

# On the Fluctuation of the Price of Rice in the Chiang-nan 江南 Region during the First Half of the Ch'ing Period (1644-1795)

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## Prefatory

The period of late Ming and early Ch'ing has already attracted attention as being an epoch making one, which brought to Chinese society a certain qualitative development. The present article is a piece of preparatory work in attempt to illuminate this period in the light of commodity prices. In this article the price of rice is the centre of attention, while I have handled other commodity prices in a separate article, '*The fluctuation of commodity prices in the Chiang-nan region in the first half of the Ch'ing period.*'<sup>(1)</sup>

People have been concerned with commodity prices ever since the invention of money; and from pre-Ch'in 先秦 times their fluctuations have either been publicly recorded by officials, or privately recorded by intellectuals. It may thus be said that the phenomenon of the rise and fall of commodity prices is one which throughout history has always accompanied the existence of money.

In Japan hitherto, studies of late Ming and early Ch'ing have developed in discussions of the nature of society, in such fields as the birth of capi-

talism, the development of the serf system or that of control by country gentry, while there has been comparatively little discussion among them of commodity prices.<sup>(2)</sup> I wonder if this is not due to the view that commodity prices have various values, moving according to the determining quantitative or external factors of volume of production or money supply, and that the connection is tenuous with the recognition of the irreversible and qualitative changes in the basic economic structure, which should be regarded as the ultimate question for consideration. Accordingly, such matters as the development of the production of commercial goods and artisanal work in rural areas, or changes in the taxation and *corvée* system, or the rise of resistance to land rent—such phenomena as these, which could be direct indicators of a particular stage of development, have increasingly become the objects of theoretical study; while it may be felt that, on the other hand, there has been scarcely any treatment as 'historical events' of the big rise in commodity prices in the period from Ch'ung-chen 崇禎 (1628–44) to Shun-chih (1644–61), or of their collapse in the K'ang-hsi period (1662–1772).

It cannot be said that the history of commodity prices has already established itself methodologically as a field in the study of the social and economic history of the Ming and Ch'ing; and it must be admitted that its methodological efficacy has not yet been proven. It would seem that in general there are two questions as regards the efficacy of the commodity price approach in the study of premodern history. The first is this: even if it were accepted that commodity prices in premodern times had been accurately recorded, price levels were not in general established by the free exchange of the primary producers, and, in consequence, there was a tendency to the haphazard and the arbitrary; and so, is not the efficacy of analysis of these prices *a priori* limited?<sup>(3)</sup> The second question is this: are the materials for commodity prices, in the historical sources, of sufficient accuracy and quantity to be evaluated? And these two questions require mature reflection even in the case of Ch'ing China. In respect of the first of these points, it may be said that the negative view prevails, in corroborative studies hitherto, as to the effective application of the law of value in the markets of the Ch'ing period. It has frequently been pointed out that the primary producers generally sold in a condition of financial extremity, and that, in consequence, there was the possibility of making large scale profits, as with the pre-modern capital based on the principle, 'buy cheap, sell expensive'.<sup>(4)</sup> With respect of the second point, as will be explained later, much of the material on commodity prices in the Ch'ing period is fragmentary, and there is also a subjective admixture; in addition, there was a remarkable lack of accurate description of merchandise, as well as uniformity in the Ch'ing period in weights and measures and in money values; in view of these considerations, it surely cannot but be said to be absurd to establish any particular theory by relating or, indeed, comparing the multiplicity of

values to be extracted from different historical sources.

Even so, it is the fact that, in respect of the Chiang-nan region in the Ch'ing period, market prices within one to several sub-prefectures are frequently reported by contemporaries, and a certain degree of unanimity is to be found in these reports; and this may be taken to show that the existence of market prices were accepted as a matter of course by the people of Chiang-nan at the time, as well as being capable of simple recognition. This suggests that, in Chiang-nan in the Ch'ing period, there was in operation, through competition, a market structure regulated by the law of indifference within the various market areas. It can be pointed out that there was no application of the law of value in respect of the price structure in the Ch'ing period. But this does not necessarily mean that prices were arbitrarily fixed in individual circumstances as a result of non-economic factors (immaturity of the market itself, in other words). It may rather be held that, as a result of the immaturity (sales under financial pressure, *etc.*) of the principal constituents of market, the primary producers and small consumers, market values arrived at through competition were not to the advantage of the primary producers and small consumers. Again, the fact that the existence and the change of market values in them are mentioned as self-evident by people of the Chiang-nan region in the Ch'ing period, suggests that, in their view, at least within a specific market area, the aforesaid lack of uniformity in weights and measures did not constitute an obstacle sufficient to prevent the establishment and recognition of a market. Accordingly, however dangerous it would of course be to carry out a statistical treatment, relying solely on the different values in the contemporary material on commodity prices, can we not perhaps, to some extent, trace the long term fluctuations of commodity prices, by using, rather than their various values, the accounts given by contemporaries of their fluctuations, comprehensive, intuitive recognitions of rises or falls?

There remain various obscure areas in respect of commodity prices of the Ch'ing period compared with more modern times; even so, at the very least, it is not only not impossible but, within limits, effective to reconstruct the long term trends of the markets as seen by contemporary observers.

### I. On the materials for the price of rice

The object of this articles is to bring order into the materials for the price of rice in the first half of the Ch'ing period. Here the first half of the Ch'ing period means the period of about 150 years covering Shun-chih (1644-61), K'ang-hsi (1662-1722), Yung-cheng 雍正 (1723-35) and Ch'ien-lung (1736-95), while materials from the end of the Ming period are also used for reference. Geographically, the materials gathered relate principally to the Chiang-nan delta.<sup>(5)</sup>

### 1. The nature of the materials

The sources of the materials are various but may be broadly divided into two categories: (a) official enquiries, (b) private or unofficial observations, *etc.*

(a) Official enquiries: these form the greatest part of the material on rice prices in the first half of the Ch'ing period, and they are the rice prices of the various regions reported in memorials to the throne. These 'memorials' (*tsou-che* 奏摺) were a certain form of official submission: unlike the *t'i-pen* 題本, which was a public text submitted to the emperor through a government organisation, the *tsou-che* was a personal and private document submitted by an individual to the emperor. The beginning of the *tsou-che* system is to be found in the K'ang-hsi period, and the earliest example is one submitted by Li Hsü 李煦 superintendent of the imperial silk factory at Soochow, in K'ang-hsi 32 (1693).<sup>(6)</sup>

The condition of the rice crop or its price constituted, like the activities of fraternities or rumours in circulation, intelligence concerning the condition of affairs and popular feeling in the various regions, and it was one of the important items to be reported in a *tsou-che*. In the *tsou-che* submitted by Li Hsü, superintendent of the imperial silk factory at Soochow, from K'ang-hsi 32 (1693) onwards, reports on the rice price are frequently included; in particular, in respect of the rice price in Soochow, in the ten years or so from K'ang-hsi 48 (1709), two categories of the rice price, the 'top figure' and 'second figure', are reported almost every month.<sup>(7)</sup> That the K'ang-hsi emperor also imposed on governors-general and provincial governors the duty of reporting rice prices may be discerned in the following extract from the *Yung-cheng chu-p'i yü-chih* 雍正硃批諭旨, where, in the course of his imperial acknowledgement of a *tsou-che* from Wei T'ing-chen 魏廷珍, provincial governor of An-huei, the Yung-cheng emperor criticizes the untruthfulness of Wei T'ing-chen's rice price report:

'According to your opinion, 聖祖 (the K'ang-hsi emperor) *gave particular orders some years ago that all governors-general and provincial governors should report the price of rice, rain or fine, which is truly of no profit.*' (The italics and brackets above are the present writer's.)<sup>(8)</sup>

It would seem that at the time when the rice price report was sent in by an individual superintendent of an imperial silk factory, quite unconnected with the regional administrative organisations, at the beginning of the *tsou-che* system, the rice price reports were gathered privately without the intermediary of the power of provincial and prefectural offices. However, the range of those submitting *tsou-che* was enlarged, and the duty of reporting rice prices was extended to those of governor-general and provincial governor rank; and it seems that, with the necessity of covering the area under each jurisdiction, reports on rice prices came to be gathered officially and publicly from the prefectures in each jurisdiction. For example, T'ung Kuo-jang

修國勳, provincial governor of *Chiang-hsi* 江西 from K'ang-hsi 51 (1712) to 56 (1717), reports the rice prices of all thirteen prefectures of Chiang-hsi province in his *tsou-che*,<sup>(9)</sup> and it may be supposed that he probably received reports from all the prefectures. Later on, in *tsou-che* of the Yung-cheng period (1723-35), there are also examples, like the *tsou-che* of Wei T'ing-chen, provincial governor of An-huei 安徽, where reports of rice prices from all the prefectures and sub-prefectures in the jurisdiction are given in classified totals in accordance with the highs and lows of the rice prices.<sup>(10)</sup>

In respect of the K'ang-hsi and Yung-cheng periods it is hardly possible to know in concrete fashion what form the reports from the prefectures and sub-prefectures took. But in respect of the Ch'ien-lung period material exists sufficient to give some glimpse of the reality. One example is available to us to show the cycle of rice price reports from the prefectures and sub-prefectures. This is in 熟審減等及內外結贓贖侵那銀兩刪繁就簡各條州縣晴雨米糧價值藩司彙冊轉報 produced in Ch'ien-lung 5 = 1740, found in *Hu-nan sheng-li ch'eng-an* 湖南省例成案 under *Official Forms* 公式 in *Li-lü* 吏律, Bk. 5. According to this, a proposal was approved whereby the diversity of the report cycle of weather and rice prices, furnished by prefectures and sub-prefectures, was reformed; reports were to be made on the 10th, 20th and 30th of each month, consolidated by the provincial officials, and submitted in the middle of the following month. There is a further instructive passage under *Granaries* 倉庫 in *Hu-lü* 戶律, Bk. 24 of the same work. This is 'official reporting of the investigation, promulgation of food prices' (Ch'ien-lung 32 = 1767). This concerns the two sub-prefectures of Ch'ang-sha 長沙 and Shan-hua 善化, of which the offices were both situated within the provincial capital. There is a passage pointing out and condemning the excessive contradictions to be found in the pair's reports on grain prices, in the course of which we read:

'The sub-prefectures of Ch'ang [-sha] and Shan [-hua] are both in the prefecture capital. All their reports on prices of grain and cash should concord and certainly not result in discrepancies.' (Elements in square brackets supplied by the present writer; similarly below.)

Since this states that the grain prices of the two sub-prefectures, which both have offices in the same city, should naturally agree, we may conjecture that the enquiries of the two sub-prefectures were to be carried out within the city in which their offices were situated, that is to say, the reported prices were not rural prices but city market prices. In the same text we find,

Grain prices, so long as related to the items submitted, should all include reference to *ts'ang-hu* 倉斛 and *k'u-p'ing* 庫平 in order to facilitate investigations.

From this we can conclude that it was the rule to use the officially fixed weights and measures (see below) of *ts'ang-hu* and *k'u-p'ing* in reports from prefectures and sub-prefectures.<sup>(11)</sup>

Official investigations into commodity prices were not necessarily carried out as a result of regional situation reports based on the *tsou-che* described above; there were also cases of independent action by regional officials based on their obligations to purchase, and so on. The results of such investigations are quoted in officials' memorials or public notice, and are to be found here and there in prose collections or local gazetteers.

(b) Private or unofficial observations, *etc.* An important source of commodity price materials, alongside the official enquiries, is constituted by the records of commodity prices included in *sui-pi* 隨筆 or 'jottings' and so on, as a clue to the manners and condition of the age.<sup>(12)</sup> Particularly useful here are those in which there is a faithful record of commodity prices year by year. Those that have been used in this article are the *Yueh-shih pien* 閱世編, notes by Yeh Meng-chu 葉夢珠 (1624-?), of Shanghai sub-prefecture, Sung-chiang 松江 prefecture, of the beginning of the Ch'ing period;<sup>(13)</sup> and the *Ping-t'a meng-hen lu* 病榻夢痕錄 by Wang Hui-tsu 汪輝祖 (1731-1807), of Hsiao-shan 蕭山 sub-prefecture, Shao-hsing 紹興 prefecture, Che-chiang 浙江 province. Each of these may be supposed to be recording prices of which he himself was a witness, and, in spite of defects such as lack of uniformity in the quality of goods considered or lack of regularity in the chronology of the record, they provide material of high reliability. In addition to these there are such 'jottings' as the *Li-yuan ts'ung-hua* 履園叢話 by Ch'ien Yung 錢泳 (1759-1844), of Chin-kuei 金匱 sub-prefecture, Ch'ang-chou 常州 prefecture; and the *I-pan lu* 一斑錄 by Cheng Kuang-tsu 鄭光祖, of Ch'ang-shu 常熟 sub-prefecture, Soochow 蘇州 prefecture; but they are generally stereotyped in conception, and one also finds repetitions of other works in them.<sup>(14)</sup>

In addition to the official enquiries and private observations recorded in notes, much use has been made in this article of the rice price records found under the headings of 'portents' 災祥, and 'omens' 祥異 in the various local gazetteers. Under 'portents' and 'omens' are recorded year by year such extraordinary phenomena in the natural world as great disasters, exceptional harvests, good omens and evil portents, and the price of rice is used as an indicator of the extent of the good or bad fortune. These items are recorded alongside the apparition of freak animals or strange vegetation, which inevitably gives an impression of a certain lack of reliability; however, if we compare them with one another or with other material, in spite of the appearance of such stock expressions as 'a peck of rice, a thousand cash', we may consider them as seeming to be reasonably faithful records. Certain points may be adduced in respect of which it is difficult to accord the reliability of formal historical materials to these records: the first is a difficult point about the rice price recorded under portents, that is to say, an extreme figure in the case of famine or exceptional harvest; another is that the greater part of the items is of unknown source, and even in cases quoted

from previously published work, the source of the quotation is not given. However, these records of the rice price, and especially the comments that accompanied the values, may be thought to give an idea of the general feelings at the time on rice price movements, and as such they are useful.

