1899-1945, ed. Livingston, Moore and Oldfather, New York, Random House, 1973, p.4.

²⁰ Dore, Land Reform in Japan, Oxford University Press, 1959, p.34.

²¹ Bennett and Ishino, op.cit., p.216.

²² Dore, op.cit., p.30.

²³ Bennett and Ishino, op.cit., p.218.

²⁴ Loc.cit.

²⁵ Bennett and Ishino, op.cit., p.221

²⁶ Dore, op.cit., p.33.

²⁷ Waswo, "Origins of Tenant Unrest", op.cit., p.389.

²⁸ Scott, op.cit., p.9.

²⁹Wakakawa, S. "The Japanese Farm Tenancy System", in D.G. Haring ed. Japan's Prospects. Cambridge, Mass., 1946, p.123.

³⁰T.C. Smith, loc.cit.

³¹Robertson Scott, The Foundations of Japan, London, John Murray, 1922, Appendix LXV, p.405.

³²Miriam S. Farely, "Japan's Unsolved Tenancy Problem" Far Eastern Survey, Vol. 6, No.14, July 1937, I.P.R. New York, p.155.

³³Scott, op.cit., p.11.

³⁴Ibid., p.12.

³⁵Waswo, "Landlords and Social Change in Prewar Japan" unpublished Ph.D. Thesis.

³⁶Ibid. p.82.

³⁷Ibid. p.85.

³⁸Ibid. p.97

³⁹Ibid. p.99

⁴⁰Loc.cit.

⁴¹Loc.cit.

⁴²Waswo, Ph.D. Thesis, op.cit., p.108.

⁴³Ibid. p.116.

⁴⁴Ibid., p.117.

⁴⁵R.P. Dore, "The Meiji Landlord Good or Bad", Journal of Asian Studies, No. 3, May 1959, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, p.351.

⁴⁶Kinbara Samon, Taisho Demokurashi No Shakai Teki Keisei Aoki Shoten, Tokyo, Japan, 1974, p.76.

⁴⁷Ibid. p.72

⁴⁸Ibid. p.89.

⁴⁹Loc.cit.

⁵⁰T.C. Smith, "The Japanese Village in the 17th Century" quoted in Imperial Japan 1800-1945, ed. Livingston, Moore and Oldfather, New York, Random House, 1973, p.48.

⁵¹Kinbara, op.cit., p.89.

⁵²Ibid., p.90.

⁵³Robertson Scott, op.cit., p.322.

⁵⁴Waswo, Ph.D. Thesis, op.cit., p.112

⁵⁵Robertson Scott, op.cit., p.38

⁵⁶James Scott, Ibid., p.35.

⁵⁷Nihon Nomin Undo Kenkyu Kai, op.cit., pp.11-12

⁵⁸Waswo, "Origins of Tenant Unrest", p.393.

⁵⁹Waswo, Ph.D. Thesis. This information is condensed from table IV-1, p.119 and IV-4 p.131.

⁶⁰Scott, op.cit., p.35.

⁶¹Loc.cit.

⁶²Scott, Ibid. p.87.

⁶³Wakakawa, op.cit., p.119.

⁶⁴Farley, op.cit., p.157.

⁶⁵Dore, Land Reform in Japan, Oxford: University Press, 1962, p.62.

⁶⁶Dore, pp.17-18.

⁶⁷E.H. Norman, Japan's Emergence as a Modern State
New York, 1940, p.165.

⁶⁸Ibid. p.164.

⁶⁹Ibid. p.144.

⁷⁰Ibid. p.144.

⁷¹Ibid. p.156.

⁷²James Scott, p.20.

⁷³Nomin Kumiai Kanko Kai (Farmers' Union Publishing Association) ed. Nomin Kumiai Undoshi (Farmers' Union Movement History) Nichikan Agricultural Newspaper Company, 1961, p.40.

⁷⁴Kozo Yamamura, "The Japanese Economy 1911-1930: Concentration, Conflicts, Crisis" in Japan in Crisis: Essays on Taisho Democracy, ed. Silberman and Harootunian Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1974, p.608.

⁷⁵Ouchi, Tsutomu, "Agricultural Depression and the Japanese Villages" in Developing Economies. Vol.4, Dec.1967, p.603.

⁷⁶Nomin Kumiai Undoshi, op.cit., p.41.

⁷⁷Ouchi, op.cit., p.608.

⁷⁸Nomin Kumiai Undoshi, loc.cit.

⁷⁹Ouchi, op.cit. p.603.

⁸⁰Loc.cit.

⁸¹Nomin Kumiai Undoshi, loc.cit.

⁸²Ouchi, op.cit., 608.