## 2. Possibility of comparison

In order that we may compare the materials on rice prices together, it is first essential either that the unit of grain measure be one or that conversion between different ones be possible. Again, in a case where, as in China in the first half of the Ch'ing period, the principal form of currency is not numerical but by weight (of silver in this case), a similar condition must be satisfied in respect of the degree of purity of the metal and the unit of weight. Well, works discussing the weights and measures of old China, since the end of the Ch'ing period, all agree in pointing out their almost infinite variety. Weights and measures differed by region, they differed according to the merchandise being handled, and finally they differed according to the nature of the market (wholesale or retail). And this seems to have been the situation prevalent in the first half of the Ch'ing period also. We can only obtain fragmentary accounts of the weights and measures of the time, and it is absolutely impossible to arrive at an overall grasp of them, but in this section I would like to give a glimpse of what can be known.

(a) *Units of grain measure.* In the first half of the Ch'ing period, foodstuffs were generally reckoned by volume and other goods by weight; and the materials on the price of rice in this period are generally expressed in terms of currency weight per unit of volume.<sup>(15)</sup> The rule throughout the country was a decimal system of units of volume, expressed in descending order, each term a tenth of the preceding, in *shih* 石, *tou* 斗, *sheng* 升, *ko* 合 and *shuo* 勺, and in this respect it was the same in Japan. But in the Ch'ing system one *sheng* was about 1,036 cc.,<sup>(16)</sup> and this is somewhat over one half of the Japanese volume. At the beginning of the Ch'ing period iron *hu* 斛—a *hu* was a measure equal to 5 *tou*—were made, intended to be the standard for the whole country, and distributed to granaries; the director general of the grain tribute and the provincial treasurers of all the provinces.<sup>(17)</sup> The *hu* were known as granary *hu* (*ts'ang-hu* 倉斛) but *hu* called official *hu* (*kuan* 官-*hu*) and metropolitan *hu* (*ching* 京-*hu*) in the historical sources were probably the same thing.<sup>(18)</sup> It was, then, the rule that this *hu* should be regarded as the standard, not only in the official collection of rice, but in all civil commercial transactions.<sup>(19)</sup> However, in spite of the existence of regulations for punishing the use of *hu* differing from the standard one,<sup>(20)</sup> the units of volume in current use among the people were of various sizes. As far as I know, the comparative capacity of the *hu* in current use in the markets differed widely from region to region,<sup>(21)</sup> from 3 times in the provincial city of Yun-nan 雲南 to 0.85 times in the city of Lo-ting-chou 羅定州 in Kuang-tung 廣東 province.<sup>(22)</sup> Not only

this; there are many texts which point out examples of the difference between the *hu* used for rent collection and that in general use,<sup>(23)</sup> or of brokers altering the *hu* in order to make the strangers interested.<sup>(24)</sup>

However, it would seem that within the region of the Chiang-nan delta, with which this article is concerned, the differences in units of volume were not so very extreme. The *Hsin-k'e t'ien-hsia ssu-min pien-lan san-t'ai wan-yung cheng-tsung* 新刻天下四民便覽三台萬用正宗 is an encyclopaedia for daily use published in Wan-li 27 (1599); in Bk. 21, under the heading 'Travelling Merchants', there is a passage comparing the *hu* of various places; here, the *hu* of Soochow is cited as one which hardly differs from the 'iron standard' (the official *hu*), and the *hu* of Chia-hsing 嘉興 and Wu-hsi 無錫 are cited as one *sheng* down. There are also such examples as the rice *hu* of Wu-hsi (3 *sheng* up) or that of Ch'ang-chou 常州 (2 *sheng* or more up). If we look at H. B. Morse's comprehensive investigations of the volume of the *hu* in different places at the end of the 19th century, we find such various values as 10.43~10.64 litres in Soochow city (4 examples), 10.67~11.34 litres in the suburbs of Soochow city, 10.20 litres in Chen-tse 震澤 sub-prefecture of Soochow prefecture (1 example), 10.5~10.62 litres in Wu-hsi sub-prefecture of Ch'ang-chou prefecture (3 examples), and 12.17 litres in Sung-chiang 松江 city (1 example).<sup>(25)</sup>

(b) *Currency*. Commodity prices in the first half of the Ch'ing period are expressed in silver or in copper cash, but if one assembles and arranges the materials on commodity prices from the end of the Ming to the Ch'ien-lung period, it will be noticed that, whereas in the Ming period and the latter half of the Ch'ien-lung period these are comparatively often expressed in copper cash, they are more often expressed in silver in the intervening period from Shun-chih to the first half of Ch'ien-lung.<sup>(26)</sup> T'ang Chen 唐甄, who lived in Soochow in the first half of the K'ang-hsi period (1662-1722), records in 'currency changes' in the first part of the last section of his *Ch'ien-shu* 潛書 as follows:

'Though cash is now used, it is only for transactions in fish, meat, fruit and vegetables. For a *shih* of rice and above, or a roll (*p'i* 匹) of cloth and above, silver is always used.'

In his *Hsi-chin shih-hsiao lu* 錫金識小錄 written in Ch'ien-lung 17 (1752), Bk. 1, 備參上, under 'transactions in silver and cash', Huang Ang 黃印 writes of the situation in Wu-hsi and Chin-kuei sub-prefectures of Ch'ang-chou prefecture:

'In market transactions in the city, silver and cash are both used. Formerly silver was used more than cash, whereas now there is cash and no silver. In the K'ang-hsi period, cash was usually not used above a tael (*liang* 兩). Even in transactions involving thousandths of a tael, silver and cash were still both used. . . . It was still thus in the Yung-cheng period . . . from Ch'ien-lung 5 or 6, silver became gradually

scarcer, cash gradually more abundant. Today cash is universally used. Even in transactions up to 1,000 taels or more, it is almost always cash, never silver.'

Again, Chu Lien 諸聯 of Ch'ing-p'u 青浦 sub-prefecture, Sung-chiang 松江 prefecture, writes in Bk. 12 of his notes, *Ming-chai hsiao-shih* 明齋小識, published in Tao-kuang 14 (1834):

'One hears old people say that in the early years of the Ch'ien-lung period, silver was in universal use in the markets; 20 years later silver was scarce and cash prevalent.'

It can probably be argued from the foregoing that, in the cities of the Chiang-nan region, silver was in comparatively greater use from the K'ang-hsi period to the beginning of Ch'ien-lung, whereas the use of copper cash became more prevalent from the mid-Ch'ien-lung period on. This is not only to say that silver was only much used quantitatively in the early Ch'ing period. There is a stone tablet, *Tien-p'u tang-shu chih-yin i-li t'ieh* 典鋪當舖值銀一例帖<sup>(27)</sup>, recording regulations in Ch'ang-shu sub-prefecture, Soochow prefecture, of Shun-chih 13 (1656): this lays down that, in order to prevent losses to pawn-shops in the situation where a multiplicity of copper coinage with varying intrinsic values was in circulation, even in cases where copper coinage was given or taken, this should be converted into silver in the market at the time, and entered on the ticket. This may be said to be an example showing that at the beginning of the Ch'ing period silver played the role of standard money among the various forms of currency. Accordingly, when we inquire into commodity prices in the first half of the Ch'ing period, it may be thought that, by expressing such prices basically in silver, we will be able to conduct our enquiry in a manner most in conformity with the ideas of the people of the time; therefore, where, in the study which follows, we are dealing with values expressed in copper cash, we will make a conversion to silver according to the appropriate silver-cash exchange rate prevailing in the market at the time.

In comparing together values expressed in silver, we first encounter the questions of the degree of purity of the silver (its 'grade') and of the types of scale or standard weight. First, on the degree of purity, we may read under 'transactions in silver and cash' in Bk. 1 of Huang Ang's *Hsi-chin shih-hsiao lu* of the situation in Ch'ang-chou in the K'ang-hsi period (1662-1722):

'There were many kinds of silver of different finess at that time, of 90%, 80% and 70%. Those skilled in distinguishing the grades of silver could discriminate infallibly between 82% and 83%, but the rest were largely liable to be taken in. There was also constantly fake silver on the market.'

From this we learn that many kinds of silver were current, that those with the skill to distinguish the grades could discriminate with accuracy within

a margin of 1%, but that others were frequently cheated. According to 'Study of currency, 4' in Bk. 16 of the *Huang-ch'ao wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao* 皇朝文献通考, the various grades of silver circulating in the markets were converted into *shih-ch'êng tsu-wen* 十成足文 ('100% standard purity'),<sup>(28)</sup> but there existed in different regions silver of standard forms; it is stated that in Chiang-nan and Chekiang this was called *yuan-ssu* 元絲 silver. As an account of *yuan-ssu* silver, we may cite Nakagawa Tadahide 中川忠英 on 'dwelling houses' in Bk. 2 of his *Shinzoku kibun* 清俗紀聞, a work in which was collected information gathered from merchants of Fu-kien, Che-kiang and Kiang-su, who visited Nagasaki in the last years of the Ch'ien-lung period. He says:

'Silver is named *yuan-pao* 元寶, *tsu-wen* and *yuan-ssu*. Each is genuine. When *yuan-pao* is melted to make *tsu-wen* the difference is made by reducing the copper; when melting *tsu-wen* to make *yuan-ssu*, also, 4 or 5 *bu* 分 or 0.4 or 0.5 *monme* of copper go to every 10 *monme* of silver. These three grades are the top grades. . . . One ingot of *yuan-pao* silver weighs 500 *monme*. *Tsu-wen* silver is 33 *monme* each. The weight of an ingot of *yuan-ssu* silver is 11 *monme*.'<sup>(29)</sup>

Again, in 'Additional requirements for distinguishing silver', in Bk. 5 of the *Shang-ku pien-lan* 商賈便覽, a commercial guide written at the end of the Ch'ien-lung period, the appellations of various grades of silver are given, starting with *tsu-wen*, and here 97% silver is named *yen-ssu* 鉛絲. In the same section of the same work, under 'Distinctive high and low grades refined in different localities', we find 'Soochow refines *yuan-ssu* 圓絲, that is to say, *yen-ssu*', from which it may well be supposed that *yen-ssu* is *yuan* 圓-*ssu*, that is to say *yuan* 元-*ssu*. From the above we may consider that *yuan* 元-*ssu* silver was of a slightly inferior degree of purity to *tsu-wen*, and circulated in the form of small ingots of the order of one tael in weight.<sup>(30)</sup>

We come next to standard weights (*p'ing* 平), and we find the following under 'list of market scales' in Bk. 5 of the *Shang-ku pien-lan*:

'There is a single uniform *k'u-p'ing* 庫平 in China. This is also called the *ssu-ma* 司馬 scale. . . . The old *ts'ao-p'ing* 曹平, prevalent in Soochow hitherto, was 2.5 taels per cent less than the *k'u-p'ing*. The new *ts'ao-p'ing* of recent times varies, with differences of a few thousandth. But there seem to be many markets where dealings are made on the *ts'ao-p'ing*. Consequently, in the both capitals and in the principal markets of the provinces, both the *k'u-p'ing* and the *ts'ao-p'ing* are looked upon as standard.'

This tells us that the officially fixed *k'u-p'ing* and the *ts'ao-p'ing* used in Soochow had become the standards throughout the country. In Bk. 3 of the same work, 'principal trading docks in the provinces', there are listed the magnitudes of the market scales in use at the trading centres throughout the country, and the variations range from 0.92 times to 1.026 times the

*ts'ao-p'ing* scale [in relation to the *k'u-p'ing* scale from 0.897 times to 1.00 times].

I have given above a rough description of the lack of uniformity in the units of volume of grain measurement and in the currency. What emerges from the collected material on commodity prices with some degree of clarity is that, apart from the case of the *tsou-che* discussed in the foregoing section, which we may suppose to have used the granary *hu* and the *k'u-p'ing* scale, the units used which are at all clear are remarkably rare. Accordingly, even if we set aside the differences in quality of merchandise, we must expect considerable discrepancies in the multiplicity of material on commodity prices extracted from different historical sources, and it is probably fair to say that a strict statistical examination of differences in commodity prices, in time and in space, is impossible. Such an approach has been relinquished in this article; my aim instead has been to grasp the overall trend of commodity prices, relying on the collation of a large amount of material and the honest accounts of contemporaries.

Finally in this section I propose briefly to touch on the questions of the quality of the grain and of the markets.

Originally the word 'rice' (Chinese *mi* 米) (translator's note: the ambiguities here discussed affect, of course, only one using Chinese or Japanese material, but the English reader should be aware of the existence of the problem) was a general term for grain from which the husk had been removed, and was also used for millet etc. But the attention of the present article is centred on paddy-rice, the principal cereal food of the Chiang-nan region, and in what follows the word 'rice' (*mi*) will be used to signify paddy-rice. As regards 'paddy' (*tao* 稻), it would be as well to accept that in the historical material, this means grain from which the husk has been removed, when accompanied by 'rice', and grain which is still in the husk when accompanied by 'grain' (*ku* 穀). Both 'rice' and 'grain' were current as merchandise, but which was which differed in a general way according to region and circumstances. In regard of rent, one cannot make a general statement covering the cases where they were collected as rent, but, whereas the expression 'rent rice' (*tsu-mi* 租米) was much used in Chiang-nan, the expression 'rent grain' (*tsu-ku* 租穀) was much used in the region of the middle and upper waters of the Yang-tse; and may we not then suppose that the rent was in general collected in the form of rice in the Chiang-nan region, and in the form of grain in the region the middle and upper waters of the Yang-tse? However, we find that when rice-grain was transported from the region of the middle and upper waters of the Yang-tse to Chiang-nan, it was hulled at collection points on the river, being carried down the Yang-tse thereafter to Chiang-nan in the form of rice.<sup>(31)</sup> This was no doubt because, for despatch over a long distance, the form of rice was more suitable than the bulky grain (twice as voluminous as rice). It may then be con-

sidered that the form of rice was prevalent in Chiang-nan; moreover, the expression 'rice price' is overwhelmingly frequent in the assembled material, and that of 'grain price' is rare.

The hulled rice, then, was divided into a number of classes according to its quality, refinement and so on. In respect of refinement it was divided into polished rice, semi-polished rice and coarse rice (black rice), while the qualities into which it was divided were usually styled first class, medium and inferior, or first class and second. It also seems that an especially high value was attached to specific varieties;<sup>(32)</sup> the principal distinction between qualities in Chiang-nan was that between *keng-mi* 稔米, *japonica*, principally produced in Chiang-nan, and *hsien-mi* 秈米, *indica*, principally produced in the region of the middle and upper waters of the Yang-tse. We find under 'dwelling-houses' in Bk. 2 of *Shin-zoku kibun*, cited above:

'The qualities of rice are not uniform. The rice of Kiang-su 江蘇 and Che-kiang is regarded as of superior quality. The rice at present brought here [Nagasaki] is grown in Hu-kuang 湖廣 and so on; it is known as *hsien-mi* [*indica*] and is of inferior quality. That is to say, it is early rice. Its market price is 10 or 20% less than that of the superior grain Kiang-su and Che-kiang.'

This tallies with the price difference between Kiang-su and Hu-kuang rice found in the *Yung-cheng chu-p'i yü-chih*.<sup>(33)</sup>

With regard to the quality and refinement of the rice ordinarily consumed by the people in Chiang-nan, we find the following in the *Yung-cheng chu-p'i yü-chih*:

'It is found that there has been no uniformity of rice price in the prefectures of Soochow and Sung-chiang. There is also a lack of uniformity in the quality of the rice. That which has hitherto been sold up 1.6 or 1.7 tael is the superior winter four times refined rice. As to what is bought for ordinary consumption by the people, the categories involved are coarse *keng-mi* (unrefined *japonica*) and *ch'u-hsien* 楚秈 (*indica* grown in Hu-kuang), of which the price per *shih* is 1.4 or 1.5 taels, at present not more than 1.3 or 1.4 taels.'<sup>(34)</sup>

Again, to take the example of Chiang-ning 江寧 prefectural city, it is reported that the rice long bought for consumption by the people was semi-polished or coarse rice.<sup>(35)</sup> In any case, there was a difference of 0.2 or 0.3 tael in the price of the rice commonly consumed by the people and the highest quality white rice. However, it may be supposed that of course the highest quality rice was eaten in upper class households, and one may mention the remark of Yang Hsi-fu 楊錫紱 of the Ch'ien-lung period on what the general people say of the harvest rent levied by the rich households and official families of Kiang-su and Che-kiang: 'They eat the highest quality themselves, they sell the medium quality, and they send in the third quality for tribute.'<sup>(36)</sup>

There are almost no materials which enable us to determine the nature of the markets used for finding out the price of rice; we can only conjecture, as explained above, that the prices reported in *tsou-che* were probably not rural prices but those prevailing in the urban markets, while it is by no means necessarily clear in every case whether these were wholesale or retail prices. But while it would seem reasonable to suppose that these prices were those for spot goods, the producing farmers themselves were not limited, when selling grain, to dealing in spot goods. There is a couplet from the T'ang period, 'Sell the new silk in the second month, purvey the new grain in the fifth month';<sup>(37)</sup> and it is said that even in the time of the Republic, forward sales or sales on mortgage accounted for 'half or more' of agricultural production sold,<sup>(38)</sup> and it is likely that in Ch'ing times, too, forward sale was widely practised. In 'food and money', 1, Bk. 7, of Yeh Meng-chu's 葉夢珠 *Yueh-shih pien* 閱世編 there is an account of the situation in Shanghai sub-prefecture of Sung-chiang prefecture, where we read:

'In the 9th month (*K'ang-hsi* 8 = 1669), new rice costs 0.6 tael *wen* 紋 silver per *shih*. This later reaches 0.5 tael plus, and later 0.5 tael. If money is borrowed in advance on rice in the 4th or 5th months, those who return it in rice in the autumn get a price of no more than 0.31 or 0.32 tael per *shih*.'

Again, Li T'eng-fang 李騰芳, of Hsiang-t'an 湘潭 sub-prefecture, Ch'ang-sha 長沙 prefecture, Hu-kuang 湖廣 province, at the end of the Ming period, writes in his *Tseng-hsiang i* 增餉議:<sup>(39)</sup>

'In spite of the inequalities of grain prices in the various districts, there is no one who buys 5 *shih* of grain for one tael of silver. The cheap rice in Ch'ang-sha is 10 to 12 *shih*. With the urgency taxation at the changeover from the old to the new crop, the villagers mortgage their fields, and pay with loans raised on the new grain, and the amounts go to as much as 18 to 20 *shih* a tael of silver'.

And this shows that dealings in futures took place at two thirds to a half those in spot goods.

## II. The fluctuation of the price of rice in the Chiang-nan region during the first half of the Ch'ing period

Tables I to IV represent an attempt to arrange the materials I have assembled on the price of rice. In what appears below, I hope to follow out the changes in rice prices while referring to these tables.

Table I. The Price of Rice in the Chiang-nan Region

年次	蘇州府	松江府	常州府	嘉興・湖州・紹興	備考	年次	蘇州府	松江府	常州府	嘉興・湖州・紹興	備考	
万曆(一五七三—一六一〇)	1584	0.35①				1647	4.0 ① 5.0 ⑤					
	1585	0.32① 0.25②				1648				3.0 ⑤		
		0.33③				1649	1.0+⑧			1.6~1.7⑤		
	1586	0.25①				1650		5.0 ②		1.0 ⑤		
	1587		0.35 ②			1651	4.0 ⑨	4.0 ⑩	3.0 ③	5.0 ⑤	浙省通常時価	
	1588	1.8 ①	1.2 ② 2.0 ③		1.6 ④ 1.7 ④ 1.8 ④	大水害	4.2 ① 4.4 ⑧		4.0 ③	4.5 ④	2.0+ ⑤	
	1589	1.6 ① 1.8 ④	1.6 ②				1652	2.7 ②			3.0 ⑤	
		1608	1.2 ③			0.8-1.0④	水害				3.0 ⑤	
	1620	1.4 ① 1.8 ⑤				1.5 ⑤	凶年	0.7 ⑩			3.0 ⑤	
		1624	1.4 ⑥ 1.5 ⑦					0.6~0.7⑪	0.6-⑪		3.0 ⑤	
天啓(三二—三七)	1625	1.2 ⑧					1.8 ⑥			4.5 ④		
	1627	1.5 ③					1.7 ②	0.6-⑪		1.7 ④		
	1637	1.1 ⑧					1659					
崇禎(一六二八—一六四四)	1638	2.0+②					1661					
	1640	1.8 ①		2.0 ③	1.6 ④ 3.0 ④	1640以降 三年続きの 災害	1664				江南米価 0.5 ⑤ 江浙米価 0.7~0.8⑤	
	1641	3.0 ③ 3.6 ② 4.0 ④	3.0-4.0 ③	3.0 ④	3.3 ④ 3.6 ④ 4.0 ④ 4.5 ④			1665	0.6~0.9⑫	0.4 ③ 0.4 ③		
		1642	3.3 ① 5.0 ⑤ (11000)⑥	3.9 ②	3.3 ④	4.0 ④		1666				
		1643				(4000)④		1669				0.6 ④
	1644			3.5 ③			1679	3.0 ⑬	2.4 ②		災害	
	順治	1646	2.7 ⑧			4.0 ④		1680	2.4 ⑬			
		1647	3.0 ⑧			4.0 ④		1682				
	康熙(一六六二—一七二二)							1683	0.8 ②			
								1692	0.7~0.8⑭	0.7~0.8 ⑭		
							1688				2.5 ④	
							1693	0.5 ⑮ 0.7~1.0⑯				
							1696	0.7 ⑰			0.5 ⑤	
							1698	0.8~1.0⑱				
							1701	0.8 ⑰				
							1703	0.5 ⑮				江南米價歷 年0.7上下⑥
							1706	1.3 ⑲ 2.0 ⑲				
								1.35-1.43				

年次	蘇州府	松江府	常州府	嘉興・湖州・紹興	備考	年次	蘇州府	松江府	常州府	嘉興・湖州・紹興	備考		
康熙 (一六六一—一七三二)	1707	(2400)②		2.0-④	1.8④	江南大旱	1748			(1600)⑤			
	1708	2.4⑮	2.8⑳	2.0-④	2.2④	大水	1749			2.0+④			
	1709	(1700)②	(1700)②	(1700)②		大水	1750			2.0+④			
		2.4⑰					1751	3.1⑮		2.5④	3.0④		
	1712	0.9⑳					1752		(1000)③	3.0⑳			
	1715	1.0㉑					1755	(3600)②	(3600)②	(3600)②	3.2④	虫荒	
1716					江浙米価 1.2~1.3⑤	1756	3.1⑮	(2000)③					
雍正	1727			1.0-④	雍正乾隆 初、蘇・松・ 常米価	乾隆 (一七三六—一七九五)	1759			4.0⑤	(3400)④		
	1728			1.0-④	(1000+)②		1766	3.8⑮			(3500)④	(2400)④	
乾隆 (一七三六—一七九五)	1739				江・浙米価 1.5~1.6⑤ 浙江米価 1.5~1.8⑤		1769					3.3④	
							1779					(5000)④	
1742	3.0⑮	3.5⑳	2.0+④	3.0④	⑤ (900~1000)		1785	(5000)⑤	(4000)③			(3800)④	大旱
							1786	(5700)②	(5700)②	(5700)②	(5000)④	(5000)④	
									(5600)③	(4300)④			
1748		(2000)③		(2000)④			1793				(2800~3100)③		
							1794	(3000+)⑥				(3300~3400)③	

The figures in the tables represent the price of rice per *shih* by *liang* in silver. Figures in [ ] represent the price in copper cash. Figures underlined show the price gone up for the reason of short crop, while figures underlined by wave the price fallen because of rich harvest. In case similar prices are recorded in several gazetteers of the same region, the author of the present article has taken as a rule the price in earlier gazetteer. The difference of date between the solar and lunar calendar is ignored for the reason that it does not make much for the long-term survey of rice price.

①康熙『蘇州府志』2 (以下、數字は卷數を示す)。②康熙『吳江縣志』15。③乾隆『吳縣志』26。④康熙『崇明縣志』7。⑤康熙『嘉定縣志』3。⑥道光『瓊涇志稿』7。⑦光緒『嘉定縣志』3, 巡按徐吉疏略。⑧葉紹袁『啓禎記聞錄』。⑨康熙『具區志』14。⑩陸世儀『陸桴亭詩集』5, 水田謠。⑪陸世儀『陸桴亭文集』5, 漕兌揭。⑫光緒『蘇州府志』12, 康熙4年韓世琦疏略。⑬光緒『崑新兩縣續修合志』51。⑭宋榮『西坡類稿』34, 酌議運船飯米疏。⑮道光『平望志』13。⑯『李煦奏摺』(本文註6)1~2頁。⑰乾隆『吳江縣志』40。⑱『李煦奏摺』11頁。⑲黃中堅『蓄齋集』4, 平粟價議。⑳『李煦奏摺』30頁。㉑顧公燮『消夏閑記摘抄』下, 連年水旱。㉒錢泳『履園叢話』1, 米價。㉓道光『震澤鎮志』3。㉔同㉒書, 上, 撫軍設誓。㉕同前書, 上, 乾隆五十年乙巳早荒。㉖乾隆『金山縣志』18, 田幼溪遺事。㉗范濂『雲間據目抄』3。㉘乾隆『上海縣志』12。㉙嘉慶『上海縣志』19。㉚光緒『華亭縣志』23。㉛乾隆『婁縣志』7, 徭役, 順治14, 5年の記事。㉜董合『三岡識略』5, 康熙4年, 謠諺。㉝同前書同卷, 熟荒。㉞乾隆『金山縣志』18。㉟嘉慶『松江府志』80。㊱康熙『宜興縣志』卷末詳異。㊲康熙『無錫縣志』24。㊳同前書30。㊴黃印『錫金識小錄』2。㊵同前書1。㊶汪輝祖『病榻夢痕錄』乾隆51年の條。㊷同治『南潯鎮志』19, 20。㊸崔嘉祥『鳴吾紀事』『鹽邑志林』所收。㊹康熙『蕭山縣志』9。㊺康熙『桐鄉縣志』2。㊻民國『雙林鎮志』32, 沈氏「奇荒紀事」。㊼乾隆『武康縣志』1。㊽乾隆『烏青鎮志』1。㊾同㊼書19。㊿張履祥『楊園先生全集』17, 狷士記。①乾隆『蕭山縣志』19, ②同④書, 乾隆57年, 59年の條。③范承謨『范忠貞公集』2, 請改折漕糧疏。④任源祥『食貨策』(『皇朝經世文編』29)。⑤『聖祖實錄』14, 康熙4年3月戊戌, 楊雍建奏。⑥本文註58參照。⑦『聖祖實錄』269, 康熙55年9月甲申の上諭。⑧本文註62參照。⑨本文註61參照。

Table II. The price of rice in Sung-chiang-fu in late Ming and early Ch'ing

年 月	品 質	銀 建 價 格 (兩/石)	銅 錢 建 價 格 (文/石)	年 月	品 質	銀 建 價 格 (兩/石)	銅 錢 建 價 格 (文/石)		
崇禎 (一六四一—一六四四)	1632 夏	白 米	1.0	1200	順治 (一六四四—一六六二)	1661. 11	新 米	1.8	1300 700
	〃 秋	早 米		650~660		1662. 1	白 米	2.1	
	1633~7			1000±		〃 1	糙 米	1.9	
	1638~9		1.8~1.9	3000		〃 7	早 米	1.2	
	1642 春	白 米	5.0	12000+		〃 7	糯 米	1.3~1.4	
	1643~5		2.0~3.0			1663. 10		0.9③	
	1646			10000		1669.9④	新 米	0.6	
	1647	白 米	4.0			〃 冬		0.5	
	1649	糯 米①	1.2			1670. 6	白 米	1.3	
	〃	川珠米②	0.9			1670. 8	新 米	0.9	
	〃 冬		1.0③			康 〃 9		0.8	
	1650 2	白 米	1.0			〃 9	糯 米	0.7	
	〃 9	新 米	2.0			〃 10		0.9	
	〃 9	糯 米	1.8			〃 10	糯 米	0.8+	
〃 9	白 米	2.5		〃 10末		1.3			
順治 (一六四四—一六六二)	1651 2	白 米	3.0		1671	早 米	1.1	1300	
	〃 3		3.4③		1672秋⑤	新 米	0.63	700	
	〃 3		3.5		1678	早 新 米	0.73		
	〃 4		4.0		1679 春		1.4~1.5		
	〃 6		4.8~5.0		〃 8		2.0		
	〃 7	新 穀	2.0		〃 8	早 新 米	1.7		
	1652 夏	白 米	4.0		1680 夏	白 米	2.0		
	〃 秋		2.5~2.6		1682. 5	白 米	0.85		
	1653		2.5~2.6		〃 冬	新 糙 米	0.56~0.57		
	1657. 11		0.6~0.8		〃 〃	〃	0.51~0.52⑦		
	1659. 閏3		2.0		1683冬⑥	白 米	0.9±		
	1661. 10	白 米	1.5		1684秋⑥	糙 米	0.8~0.9		
	〃 10	新 米	1.3		1685 春	白 米	0.8~0.9		
	〃 11	白 米	2.0						

Unless otherwise stated, the prices of rice in this table are based on Yeh Meng-chu's 葉夢珠 *Yüeh-shih-p'ien* 閱世編, Bk. 7, *Shih-hua* 食貨 1. When based on other sources, they are indicated in foot-notes.