⁸³Nomin Kumiai Undoshi, Ibid. p.42

- ⁸⁴Ouchi, op.cit., p.610
- ⁸⁵Loc.cit.
- ⁸⁶W.L. Holland. "The Plight of Japanese Agriculture", Far Eastern Review. I.P.R. New York, Jan. 1936, p.2.
- ⁸⁷Thomas Havens, Farm and Nation in Modern Japan, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1974, p.138.
- ⁸⁸Ouchi, op.cit., p.601.
- ⁸⁹Ouchi, op.cit., p.603.
- ⁹⁰Totten, op.cit., p.195.
- ⁹¹Loc. cit.
- ⁹²Waswo, Ph.D. Thesis, p.132.
- ⁹³J. Davis, Group Performance, Reading, Mass., Addison Welsey Publishing Company, 1969, p.33.
- ⁹⁴Waswo, op.cit., p.180.
- ⁹⁵Nihon Nomin Undo Kenkyu Kai, op.cit., p.5.
- ⁹⁶J. Scott, Ibid., p.35.
- ⁹⁷Nihon Nomin Undo Kenyu Kai, op.cit., p.5.
- ⁹⁸Aoki Keiichiro, Nihon Nomin Undoshi, (History of the Japanese Peasant Movement) Vol.3, Tokyo, 1959, p.56.
- ⁹⁹Loc.cit.
- ¹⁰⁰Aoki, op.cit., p.58.
- ¹⁰¹Nihon Nomin Undo Kenkyu Kai, op.cit. p.131.
- ¹⁰²Aoki, op.cit., p.58.

¹⁰³Loc.cit.

¹⁰⁴Loc.cit.

¹⁰⁵Aoki, op.cit., p.56.

¹⁰⁶Aoki, Ibid. p.59

¹⁰⁷Dore, Land Reform in Japan, p.72.

¹⁰⁸Aoki, op.cit. p.62.

¹⁰⁹George Totten, "Labor and Agrarian Disputes in Japan Following W.W.I" Economic Development and Cultural Change, Vol. 9, #1, part 2, at 61, p.202.

¹¹⁰Dore, op.cit. p.73.

¹¹¹Orchard, D. "Agrarian Problems of Modern Japan, Part II", The Journal of Political Economy, Vol.37, #2, June 1929, pp.387.389.

¹¹²Waswo, Ph.D. Thesis, P.118.

¹¹³Orchard, op.cit. p.391

¹¹⁴Loc.cit.

¹¹⁵Dore, Op.cit. p.76.

¹¹⁶E.P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, Penguin Harmondsworth, Middlesex England, 1963, p.10.

¹¹⁷Loc.cit.

¹¹⁸Nihon Shakai Undo Shiryo No Kikai (Japan's Social Movements Historical Materials Organization) ed. Nihon Nomin Kumiai Kikanshi (The Japan Farmers' Union Bulletin), Tokyo, 1974.

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- ¹²⁰Totten, Labour and Agrarian Disputes, p.204.
- ¹²¹Dore, op.cit. p.73.
- ¹²²Nihon Nomin Undo Shi Kenkyu Kai, op.cit., p.133.
- ¹²³Nomin Kumiai Kanko Kai, op.cit., p.43.
- ¹²⁴Loc.cit.
- ¹²⁵Ibid. p.44
- ¹²⁶Loc.cit.
- ¹²⁷Ibid. p.54.
- ¹²⁸Nakamura Shinko ed. Nihon Seikatsu Fuzokushi, (A History of Japanese Customs) Vol. 3, Industrial Customs, pp.143-147.
- ¹²⁹Nomin Kumiai Kanko Kai, op.cit., p.49.
- ¹³⁰Nihon Nomin Undo Shi Kenkyu Kai, Ibid. p.10.
- ¹³¹George Totten. The Social Democratic Movement in Post War Japan, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1966, p.37.
- ¹³²Ibid. p.101.
- ¹³³Nihon Nomin Undo Shi Kenkyu Kai, op.cit., p.11.
- ¹³⁴Totten, "Labour and Agrarian Disputes....", p.187.
- ¹³⁵Ibid. p.197.
- ¹³⁶Nomin Kumiai Kanko Kai, op.cit., p.52.
- ¹³⁷Totten, op.cit. p.211.
- ¹³⁸Totten, Ibid. p.204.

¹³⁹See the discussion in Nomin Kumiai Kanko Kai, op.cit., pp.51-52.

¹⁴⁰Totten, "Labour and Agrarian Disputes in Japan Following W.W.I", p.189.

¹⁴¹Loc.cit.

¹⁴²Nomin Kumiai Kanko Kai, op.cit., p.53.

¹⁴³Waswo in Harootunian et al, op.cit., p. 397.

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