- (1) No-mi 糯米 means glutinous rice.
- (2) The *Yüeh-shih-p'ien*, Bk. 7, *chung-chih* 種植, enumerates three kinds of nonglutinous rice produced in Shang-hai-hsien according to the order of their harvest time. The *ch'uan-chu-mi* 川珠米 is the general appellation of the earliest and second to the earliest.
- (3) Based on the *Yüeh-shih-p'ien*, Bk. 7, *Shih-hua* 2.
- (4) In the text it is described as the ninth year 九年, which is obviously a mistake for the ninth month 九月.
- (5) In the text it is described as 1673 autumn (康熙)十二年壬子秋 which is probably a mistake for 1672 autumn (康熙)十一年壬子秋.
- (6) In the text it is described as (康熙)二十三年冬, 白米每石價銀九錢上下. 二十二年秋, 糙米每石八, 九十錢, in which 22 and 23 are to be interchanged with each other.
- (7) This is the price in Soochow.

Table III. The Price of Rice in the Neighbourhood of Soochow in late years of K'ang-hsi

年次	報告月日	米 價 (兩/石)		備 考	年次	報告月日	米 價 (兩/石)		備 考
		上 号	次 号				上 号	次 号	
46 (四十七)	8.	1.2			52 (四十七)	10.6	1.0*	0.9*	
	10.	1.1~1.2				11.12	1.0	0.9	
	12.	1.6~1.7				12.9	1.0	0.9	
47 (四十七)	6.	1.7~2.0		×0.9~1.3 (3.1) △1.2~1.4 (5.25) ×1.0~1.3 (9.1)	53 (四十七)	1.20	1.0	0.9	
	9.4	1.3~1.4				3.11	1.0	0.9	
	9.19	1.1~1.2				4.11	1.0	0.9	×0.9~1.0 (5.9)
48 (九十七)	4.15	1.3~1.4		×1.2~1.3 (2.8)	54 (五十七)	6.9	1.1	1.0	
	5.9	1.3~1.4		×1.2~1.4 (3.16)		7.13	1.14~1.15	1.05~1.06	×0.9~1.0 (7.2)
	5.19	1.3~1.4				8.21	1.04~1.06	0.9	
	5.27	1.3~1.4				9.20	1.1	1.0	○1.14~1.15 (9.8)
	6.18	1.3~1.4				10.6	1.04~1.05*	0.92~0.93*	
	7.16	1.2	1.1	×1.1~1.2 (7.3)		3.10	1.1	1.0	○1.13~1.14 (2.24)
	8.18	1.2	1.1	×0.84~0.85 (8.3)		5.16	1.16~1.18	1.05~1.07	○0.97~0.98 (6.1)
	9.13	1.2	1.0	×0.8 (9.2)		6.6	1.15~1.17	1.06~1.08	×1.0~1.1 (6.3)
	10.7	1.1*	0.9*			7.7	1.2	1.1	×1.0~1.1 (7.3)
	11.8	1.0	0.9			8.20	1.2	1.1	○0.94~0.95 (8.12)
49 (九十七)	1.19	1.1	0.9	×1.1~1.2 (3.15)	55 (六十七)	9.10	1.2	1.1	×0.7 (8.20)
	4.15	1.1	1.0	×1.2 (4.4)		2.18	1.0*	0.9*	○0.82~0.83 (9.20)
	5.13	1.0	0.9	×0.8~1.0 (5.2)		3.4	1.1	1.0	×0.6~0.74 (10.4)
	6.11	1.0	0.9	×0.9 (6.1)		閏3.12	1.1	1.0	○0.8 (10.28)
	8.22	1.0	0.9	×0.8 (閏7.2)		4.9	1.1	1.0	×0.6~0.74 (12.1)
	9.11	0.9*	0.8*	×0.7 (9.2)		5.12	1.1	1.0	○0.8 (12.1)
50 (九十七)	2.29	0.9	0.8		56 (七十七)	2.18	1.0*	0.9*	
	4.4	1.0	0.8			3.4	1.1	1.0	○0.85~0.86 (3.1)
	4.25	0.9	0.8			閏3.12	1.1	1.0	
	5.13	0.9	0.8			4.9	1.1	1.0	
	9.28	0.8	0.7	×0.6~0.8 (9.2)		5.12	1.1	1.0	○0.85~0.86 (5.4)
	10.9	0.8*	0.7*	×0.6~0.7 (10.2)		6.15	1.1	1.0	×0.78~0.86 (5.19)
	11.5	0.8	0.7			6.25	1.1	0.9	○0.9 (7.4)
51 (四十七)	8.8	0.8	0.7	×0.7~0.8 (2.2)	7.4	1.1	0.9	×0.8~0.98 (7.5)	
	10.4	0.8*	0.7*		8.3	1.1	1.0	×1.0~1.2 (8.1)	
	12.11	0.8	0.7		9.16	1.1	0.95	○1.03~1.04 (9.9)	
52 (三十七)	1.13	0.8	0.7		10.2	1.15*	1.0*	×1.0~1.1 (10.1) △1.1~1.2 (11.26) ○1.04~1.05 (12.1)	
	閏5.23	1.0	0.9	×0.9~1.0 (閏5.2)	12.8	1.14~1.15	1.04~1.05		
	6.9	1.1	1.0		1.22	1.1	1.0	△1.2 (1.2) △1.2~1.3 (2.1) ○1.04~1.05 (3.1) △1.2 (3.1)	
	7.5	1.0	0.9		3.11	1.16~1.17	1.07~1.08	△1.3~1.4 (4.1) ○1.02~1.03 (4.15)	
	8.6	1.0	0.9	×0.8~0.9 (8.2)	4.10	1.15~1.16	1.04~1.05	△1.2~1.4 (5.1) △1.2~1.35 (6.1) △1.2~1.3 (7.2) ○0.82~0.94 (7.20)	
8.21	1.05~1.06	0.94~0.96	×0.8~0.9 (9.2)	5.6	1.1	1.0			
				6.3	1.1	1.0			

年次	報告 月日	米 価 (兩 / 石)		備 考	年次	報告 月日	米 価 (兩 / 石)		備 考	
		上 号	次 号				上 号	次 号		
56 (一七二七)	8.9	1.1	0.95	×0.74~0.75(8.1) △1.0~1.3(8.1) ○0.8(9.1) △1.0~1.3(9.1) △0.9~1.0(10.1) △0.9~1.0(11.1)		2.8	0.82	0.7	△0.85~0.98(5.1)	
	9.9	1.0	0.9			3.15	0.86	0.74		
	10.11	0.9*	0.8*			4.13	0.84	0.72		
	11.7	0.95	0.8			5.2	0.9	0.76		
	12.7	0.95	0.8			59	6.13	0.95		0.78
57 (一七二八)	4.25	1.0	0.9	△0.87~0.97(5.1) ×0.8~0.9(5.13) △0.84~0.96(6.1) ×0.8~0.9(6.2)	(一七二八)	7.9	0.95	0.8		
	5.17	1.05	0.95			8.8	0.96	0.82		
	6.16	1.0	0.9			9.8	0.92	0.8		
	7.5	1.0	0.9			10.3	0.94*	0.78*		
	8.8	1.0	0.9			10.23	0.9	0.8		
	閏8.9	0.94~0.95	0.84~0.85			11.4	0.9	0.8		
	閏8.22	0.9*	0.75*			11.14	0.9	0.8		
	閏8.9(註)	0.9	0.7			60	5.12	0.97		0.83
	10.5	0.85	0.65			(一七二九)	6.6	0.97		0.84
	11.16	0.85	0.65			閏6.6	7.8	0.97		0.84
58 (一七二九)	4.26	0.9	0.75	△0.89~0.98(3.1)	(一七三〇)	8.8	0.98	0.85		
	5.6	0.9	0.75			8.8	1.1	0.96		
	6.10	0.9	0.75			2.21	1.05*	0.9*		
	6.24	0.87	0.73			3.6	1.2	0.97		
	7.9	0.87	0.73			4.8	1.2	0.97		
	8.7	0.87	0.73			5.2	1.18	0.96		
	9.10	0.87	0.73			6.7	1.18	0.96		
	10.8	0.8*	0.7*			7.8	1.25	1.03		
	11.13	0.8	0.7			8.6	1.2	0.98		
	12.10	0.8	0.7			9.11	1.14	0.95		
59	1.9	0.82	0.7	×0.64~0.75(2.2)	61 (一七三〇)	10.4	1.1*	0.92*		

This table was compiled on the basis of *tsou-che* of Li Hsü 李煦, superintendent of the Weaving Office in Soochow, edited by the Ming-Ch'ing Tang-an Department 明清檔案部, Palace Museum, Peking, and published in 1975 by Chung-hua shu-chü under the title of 李煦奏摺. The same kind of table has already been compiled and published by J.D. Spence in his *Ts'ao Yin and the K'ang-hsi Emperor: Bondservant and Master*, Yale University Press, 1967, pp. 297-299, and by Ch'üan Han-sheng 全漢昇 and Richard A. Kraus in *美洲白銀與十八世紀中國物價革命的關係* (see note 2) and *Mid-Ch'ing Rice Markets and Trade* (*op. cit.*).

The prices of rice as reported by Li Hsü are in almost all cases those of Soochow or of Soochow and Yang-chou 揚州 except some which are of unknown place or of the Chiang-nan region. Figures marked with × and recorded in 備考 column are those given by Ts'ao Yin 曹寅 and Ts'ao Yü 曹顥, who were both the Superintendents of the Weaving Office in Soochow in their *tsou-che* published in the 宮中檔康熙朝奏摺 either as the price of rice in Chiang-nan 江南 or as that of Chiang-ning 江寧. Figures marked with ○ are the prices reported by Ho T'ien-p'ei 何天培 as those in Chen-chiang 鎮江 in his *tsou-che* published in the same book. Figures marked with △ are those reported by Sun Wen-ch'eng 孫文成, superintendent of the Weaving Office in Hang-chou 杭州, in his *tsou-che*, translated from Manchu, as the price of rice in Hang-chou in the 'previous month'. Refer to 孫文成奏摺 commented by Chuang Ch'i-fa 莊吉發 and published by 文史哲出版社 in T'ai-pei in 1978. The dates given between ( ) brackets are of Chinese calendar.

Table IV. The price of rice in the Chiang-nan region during the yung-cheng Period

西曆	雍正	最高價格(報告月日)		最低價格(報告月日)		奏米 摺報 數告
		上米(兩/石)	次米(兩/石)	上米(兩/石)	次米(兩/石)	
1723	元	1.2 (6.25)		1.05 (5.4)	1.0 (5.4)	3
1724	2	1.33 (9.24)	1.25 (9.9等)	1.21 (1.27等)	1.11 (5.19)	7
1725	3	1.37 (5.6)	1.32 (5.6)	1.17 (12.16)	1.06 (12.16)	6
1726	4	1.3 (12.13)	1.2 (12.13)	0.98 (9.2)	0.88 (9.2)	6
1727	5	1.5 (4.15)		1.0 (11.17)	0.84 (11.17)	7
1729	7	1.15 (5.29)	0.96 (5.29)	0.6 (9.6)		2
1731	9	1.2 (11.2)		1.14 (11.2)		1
1733	11	1.7* (4.15)	1.5* (4.15)	—————	1.3 (4.15)	1
1734	12	1.3 (10.6)		0.9 (10.6)		4
1735	13	1.3 (5.12)		0.8 (5.12)		5

\* These are given as the price in the spring of the 11th year.

A table of the price of rice as appeared in the *Yung-cheng chu-p'i yü-chih* 雍正硃批諭旨 has been published by Professor Ch'üan Han-Sheng 全漢昇 and others in the *清雍正年間的米價 and Mid-Ch'ing Rice Markets and Trade* as has been indicated in Note (2) of this article. To make the matter simple, here are indicated only the highest and the lowest prices given in *tsou-che* 奏摺 for the corresponding years. The *tsou-che* utilized are as follows:

第8冊, 江蘇巡撫何天培奏摺; 第12冊, 江蘇巡撫張楷奏摺; 第23冊, 江南提督魏經國奏摺; 第34冊, 江南提督高其位奏摺; 第35冊, 江蘇巡撫喬世臣奏摺; 第50冊, 蘇州織造兼清墅關稅務郎中高斌奏摺; 第57冊, 江南提督趙弘恩奏摺; 第60冊, 蘇州巡撫尹繼善奏摺。

## 1. High price of rice in Shun-chih period

The high level of rice prices for some years at the beginning of the Ch'ing period was a continuation from the Ch'ung-chen 崇禎 period (1628-44) at the end of Ming; but the rise in the rice price in the Ch'ung-chen period may itself be traced back to the end of the Wan-li period (1573-1620). The price of rice in the Wan-li period was in general stable, and one may suppose the normal rate to have been of the order of 0.5 tael in silver to the *shih*.<sup>(40)</sup> But there is an item under 'omens' in Bk. 3 the K'ang-hsi *Chia-ting-hsien chih* 康熙嘉定縣志 which records a disaster in Wan-li 48 (1620), and adds, 'Thereafter there were no years in which rice was not expensive', and it may be said that from the end of the Wan-li period an upward trend in the price of rice was generally felt. Even so, in Sung-chiang prefecture in Ch'ung-chen 5 (1632) a price per *tou* of white rice of 0.1 tael in silver (*i.e.* 1 tael to a *shih*) was felt to be a high one;<sup>(41)</sup> and between Ch'ung-chen 6 and 10 (1633-37) the price of rice stayed round about 1,000 cash coin per *shih* (about 0.8 tael of silver at the comparative value of silver and cash at the time) (table II).

The abrupt rise in the price of rice came in Ch'ung-chen 11-12 (1638-39). According to Yeh Meng-chu, who was a native of Shanghai sub-prefecture, Sungchiang prefecture, in Ch'ung-chen 11-12, 'the value of cash fell daily, and the price of rice increased suddenly'; one *shih* of rice was at 1.8 to 1.9 taels in silver, and in copper cash this came to 3,000 coin (table II). A certain Shen 沈, of Hu-chou prefecture in Chekiang province, relates that in spite of the fact that there had been no particular disasters since Ch'ung-chen 11-12, there was a series of poor harvests, and the price of rice never fell below 1 tael or more. And Hsü Shu-pi 徐樹丕 in the *Shih-hsiao lu* 識小錄 tells us that there was a good year in Soochow prefecture in Ch'ung-chen 12, but rice went up and cash fell, so that the life of the common people became hard.<sup>(43)</sup>

From Ch'ung-chen 13 to 15 (1640-42) there was a food shortage throughout the country; in the course of this the Chiang-nan region also met with disaster, and, in particular, in the Chia-ting sub-prefecture of Soochow prefecture, and the Shanghai sub-prefecture of Sung-chiang prefecture, known as cotton growing areas, the price of rice attained the unprecedented level of 5 taels to a *shih* (tables I & II). Shen of Hu-chou estimates that the number of deaths in the series of disasters of these three years probably amounted to as much as 30% of the population of the prefecture of Hu-chou.<sup>(44)</sup> After the great harvest of the 15th year (1642) the price of rice fell somewhat, and from the 16th year to Shun-chih 2 (1645), it stood, in Shanghai sub-prefecture, at 2 to 3 taels per *shih* (table II). It was in such a state of affairs that the Chiang-nan region confronted the southward advance of the Ch'ing armies. According to the *Yueh-shih pien*, the price of rice in the 1st and 2nd years of Shun-chih was somewhat lower than in

the preceding and following years; and Yeh Shao-yuan 葉紹袁, of Soochow prefecture, says in his *Ch'i-chen chi-wen lu* 啓禎記聞錄, under Shun-chih 3, 'This year a *tou* of rice reached 1,300-1,400 cash coin. Compared with the previous time of disturbance, the price also doubled'; and this tells us that in Soochow prefecture the price of rice suddenly rose rather after the end of hostilities.

According to the records, which show a certain degree of unanimity, of Chang Li-hsiang 張履祥, of T'ung-hsiang sub-prefecture, Chia-hsing prefecture, and Yeh Meng-chu, of Shanghai sub-prefecture, Sung-chiang prefecture, for the first half of the Shun-chih period (1644-61), the price of 1 tael per *shih* in Shun-chih 7 was the lowest, and that of 5 taels per *shih* in Shun-chih 8 was the highest, the price generally turning about the high level of some 3 taels per *shih* (tables I & II). But in spite of such high rice prices, Chang Li-hsiang reports that the situation was unlike that of the end of the great famine at the end of the Ch'ung-chen period, and that in the Shun-chih period there were no cases of people dying of starvation or selling their wives and children.<sup>(45)</sup> Not only this, a phenomenon the opposite of the general slump<sup>(46)</sup> in the price of rice land in the famine period was to be seen, a fever for investment in land causing a rise in the price of rice land.<sup>(47)</sup> This may be said to suggest that the rise in the rice price in the Chiang-nan region in the first half of the Shun-chih period was not caused only by the absolute decline in the quantity of rice, due to poor harvests. Chin Fu 靳輔, an official of the K'ang-hsi period, in his 'Second submission on the production of wealth and plenty' in the *Chin Wen-hsiang kung tsou-shu* 靳文襄公奏疏, Bk. 7, reports what the people of Kiangsu and Chekiang said,

'In the early years of the Shun-chih period in Kiangsu and Chekiang, all goods, silk, grain, cloth, utensils, were very expensive, but there were many buyers, there was no shortage of goods circulating among the people, merchants made good profits, and everyone felt happy.'

Thus the first half of the Shun-chih period, which was one of high commodity prices, came in later times to be felt to have been a good time.

## 2. Low price of rice in the K'ang-hsi period

There was, a saying already in existence in the Han period, 'Expensive grain hurts the people, cheap grain hurts the farmers';<sup>(48)</sup> thus it is clear that from ancient times a low grain price was not seen only as a sign of prosperity and good harvests; its effect on the livelihood of farmers was not overlooked. However, during the 40 years or so between the end of the Wan-li period (1573-1620) and the first half of the Shun-chih period (1644-61), the consistent social question was on the side of 'expensive grain hurts the people', and the situation reflected in 'cheap grain hurts the farmers' was not generally noticed.

In Shun-chih 13 (1656), Lu Shih-i 陸世儀, of T'ai-ts'ang-chou 太倉州,

Soochow prefecture, wrote a 7-syllable quatrain:

'This year rice is cheap, a good plentiful year: 今年米賤好豐年,  
Each *shih* of rice harvested worth 0.7 tael. 每石收來價七錢,  
In the best fields 2 *shih* are 1.4 taels; 上田二石一兩四,  
In the poor fields five *tou* are quite pitiable.' 下田五斗也堪憐,

This he annotated, 'Now for the first time is the proof of "cheap grain hurts the farmer"';<sup>(49)</sup> this shows how the expensiveness of grain had been the chief social question since the end of the Ming period, and how, the cheapness of grain had now become a question for the first time. That the figures of 0.7 tael per *shih* were not there for poetical purposes may be concluded from the rice price for the following year, Shun-chih 14, shown in tables I & II. On the slump in the rice price in this 14th year, there is the following passage under 'good and bad omens' in the *Huang-ching chih-kao* 璜涇志稿 Bk. 7, miscellanea of the Tao-kuang 道光 period (Huang-ching is the name of a trading centre in T'ai-ti'ang-chou, Soochow prefecture):

'Autumn, good rice harvest, medium cotton harvest; general sudden fall in prices, investment not repaid by receipts. The farmers had no profits, the great houses, no rent. Both upper and lower classes in difficulties.' 秋, 稻上熟, [棉] 花中熟, 俱驟賤, 獲不償本, 農民無年, 大戶無租, 上下皆困,

Again, Hsü Fang 徐枋, a landlord of Chang-chou sub-prefecture, Soochow prefecture, who spent the period from the winter of the 14th year to the spring of the 15th struggling with ill health, wrote in his *Ping-chung tu-suei chi* 病中度歲記<sup>(50)</sup>:

'This year the price of rice was very low, at a level not seen for several decades. The humblest people in the poorest hamlets all ate fine rice and made cakes, while in my house we ate no midday meal on the last day of the year.' 今年米價甚賤, 爲數十年來所未有, 窮閭細民, 無不食精鑿製糕糜, 而余家則歲除無午飯

Later, coming to the beginning of the K'ang-hsi period, the cheapness of rice became more serious still. Yeh Meng-chu records in his *Yueh-shih p'ien* that the price of rice in Shanghai sub-prefecture, which had been gradually falling since the latter half of the Shun-chih period, attained, in K'ang-hsi 8 (1669), the low figure of 0.5 tael in silver per *shih* (table II). The *Shih-huo ts'e* 食貨策 of Jen Yuan-hsiang 任源祥 says, 'In K'ang-hsi 3 the price of rice in the Chiang-nan region did not exceed 0.5 tael per *shih*', thus pointing out the general cheapness of rice in the Chiang-nan region;<sup>(51)</sup> again, Tung Han 董含, of Hua-t'ing sub-prefecture, Sung-chiang prefecture, introduces in his notebook, *San-kang shih-lueh* 三岡識略, Bk. 5, a popular satirical poem in Sung-chiang prefecture in K'ang-hsi 4 (1665), and annotates the phrase, 'all goods are expensive, rice alone is cheap' 百物俱貴, 米獨賤, with the words, 'the rice price was 0.4 tael per *shih* 米價每石四錢.' In the same work he has the following to say about the collapse of the rice price in the

next year:

'Big harvest in the autumn, a *hu* (5 tou) of rice at 0.2 tael. In Hu-kuang and Chiang-hsi at this time the price fell even lower. What rice fields brought in was not enough to pay taxes. The rich with granaries full of pulse and millet, handed them over and fled. Every other kind of goods was so abundant that nobody would not take care of it. The people called this situation "dearth in plenty". It is still remembered how, in Shun-chih 3 and 8, the price of rice rose until a *shih* reached 4 taels or more, and yet there were none who fled. How true is the old saying that cheap grain hurts the farmers.' 秋大熟，斛(五斗)米二錢，時湖廣江右價尤賤，田之所出不足供稅，富人菽粟盈倉，委之而逃，百貨充斥，無過問者。百姓號爲熟荒。猶憶，順治丙戌(三年)，辛卯(八年)兩年，米價騰貴，每石價至四兩餘，而民反無流亡者，古人云，穀賤傷農，信然。

According to Tung Han's observation, there were, even among landowners finding themselves in difficulties about paying their taxes because of the slump in the rice price, some who abandoned their houses and fled. It is reported that in Sung-chiang prefecture at this time, as a result of the fall in revenues caused by the collapse of the rice price and the severity of the corvée for which landowners were assessed, many sold their rice fields, and the price of rice land fell sharply.<sup>(52)</sup>

The effect of the collapse of the rice price was not confined to the farmers.<sup>(53)</sup> Along with the collapse in the rice price a situation arose in which both artisans and merchants were in difficulties, and economic activity stagnated. The *Ssu-tz'u-t'ang kao* 四此堂稿 by Wei Chi-jui 魏際瑞 of Ning-tu 寧都 sub-prefecture, Kan-chou 贛州 prefecture, Chiang-hsi province, is a collection of pieces written at the beginning of the K'ang-hsi period, when the author was on the staff of Fan Che'ng-mo 范承謨, then governor of Chekiang. In Bk. 10, 'General ideas', which may be said to be his conclusion, Wei gives the following description of the economic stagnation throughout the country:

"The abundant quantity and fine quality of goods usually go side by side throughout the country. But in Soochow, Hang-chou, Chiang-ning, Kuang-tung and Fukien, there used to be a great many merchants in former years, so that the wealth of these regions was still the greatest in the country. Now, for goods which used to be priced at one tael; only 0.5 to 0.3 tael is asked, and there are still no buyers. The people of Kiangsu, Chekiang, Fukien and Kuangtung, whether great families or small households, are equally impoverished, which tells us about other areas. For the last few years, the rice of Chiang-hsi was the lowest. In the Nan-kan 南贛 region, it so happened that 1 tael in silver could purchase 11 *shih* of grain. But, even so, many people died of starvation. Those who earned their livelihood by carrying or manufacturing things, usually said that they wanted to eat expensive grain. For, when grain

is expensive, the rich have money and can employ artisans and buy goods, so that the powerless people can earn some profit. Now, with all the rich impoverished, the poor are still less able to procure food. When goods are plentiful and harvests abundant, and yet the people's means are still thus. If there is a continuous series of disasters, can popular feeling be kept loyal in such circumstances?' 天下貨物之多而美莫不共。惟蘇·杭·江寧·廣東·福建等處，昔年販賣者多，故地方富盛亦甲天下，今則昔值一兩之貨，只要五錢三錢亦無人買。江·浙·閩·廣之人，無論大家·小戶，个个訴窮，則他處可知矣。前數年間，江西之米最賤，而南贛一帶，抵銀一兩可買穀十一石，民尚多飢餓者，其負販工作之人，每言願食貴穀。蓋以貴穀則富者有銀，可以僱工與作及買置貨物而小民得沾其利。今富者皆窮，則窮民愈無處趨食矣。夫物阜年豐而民窮財盡猶且若此，倘災異相仍事故一出，能保民之有恆心乎。

This situation, in which all social classes were in difficulties because goods and grain were not being sold well, is said by Wei Chi-jui to have become most severe between Shun-chih 18 (1661) and today (K'ang-hsi 10 = 1671).<sup>(54)</sup> One or two further examples may be cited. The *P'u-chüan t'ung-li hsiu-te jang-zai shuo* 普勸同里修德禳災說<sup>(55)</sup> by Tung Han-ts'e 董漢策 may be supposed to have been written during this period of cheap grain. There we read that, while festivals in Nan-hsün chen 南潯鎮 are becoming splendid, 'cash is expensive, grain cheap, farmers do no trade, goods are daily cheaper, and rich merchants are in difficulties' 錢貴穀賤，農不交易，貨權日輕，富賈坐困；he is describing, that is to say, a situation in which, as a result of the cheapness of grain, farmers are cutting down their expenditure, and the consequent lack of sale of merchandise brings merchants into difficulties: 'the destitution of Hsün-li 潯里, (*i.e.* Nan-hsün-chen) is extreme.' 潯里凋敝極矣。Again, there is the thinker, T'ang Chen 唐甄, who spent the first half of the K'ang-hsi period (1662-1722) in Soochow. In *Ts'un-yen* 存言 which is in the first part of the second volume of his *Ch'ien-shu* 潛書, he describes the stagnation of commerce:

'I have been told that the general rule for arriving at self-support is that in three years one can manage, in five years one achieves a sufficiency, and in ten years one achieves prosperity. It is now more than fifty years since the rise of the Ch'ing. Poverty is increasing daily throughout the country. The farmers are penniless, the artisans are penniless, the merchants are penniless, the officials are penniless. Grain is cheap but it is difficult to eat; cloth is cheap but it is difficult to get worn; the boats, (carrying merchandise,) go from one market to another and the goods lose their value; those in office abandon their offices and have no means of livelihood: these are the four poverties. Money is a means of circulation. Families of moderate means used not to find ten days a piece of money, to look for a string of cash. As there is no circulation of money, the farmers are cold and hungry, merchandise is all dead, the good harvest year seems a year of famine.'

甄聞之，生養之道，三年可就，五年可足，十年可富，政之常也。清興，五十餘年矣。四海之內日益困窮，農空，工空，市空，仕空。穀賤而艱於食，布帛賤而艱於衣，舟轉市集貨折賞，居官者去官而無以為家，是四空也。金錢所以通有無也。中產之家，嘗旬日不覩一金，不見緡錢。無以通之，故農民凍餒，百貨皆死，豐年如凶。

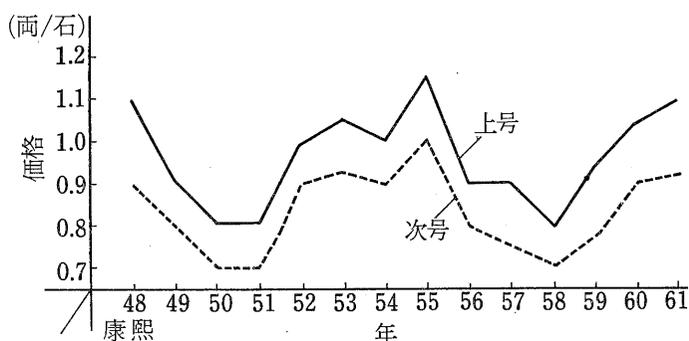
From the foregoing examples we can surmise that, for the people of the first half of the K'ang-hsi period, the slump in commodity prices was not taken as the result of the abundance of commodities; they were conscious of a vicious circle in which the fall in prices led to a fall in people's revenues, and the diminution of effective demand caused a further fall in commodity prices.

The low price of rice may be considered to have continued until the middle of the K'ang-hsi period, except for the period of the rise caused by the disasters of K'ang-hsi 18 and 19 (1679-80) (tables I & II). In K'ang-hsi 42 (1703), Sung Lo 宋肇, governor of Kiang-su, and Ts'ao Yin 曹寅, superintendent of the imperial silk factory at Chiang-ning, separately but un-animously reported that the price of rice in the Chiang-nan region had stayed at the level of about 0.7 tael per *shih* for a number of years,<sup>(56)</sup> nor are the materials on rice prices in table I at variance with this. At the same time one should notice the fact that the price of rice in Soochow prefecture, shown in table I, for K'ang-hsi 35 (1696) and 40 (1701) (0.7 to 0.8 tael per *shih*) is recorded as a price in a year of plenty, and does not exhibit such a fall as there was in the beginning of the K'ang-hsi period. When the K'ang-hsi emperor made a southern progress in the 38th year of his reign (1699), he asked, 'why, in spite of the good harvest in Wu 吳 last year, is the price of rice not low?'<sup>(57)</sup> Also, in the preceding year the emperor issued an edict with reference to the rise in the rice price particularly in the rice producing areas of Hu-kuang and Chiang-hsi,<sup>(58)</sup> and it may well be said that signs of a long term rise in the rice price started to emerge at about this time. In K'ang-hsi 44 (1705), in Sung-chiang prefecture, we find a rise in the price of fuel, rice, salt and cotton,<sup>(59)</sup> and, again, in K'ang-hsi 46-47 ((1707-8), the price of rice in the Chiang-nan region went up as a result of disasters (tables I & II), and, even after the good harvest of the 48th year, it did not come down.<sup>(60)</sup>

For the period from K'ang-hsi 48 (1709) to 61 (1722) there exist detailed reports of the price of rice, which we owe to Li Hsü, superintendent of the imperial silk factory in Soochow (table III). If we extract from them the prices at harvest time, we can construct a graph as shown here. The value of superior rice moves gently about the line of 1 tael per *shih*. If we look at the explanatory remarks added by Li Hsü to his reports, it is clear that, apart from the summers of the 52nd and 55th years (1713 and 1717), when little rice was brought from Hu-kuang and Chiang-hsi, and the price rose somewhat, all the entries are evaluated as 'average' or 'cheap', and so movements of this extent were regarded by Li Hsü as normal.

The price of rice in the Chiang-nan region in the Yung-cheng period (1723-1735) is reported in *tsou-che* recorded in the *Yung-cheng chu-p'i yü-chih* (table IV). As these reports are not for the same places, a direct comparison is impossible, but, since throughout the 13 years period an instance of the price of superior rice falling below 1 tael is only once reported, may we not well say that, in comparison with the K'ang-hsi period, the price level was somewhat higher?

Price of late-sown rice at the harvest time in Soochow in the late years of K'ang-hsi



This graph was drawn on the basis of rice price at the harvest time of every year, extracted from Table III. In case the completion of harvesting is not reported in the *tsou-che*, the price mentioned in it was taken up. If no such *tsou-che*, the price in the 10th month was utilized. For the year in which no report was given about the price in the 10th month, the price given at the time immediately after the 10th month was utilized. The price of rice taken up in this table are marked with \* in Table III.

### 3. Rise in the price of rice in the Ch'ien-lung period.

With the beginning of the Ch'ien-lung period (1736-1795) the upward trend of the price of rice becomes marked. In Ch'ien-lung 4 (1739), Sun Hao 孫灝, censor on the Kuei-chou 貴州 circuit, recorded, 'Among hardships accumulated in the south-east, the severest is the price of rice, which is going up every day'; and he points out that the price of rice in Chekiang has amounted to 1.5 or 1.6 taels per *shih* or to 1.7 or 1.8 taels.<sup>(61)</sup>; again, Lu Chuo 盧焯, governor of Chekiang, reported that in Kiangsu and Chekiang even in good years a shortage of rice was felt, and that in recent years a price of 1.5 or 1.6 tael had become the normal situation.<sup>(62)</sup>

In Ch'ien-lung 13 (1748) the question of dear rice throughout China became a major concern of the government; and the point was reached where popular riots broke out on the pretext of dear rice in Kiang-su and Che-kiang.<sup>(63)</sup> On the extent of the rise in the price of rice in this same year in the Chiang-nan region, materials are available showing 3 taels per

*shih* in Soochow prefecture, 3 taels again in Hu-chou prefecture, and 3.5 taels in Sung-chiang prefecture (table I). Records to the effect that in this year there were especially grave disasters are not to be found for all local gazetteers; from this it may be concluded that the phenomenon of dear rice in Ch'ien-lung 13 was of a different character from that of a phenomenon of dear rice arising from natural disasters on a large scale. That is to say, this dear rice was not brought about by a temporary diminution in supply caused by natural disaster; the long term tendency towards a shortage of rice may be regarded as having temporarily emerged as a result of storing or exportation.<sup>(64)</sup> In Ch'ien-lung 16 (1751) the price of rice rose again (table I), and Huang Ang notes in his observations in Bk. 2 of his *Hsi-chin shih-hsiao lu*, in respect of the rise in the rice price this year in Wu-hsi and Chin-kuei sub-prefectures of Ch'ang-chou prefecture,

'There was very fine harvest in rural districts, but at the end of winter rice price was 2.5 taels per *shih*. The price rising like this when the rice is marketed is unprecedented even in exceptionally bad years.' 邑田禾頗稔，而冬底米價石二兩五錢，於出米之時，價昂若此，雖奇荒之歲，亦所未有也。 Subsequently the rice price fell to a more normal level, and it is reported that in Ch'ien-lung 26 (1761) the price of rice in the city of Soochow prefecture was about 2 taels in the expensive category, about 1.5 tael in the medium category, and about 1 tael in the cheap category.<sup>(65)</sup>

The trend of rice prices in the latter half of the Ch'ien-lung period (1736-95) is recorded in several 'jottings'. According to Ch'ien Yung's *Li-yuan ts'ung-hua*, Bk. 1, 'rice price', the level of the rice price in the Chiang-nan area from Ch'ien-lung 20 (1755) to 50 (1785) was 14, 15 *wen* 文 per *sheng* 升 (in silver, 1.6 to 1.9 tael per *shih*<sup>(66)</sup>) and, after the great drought of Ch'ien-lung 50, the prices constantly differed from 27 or 28 *wen* per *sheng* to 34 or 35 *wen* (which equals to about 1.9 or 2.7 taels per *shih*.) Again, Cheng Kuang-tsu 鄭光祖 of Ch'ang-shu sub-prefecture, Soochow prefecture, tells us in his *I-pan lu tsa-shu* 一斑錄雜述, Bk. 6, 'rice price', that after Ch'ien-lung 20 (1755), as a result of a series of good harvests, the price of rice fell for a time below 1,000 *wen* (about 1.4 taels<sup>(68)</sup>) per *shih*; and again, that it subsequently rose gradually to 16 to 17 *wen* per *sheng*, while after the great drought of the 50th year (1785) until the closing years of the Ch'ien-lung period it was at the level of 20 *wen* per *sheng* (about 2.2 taels per *shih*<sup>(69)</sup>). From the foregoing it seems that we can tell that the price of rice expressed in silver gradually increased from Ch'ien-lung 20 (1755). From Ch'ien-lung 40 (1775) the quantity of copper cash in circulation increased, and there was a tendency for silver to be expensive and copper cheap than before,<sup>(70)</sup> with the result that the extent of the rise in the rice price expressed in copper cash is even more evident than when it is expressed in silver.

By most contemporaries this rise in the rice price in the Ch'ien-lung

period was accepted as being associated with a shortage of rice, due principally to the increase in the population.<sup>(71)</sup> Hung Liang-chi 洪亮吉, of Yang-hu 陽湖 sub-prefecture, Ch'ang-chou prefecture, in his *Sheng-chi pien* 生計編<sup>(72)</sup> makes a comparison between the high level of commodity prices at the end of the Ch'ien-lung period and their cheapness fifty years earlier, and, taking this to be the result of a shortage of goods caused by the increase in the population, he expresses feelings of grave concern. On the other hand, however, there was Wang Hui-tsu 汪輝祖, of Hsiao-shan 蕭山 sub-prefecture, Shao-hsing 紹興 prefecture, at the end of the Ch'ien-lung period, who said,

'Rice is always expensive now, but people enjoy life. For in the past high cost was confined to rice, but now fish, prawns, vegetables and fruit are all expensive, and the small traders and farmers can all make a living.' 今米常貴而人尚樂生, 蓋往年專貴在米, 今則魚鰕蔬果無一不貴, 故小販郵農俱餬口<sup>(73)</sup>.

And we have thus a description enabling us to conjecture a considerable level of economic activity in the midst of high prices. We may perhaps look at this situation as the converse of that which prevailed at the beginning of the K'ang-hsi period, when the low price of rice was accompanied by a stagnation of economic activity.

### In conclusion

In our foregoing attempt to look at the fluctuation in the price of rice from the Wan-li period to the end of the Ch'ien-lung period it seems possible to discern a general movement: gradual rise from the end of the Wan-li period (about 1620)→sharp rise from Ch'ung-chen 11-12 (1638-1639)→high price in the first half of the Shun-chih period (1644-61)→slump from the second half of Shun-chih to the beginning of the K'ang-hsi period (1662-1722)→cheap rate in the first half of K'ang-hsi→gradual rise after the middle of the K'ang-hsi period→high rise in the first part of the Ch'ien-lung period (1736-95)→gradual rise from the middle of the Ch'ien-lung period.

The present article owes much to the achievements of previous research, above all those of Ch'üan Han-sheng 全漢昇 and Wang Yeh-chien 王業鏗, but if it is to make any contribution in the future to the study of the economic history of the Ming and Ch'ing, as a preparatory work in the field of the study of Ch'ing commodity prices, I would like, by way of conclusion, to attempt briefly to see where that contribution may lie.

It may be said that in the studies of Ming and Ch'ing society and economics carried out in Japan after the war, with the object of overturning the thesis of absolute stagnation in Chinese society, various phenomena apparent in the Ming and Ch'ing periods were not pointed to only as phenomena; they generally became the object of discussions connected with

a recognition of steps in the development of Ming and Ch'ing society. The tendency which led to this general movement was one in which the various social and economic changes of the time—the accumulation of land, the production of commercial goods, the development of artisanal crafts in rural areas, and so on—were directly linked in discussion with theories, to a high degree abstract, of developmental stages or economic structure; and may we not consider that there was a tendency whereby there was not necessarily an adequate investigation of the *concrete* economic background, in which such changes, for the landowners and producers of the time, were made possible, profitable or inevitable? One may well be able to regard such developments as the accumulation of land, the production of commercial goods or resistance to rent collection as indications of what were ultimately certain qualitative and irreversible stages of development; but it is also hard to deny that aspect of these phenomena under which they appear as being regulated by such reversible and quantitative factors as the rise and fall of the population, changes in the volume of production, changes in the quantity of money in circulation, and the corresponding accompanying movements of prices. If this is accepted, then it is precisely the characteristics of these regulating factors, the general way of the economic movements which these reflect, that may be held to provide an effective viewpoint for the construction of a vivid image of the society and economics of the period. For example, it would probably be to some extent effective, in providing a new analysis and interpretation of the various social and political phenomena, to work from a division between the prosperous and unprosperous aspects of the Ch'ing period. It can surely be said that the study of commodity prices is not confined to pointing out phenomena of price rises and falls, or, indeed, to discussions relating to such single fields as the volume of money in circulation or the rise and fall of the population; it should henceforth be taken up as an indispensable, basic study for carrying out overall analyses leading to knowledge of the economic specificity of pre-modern China.

#### NOTES

- (1) Nakayama Mio 中山美緒, 清代前期江南の物價動向 (On the rise and fall of prices of commodities in the Chiang-nan region during the first half of the Ch'ing period), In: Toyoshi Kenkyu 東洋史研究, XXXVII, 4, 1979, pp. 77-106.
- (2) Among studies dealing with commodity prices in this period, there was already in 1930 Liu I-cheng 柳詒徵, 江蘇各地千六百年間之米價, In: *Shih-hsüeh tsa-chih* 史學雜誌, 南京中國史學會, vol. 2, no. 3/4; this introduces material on rice prices in Kiang-su; but it should probably be said that up to the 1950's overall studies were carried out, principally from the viewpoint of the history of money. The principal achievements were: P'eng Hsin-wei 彭信威, 中國貨幣史, Shanghai: 上海羣聯出版社, 1954 (2nd ed. 上海: 上海人民出版社, 1958) and Ch'üan Han-sheng 全漢昇, 美洲白銀與十八世紀中國物價革命的關係 (American silver and the price revolution in China during the 18th century), In: 中央

研究院歷史語言研究所集刊 (hereafter abbreviated to *Chi-k'an* 集刊), no. 28, 1957. Subsequent studies of commodity prices in the Ch'ing period bring Ch'üan Han-sheng and Wang Yeh-chien 王業鍵 into the forefront, and there are their joint productions: 清雍正年間 (1723-35) 的米價 (*The price of rice during the Yung-cheng period (1723-35) of the Ch'ing dynasty*), In: 集刊 no. 30, 1959, and 清中葉以前江浙米價的變動趨勢 (*Fluctuation trends of the rice price in Kiang-su and Che-kiang before the middle of the Ch'ing dynasty*), 集刊, 外篇 no. 4, 1960. Also Ch'üan Han-sheng, 乾隆十三年米貴問題 (The problem of expensive rice in Ch'ien-lung 13), In: 慶祝李濟先生七十歲論文集 was published in 1965. The four articles of Mr. Ch'üan above are collected in his 中國經濟史論叢 (*Articles on Chinese economic history*), vol. 2, Hong-kong: 新亞研究所, 1972. Also, among subsequent writings there are: Wang Yeh-chien, *The Secular Trend of Prices during the Ch'ing period (1644-1911)*, In: 香港中文大學中國文化研究所學報, vol. 2, 1972; and: Ch'üan Han-sheng and Richard A. Kraus, *Mid-Ch'ing Rice Markets and Trade—An Essay in Price History*, Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard Univ. Press, 1975.

Among Japanese studies, there is, from the viewpoint of the history of money, Miyazaki Ichisada 宮崎市定, 中國近世銀問題略説 (*An outline of the question of silver in modern China*) (contained in his アジア史研究, no. 3, Kyoto: 東洋史研究會, 1963). Also, from the viewpoint of the structure of rice distribution, among those which touch on the differences in the rice price by region and by market, there are: Shigeta Atsushi 重田徳, 清初における湖南米市場の一考察 (An examination of the rice markets in Hunan at the beginning of the Ch'ing period), In: 東洋文化研究所紀要, vol. 10, 1956; later included in the author's 清代社會經濟史研究 (Studies in the social and economic history of the Ch'ing period), Tokyo: 岩波書店 1975; Abe Takeo 安部健夫, 米穀需給の研究—『雍正史』の一章としてみた— (*A study of the supply and demand of rice designed as a chapter in a "History of the Yung-cheng period"*), In: 東洋史研究, vol. 15, no. 4, 1957, later included in the author's 清代史の研究 (Studies in the history of the Ch'ing period), Tokyo: 創文社, 1971; and Terada Takanobu 寺田隆信, 明代における北邊の米價問題について (On the question of the price of rice on the northern frontier in the Ming period), In: 東洋史研究, vol. 26 no. 2, 1967, later included in the author's 山西商人の研究 (Studies of merchants in Shan-hsi), Kyoto: 東洋史研究會 1972.

- (3) Among articles pointing out the limitations of the efficacy of studies of premodern commodity prices from this viewpoint, there is Imuta Toshimitsu 伊牟田敏充, 開港と幕末の經濟的危機 (*The opening of the ports and the economic crisis at the end of the Bakufu rule*), In: 明治維新史研究講座, 歷史學研究會編, 3, Tokyo: 平凡社, 1958.
- (4) For example, Fujii Hiroshi 藤井宏, 新安商人の研究 (*Study of the merchants of Hsin-an*), 3, In: 東洋學報 vol. 36, no. 3, 1953, etc. The view hitherto prevalent which stresses the failure to implement the law of value in the rural markets of Ch'ing China and the Republic, has very recently been subjected to criticism, Yoshida Kōichi 吉田滋一, 二〇世紀前半中國の一地方市場における棉花流通について (*On the circulation of cotton in a region of China in the first half of the 20th century*), In: 史林, vol. 60, no. 2: Adachi Keiji 足立啓二, 明清時代の商品生産と地主制研究をめぐって (On production of commercial good and the landlord system in the Ming and Ch'ing periods), In: 東洋史研究, vol. 36, no. 1—both the above, 1977. However, there is room to doubt that sufficient condition for proving the enforcement of the law of value is provided solely by the facts that the commercialization of products was constantly carried out by the direct producers (Adachi), and that there was no monopoly dividing small producers from the markets (Yoshida). The fact that, under the competition with the direct producers, the commercialization of large quantities of agricultural produce was carried out by landlords, and the fact of the widespread financial distress of direct producers and small purchasers—surely these conditions would sharply weaken any power of recovery towards a value level through price competition. However, a theoretical investigation

- of this question is beyond the present writer's power, and may therefore be postponed here.
- (5) The reason for focussing on Chiang-nan is that, apart from the relative abundance of materials on rice price available in the historical sources, this region, as a big centre for the distribution of rice, would seem to constitute a typical region, indispensable in any future study of price differences between regions.
  - (6) On the history of the *tsou-che* system, see Silas H. L. Wu 吳秀良, *Communication and Imperial Control in China: Evolution of the Palace Memorial System, 1693-1735*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1970. These *tsou-che* were preserved in the palace up to the period of the Republic. The *Yung-cheng chu-p'i yü-chih* 雍正硃批諭旨 was published in Ch'ien-lung 3 (1738); it includes about one third of the *tsou-che* of the Yung-cheng period, in revised form; and the work of arranging and publishing the others has been going forward since 1920. Some of the *tsou-che* were printed in the periodicals, *Wen-hsien ts'ung-pien* 文獻叢編 and *Shih-liao hsün-k'an* 史料旬刊, published by the Department of Documents of the National Peking Museum of the Old Palace before the Second World War. With the transfer of the Republican government to Taiwan after the war, a large quantity of palace archives, including *tsou-che*, was moved to Taiwan; These *tsou-che* are now being published by the Taipei National Museum of the Old Palace, arranged according to the reign title. We do not know full details of the *tsou-che* remaining in Peking, but we have a partial glimpse through the publication by the Chung-hua shu-chü 中華書局, Peking, of 關於江寧織造曹家檔案史料 (*Materials from the archives of the Ts'ao family, the superintendent of the Chiang-ning Imperial Silk Factory*), 故宮博物院明清檔案部 1975, and 李煦奏摺, 1976, both compiled by the Ming and Ch'ing Archives Section of the Museum of the Old Palace. On the publication of *tsou-che* of the K'ang-hsi and Yung-cheng court, see the reviews by Kanda Nobuo 神田信夫 in *Tōyō gakuho*, 59, 1/2, 1977 and 60, 1/2, 1978.
  - (7) See *op. cit.*, *Li Hsü tsou-che*.
  - (8) *Yung-cheng chu-p'i yü-chih*, vol. 37, 7th year, 6th month, 30th day, memorial of Wei T'ing-chen. As a concrete example of the K'ang-hsi emperors orders to provincial officials to report on the price of rice, we find in the section, *T'ien-yü hsia-wen* 天語下問 (*Questions asked by the emperor*), Bk. 1 of Ch'en Pin's 陳瓚 *Ch'en Ch'ing-tuan wen-chi* 陳清端文集, that, in K'ang-hsi 54 (1715), Ch'en Pin, provincial governor of Fukien, was permitted to submit a *tsou-che*, and ordered to report the price of rice; further, endorsement for T'ung Kuo-jiang 佟國勳, provincial governor of Chiang-hsi, to be ordered to report the price of rice, is to be found in a *tsou-che* (undated) of T'ung Kuo-jiang, printed in *Kung-chung-tang k'ang-hsi ch'ao tsou-che* 宮中檔康熙朝奏摺, Series 7, page 873.
  - (9) *Tsou-che* of T'ung Kuo-jiang from K'ang-hsi 52 (1713) to 56 (1717), printed in *Kung-chung-tang k'ang-hsi ch'ao tsou-che*.
  - (10) *Tsou-che* of Wei T'ing-chen in *Yung-cheng chu-p'i yü-chih*, vol. 37, 4th year, 11th month, 26th day, etc.
  - (11) On the organization of rice price reporting, much is owed to Ch'üan and Klaus, *op. cit.*, *Mid-Ch'ing Rice Markets and Trade*, chapter 1. Recently, Wang Yeh-ch'ien's monograph 清代的糧價陳報制度 (*Grain price report system in ch'ing dynasty*) was published in *Ku-kung chi-kan* (故宮季刊), vol. 13, no. 1, but I could not refer to it in this article.
  - (12) Yeh Meng-chu, of Shanghai sub-prefecture, has the following to say in his *Yueh-shih pien*, Bk. 7, with reference to movements in commodity prices:  
 'When the whole country is generally uneventful, life goes well and commerce flows easily; and high price is a presage of lower. When there are many incidents on the frontiers, the production of the land is poor, and communications are difficult; and low prices are in danger of going higher. Therefore, I record the lowest and highest prices of goods of most essential daily need, which may note the chronicle of daily changing customs, and may examine the ease or distress of the people.

- Yeh Meng-chu was one who was conscious that prices reflected the comparative peace or prosperity of society, and it may be supposed that this consciousness was shared by other chroniclers.
- (13) Included in *Shanghai chang-ku ts'ung-shu* 上海掌故叢書, Shanghai: 上海通社, 1935. Also included in *Ming-ch'ing shih-liao hui-pien* 明清史料彙編, series 6, vol. 8, Taipei: 文海出版社, 1969.
- (14) For example, there are signs that Cheng Kuang-tsu, in his *I-pan lu*, consulted Ch'ien Yung's *Li-yuan ts'ung-hua*, and that the latter, in that work, consulted Ku Kung-hsieh 顧公燮, *Hsiao-hsiao hsien-chi che-ch'ao* 消夏閑記摘抄.
- (15) But in such rice exporting areas as Hu-nan, there are numerous examples of prices being expressed in volume of rice to an amount of currency. See, for example, *Tseng-hsiang i* 增餉議 by Li T'eng-fang 李騰芳, quoted on p. 13.
- (16) Wu Ch'eng-lo 吳承洛, *中國度量衡史* (History of weights and measures in China), Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1937, p. 71.
- (17) (*Chia-ch'ing*) *Ta-ch'ing hui-tien shih-li* 嘉慶大清會典事例, Bk. 152, Hu pu 戶部, Measures, *sheng, tou, hu*.
- (18) Ch'en Hung-mou 陳弘謀 explains, in his *P'ei-yuan t'ang ou-ts'un kao* 培遠堂偶存稿, Orders 文檄, Bk. 18, 'Prohibition of use of market *tou* for withdrawal and distribution of official grain' (Ch'ien-lung 9=1744), that the 'capital *tou* 京斗 was made in accordance with the iron *tou* (the granary *tou* is meant) distributed in K'ang-hsi 44 (1705). And what appears in the sources as the official *hu* 官斛 is probably the 'granary *hu*.'
- (19) In the same section of the work in note 17 above, there is the following in the regulations for k'ang-hsi 43 (1704):  
 'It is directed that in all provincial, prefectural and sub-prefectural markets, trading centres, docks and the rural areas, the *hu* used by the people shall always be on the pattern of the iron *hu* originally distributed by the Hu-pu 戶部 and the *sheng* and *tou* are also to conform to the pattern of the 'granary *tou*' and 'granary *sheng*' of that Office.
- (20) *Ta-ch'ing lü-li* 大清律例, Bk. 15, Hu-lü 戶律 markets; private fabrication of *hu* and *tou* and weights and measures.
- (21) Chou Yü-li 周於禮, '*Tiao-ch'en cheng-mien shih-i shu*' 條陳征緬事宜疏 (Detailed account to the Burma campaign for submission), In: *Huang-ch'ao ching-shih wen-pien* 皇朝經世文編, Bk. 87, military administration, protection against southern barbarians, last part), and Lu Ying 逢英, *Ch'eng-ch'iu lu* 誠求錄, Bk. 1, public notices, 'Order to be issued that *hu* and weights should conform to the system.'
- (22) We find such examples as, in the *Yung-cheng chu-p'i yü-chih*, the market *tou* is 1.6 times the granary *tou* in the provincial capital of Kuei-chou (Bk. 27, 7th year, 11th month, 7th day, *tsou-che* of O-er-t'ai 鄂爾泰. But in the *Kung-chung-tang k'ang-hsi ch'ao tsou-che*, series 4, pp. 145, *et seq.*, the report of Liu Yin-shu 劉蔭樞 there recorded gives 1.5; the market *tou* is 2.3 times the granary *tou* in the prefectural city of Chung-king 重慶 in Szechwan (Vol. 22, 5th year, 7th month, 11th day, *tsou-che* of Jen Kuo-ying 任國榮); and the market *hu* 1.1 times the granary *hu* in the prefectural city of Ch'ang-sha in Hunan (Vol. 37, 1st year, 9th month, 6th day, *tsou-che* of Wei T'ing-chen 魏廷珍).
- (23) Pointed out in respect of Chiang-nan in the Chia-ching period (1522-66) by Hsü Hsien-chung 徐獻忠, of Wu-hsing 吳興 sub-prefecture, Hu-chou prefecture, in his *Wu-hsing chang-ku chi* 吳興掌故集, Bk. 12, manners and customs; also pointed out in respect of Soochow by Chao Hung-en 趙弘恩, governor-general of the Liang Chiang 兩江 provinces in the Yung-cheng period (1723-1735), in his *For the strict enforcement of prohibitions*, included in his *Liang-chiang shih-kao* 兩江示稿; and so on.
- (24) For example, pointed out in respect of K'un-shan 崑山 sub-prefecture, Soochow prefecture, in Wang Che-sheng 王喆生, *Su-yen wen-kao* 素巖文稿, Bk. 14, 與李邑侯論法斛 (discussion of legal *hu* for magistrate Li) (about K'ang-hsi 40=1701); or, again, in respect

- of Hsiang-t'an sub-prefecture, Ch'ang-sha prefecture, in *Hu-nan-sheng-li ch'eng-an*, Hu-lü, markets, Bk. 34, 'Official confirming and stamping of values of *hu*, *tou* and weights and measures used by brokers in all prefectures and sub-prefectures, and forbid exacting much for dried fish and cotton' (about Ch'ien-lung 1=1736); etc.
- (25) H. B. Morse, *Abstract of Information on Currency and Measures in China*, In: *Journal of the China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, new series 24, 1883, p. 91.
- (26) On the move from the expression of the rice price in copper cash to its expression in silver in Chiang-nan, taking the Chia-ching and Wan-li periods (16th century) as the limit, see Hamaguchi Fukuju 濱口福壽, 明代の米價表示法と銀の流通—明代通貨史覺書二—(*Mode of expressing rice price in the Ming period and the circulation of Silver—memorandum on the history of currency in the Ming period*, 2), In: 新瀾縣立新瀾中央高等學校研究年報, no. 15, 1969.
- (27) *Chiang-su sheng ming-ch'ing i-lai pei-k'e tzu-liao hsüan-chi* 江蘇省明清以來碑刻資料選集, compiled by Kiangsu Provincial Museum, Peking: San-lien shu-tien, 1959, pp. 590-91.
- (28) The highest grades of silver based on the traditional and empirical methods of assessment in China; but it is said that the actual grade was of the order of 992 parts to 1,000. See Miyashita Tadao 宮下忠雄, 中國幣制の特殊研究 (Specific study of the Chinese currency system), Tokyo: Nihon gakujutsu shinkō-kai, 1952, pp. 110-111.
- (29) The Japanese *monme* of this time corresponded to about 0.1 tael under the Ch'ing.
- (30) In the 唐阿蘭陀持渡金銀錢圖鑑控 (*Tō Oranda mochiwatari kingin sen zu-kan hikae*) (Catalogue of gold and silver coins brought from China and Holland), preserved in the Shiryō hensan-jo of Tokyo University, there is a drawing of a *guan-ssu* silver piece brought to Japan in Hōreki 13 (1763), and this is said to have the form of a small ingot weighing about 10 *monme* (approximately 1 tael). See Katō Shigeru 加藤繁, 唐宋時代に於ける金銀の研究 (Study of gold and silver in the T'ang and Sung periods), Tokyo: Tōyō Bunko, 1925, Vol. 1, pp. 333-334.
- (31) In *Yung-chen chu-p'i yü-chih*, Bk. 2, 2nd year, 10th month, 20th day, the *tsou-che* of Yang Tsung-jen 楊宗仁, governor general of Hu-kuang, says:  
'I find that inspecting Chekiang merchants, who come to Ch'u 楚 to buy grain, all deal in hulled rice.'  
Again, Chao Shen-ch'iao 趙申喬, governor of P'ien-yuan (Hunan) in the 40's of the K'ang-hsi period, says:  
'Grain now brought down from Hsiang-yin and Li-chou, on arrival at Hankow for export, must all be hulled for resale.'  
(*Tzu-chih kuan-shu* 自治官書, Bk. 6, memorials, 摺奏湖南運米買賣人姓名數目稿 (*Draft of tsou-che on the names and numbers of those engaged in buying and selling rice shipped from Hunan*). Further, in a *tsou-che* of Lang T'ing-chi 郎廷極, governor of Chiang-hsi, of K'ang-hsi 49 (1710), 7th month, 4th day (*Kung-chung-tang k'ang-hsi ch'ao tsou-che*, series 2, pp. 615-618), the quantities of rice and grain sold by brokers in Nan-ch'ang prefectural city of Chiang-hsi province, and in the other prefectures and sub-prefectures, are reported, and the quantities sold in the form of rice are overwhelmingly greater.
- (32) In *Tao-kuang Chen-tse chen-chih* 道光震澤鎮志, Bk. 2, produce, there is what is said to be a quotation of a record of the early Ch'ing period to the effect that white paddy rice produced in Chen-tse was priced 20% to 30% higher than ordinary rice.
- (33) According to a *tsou-che* of Chao Hung-en 趙弘恩 (vol. 57), of Yung-cheng 12, 3rd month, 15th day, the price in Soochow city of *white hsien-mi* 白秈米 from Hu-kuang was 1.15 taels per *shih*, while that of coarse *keng-mi* 糙粳米 on the spot was 1.25 tael.
- (34) *Yung-cheng chu-p'i yü-chih*, vol. 35, 11th year, 4th month, 15th day, *tsou-che* of Ch'iao Shih-ch'en 喬世臣.
- (35) *Ibid.*, vol. 57, 13th year, 1st month, 12th day, *tsou-che* of Chao Hung-en. I owe much in the foregoing, on the qualities of rice, to Abe Takeo, *op. cit.* (see note 2).
- (36) Yang Hsi-fu 楊錫紱, *Ssu-chih-t'ang wen-chi* 四知堂文集, Bk. 15, memorials, 請慎選米色以恤軍丁疏 (Request for careful choice of rice quality for the sake of the troops).

- (37) Nieh I-chung 聶夷中, *Shang t'ien-chia shih* 傷田家詩 (poem on the distress of farmers) (*Ch'üan-t'ang-shih* 全唐詩—case no. 10, vol. 1).
- (38) See articles included in *Chung-kuo tu-ti wen-t'i ho shang-yeh kao-li tai* 中國土地問題和商業高利貸 (*Questions of land, commerce and high interest loans in China*), compiled by the Chung-kuo nung-ts'un ching-chi yen-chiu hui 中國農村經濟研究會, Shanghai, 1937, especially Feng Ho-fa 馮和法, 中國農產物的原始市場 (Primitive market for Chinese agricultural products).
- (39) (Ch'ien-lung) *Hsiang-t'an hsien chih* (乾隆) 湘潭縣志, Bk. 8, taxes and corvées.
- (40) Chin I-p'ai 靳一派, who was magistrate of Ch'ung-te sub-prefecture (altered to Shih-men 石門 sub-prefecture in K'ang-hsi 1=1662), Chia-hsing prefecture, during the 30's of the Wan-li period, says in his *Pien-shen shih-i* 編審事宜, which is included in (K'ang-hsi) *Shih-men hsien chih* (康熙) 石門縣志, Bk. 2, tax and corvée:  
'Even if the rice land is of the finest, the annual rent per 100 *mou* is not more than 100 *shih*, making a value of only about 50 taels.'  
He is thus reckoning about 0.5 tael per *shih* as the rice price. Again, Jen Yuan-hsiang 任源祥, of I-hsing 宜興 sub-prefecture, Ch'ang-chou prefecture, at the beginning of the Ch'ing period, says in *Shu-huang t'an* 熟荒嘆 (Lamenting dearth in plenty), in Bk. 3 of his collection of poems, *Ming-ho-t'ang shih-chi* 鳴鶴堂詩集:  
'In Wan-li days of old, a *shih* of rice was 0.4 or 0.5 tael, and all goods were cheap.'  
昔在萬曆, 石米四, 五錢, 百貨皆賤.
- (41) Yeh Meng-chu, *Yueh-shih pien*, Bk. 7, food 1, has:  
'Ch'ung-chen 5th year, summer. White rice at 120 wen per *tou*, making 0.1 tael in silver, with the people consequently suffering from the high price.' 壬申(崇禎五年)夏, 白米每斗價錢一百二十文, 值銀一錢, 民間便苦其貴.  
In what follows, the items relating to Shanghai sub-prefecture, Sung-chiang prefecture, in this section, are based on the above work.
- (42) (Ming-kuo) *Shuang-lin chen-chih* 民國雙林鎮志, Bk. 32, Arts, Shen 沈, *Ch'i-huang chi-shih* 奇荒記事 (Records of exceptional famines).
- (43) Based on Fu I-ling 傅衣凌, *Ming-tai chiang-nan shih-min ching-chi shih-t'an* 明代江南市民經濟試探 (*Investigation of the economic condition of citizens in Chiang-nan in the Ming period*), Shanghai: Jen-min ch'u-pan she, 1957, p. 94.
- (44) As note 42 above.
- (45) According to the postscript to *Chüan-shih chi* 狷士記 in Chang Lü-hsiang 張履祥, *Yang-yuan hsien-sheng ch'üan-chi* 楊園先生全集 Bk. 17, chronicles, in the disaster periods of Wan-li 16 and 17 (1588-9) and 36 (1608), there were deaths from hunger in spite of remission of taxes granted by the court; and on the occasion of the disaster years of Ch'ung-chen 13 and 14 (1640-1), there were no remissions granted by the court and there were many cases of people selling their land and houses, wives and children, and of people dying of starvation. Between Shun-chih 5 (1648) and 12 (1655) there was a succession of floods and droughts, and the price of rice showed a rise similar to that of the end of the Ch'ung-chen period, but it was said that there were then none who sold their wives and children or died of starvation.
- (46) For example, Chou T'ien-chüeh 周天爵, a graduate of the Chia-ch'ing period (1796-1820), says in *Yü Liu Tzu-pai shu* 與劉次白書 (Letter to Liu Tzu-pai), in *Chou Wen-chung kung ch'ih-tu* 周文忠公尺牘, vol. 1:  
'In famine years rice land is bound to be cheap. The people exchange their land for their life, irrespective of the price.' 饑年田畝必賤, 民以田易命, 安問貴賤.
- (47) See Yeh Meng-chu, *Yueh-shih pien*, Bk. 1, rice land property 1, etc. I intend to deal with the price of rice land in a separate article, 'The fluctuation of commodity prices in the Chiang-nan region during the first half of the Ch'ing period.'
- (48) In the *Han-shu*, Bk. 7, Chronicle of Chao-ti, under the year Yuan-feng 6 (75 B.C.), there is:  
'An edict stated: "Now, cheap grain hurts the farmers. At present, the price of

grain near the capital has fallen, and the millet crop will have to be paid as the year's taxes.' 詔曰，夫穀賤傷農，今三輔太常穀減賤，其令以叔粟當今年賦。

Also, in the same work, Bk. 24, part 1, Food and money, part 1, there are the words, 'When rice is bought very high, it hurts the people; when very low, it hurts the farmers.' 糶甚貴傷民，甚賤傷農。

- (49) Lu Shih-i, *Lu Fu-t'ing shih-chi* 陸桴亭詩集 Bk. 5, *Shui-t'ien yao* 水田謠。
- (50) Hsü Fang 徐枋, *Chü-i-t'ang chi* 居易堂集, Bk. 8. That Hsü Fang was a landlord appears in *Chang Ying-fu chuan* (張英甫傳), in the same work, Bk. 12.
- (51) Jen Yuan-hsiang, *Shih-huo ts'e* 食貨策, In: *Huang-ch'ao ching-shih wen-pien*, Bk. 29, civil administration, taxes and corvées, 1.
- (52) Yeh Meng-chu, *Yueh-shih pien*, Bk. 1, rice land property, 1.
- (53) It may be that it is somewhat meaningless, in respect of China at this time, to subsume landlords, owner farmers and tenant farmers under the term *nung-min* 'farmers'; but it would seem that the people of the time, when saying such things as, 'cheap grain hurts the farmers', were generally thinking of landlords, owner farmers and tenant farmers, subsumed in the term 'farmers', as the principal sellers of grain, in contrast to the 'gentry, artisans and merchants' as the principal buyers; we will therefore provisionally follow this general view, and use the word 'farmers.'
- (54) The passage quoted continues:  
 'I observe that it will soon be thirty years since the beginning of the *Shun-chih* period, what people used to call a generation. Apart from levying taxes, the court has taken nothing whatever more from the people, while for disasters and mounting indebtedness there has been universal remission, so that all families should be sufficiently supplied, affluence is general, and gold and land have the same value. How can it be then that, from *Shun-chih* 18 until now, this poverty of the people and this constant inadequacy of state finance should still get worse?' 竊見，順治初年以至於今，將三十年，古人所稱一世者也。朝廷自征賦以外，未有一毫多取於民，而災傷積連無不蠲赦，宜乎家給人足，貫朽紅陳，金土同價矣，而百姓如此之窮，國家常匱不足之慮，自順治十八年以後至今日而甚者何也。
- (55) Included in T'ung Han-ts'e 董漢策, *Lien-i chi* 蓮漪集。
- (56) Sung Lo 宋榮, *Hsi-po lei-kao* 西坡類稿, Bk. 37, memorials 6, 請白糧減存米隨漕帶運疏 and *tsou-che* of Ts'ao Yin, dated K'ang-hsi 42, 8th month, 24th day, in *Kung-chung-tang k'ang-hsi ch'ao tsou-che*, series 1, pp. 64-66.
- (57) In Sung Lo, *Hsi-po lei-kao*, Bk. 14, *Ying-luan jih-chi* 迎鑾日記 there is:  
 'An edict says: there was a good harvest in Wu last year; why is the price of rice not low? The servant Lo submits: Wu is a meeting place of river and sea. Exporters and importers pass to and fro incessantly. Hitherto the price of rice has been neither very high nor very low.' 諭云，去歲吳中大熟，米價何以不賤，臣等奏云，吳中為江海通津，往來糶糴者絡繹不絕，從來米價不大貴亦不大賤。
- (58) *Sheng-tsu shih-lu* 聖祖實錄, Vol. 187, edict of K'ang-hsi 37, 3rd month, day *wu-tzu* 戊子。
- (59) Chu Lien 諸聯, *Ming-chai hsiao-shih* 明齋小識 (published in *Tao-kuang* 14=1834), Bk. 9, price of rice:  
 'I looked into our ancestor's house keeping records and found that in the K'ang-hsi period there was rice at about 40 *wen* and at about 50 *wen* per *tau*. Then, in the 44th year, there was a nomination of 'four expensive things', meaning fuel, rice, salt and cotton. The people at the time thought this hard. Prices are now ten times as high—would this really be the result of the great expansion of the population?' 會檢前人舊賬，康熙年間有斗米四十餘文者，五十餘文者，至乙酉（四十四年）有四貴之說，謂薪米鹽與木棉也。當時民以為苦，今增十倍，此固戶口繁衍所致歟。
- (60) *Sheng-tsu shih-lu*, Bk. 240, edict of K'ang-hsi 48, 11th month, day *keng-yin* (庚寅):  
 'There was no harvest in Kiangsu and Chekiang in the last two years. This year there has been a good harvest, and the price of rice is still not normal; there must be some reason for this.' 江浙前兩年無收。今年大熟，米價仍未平者，亦必有故。

- (61) Sun Hao 孫灝, 酌減採買額數疏 (*Memorial proposing reduction of quantities of official purchases*), In: *Huang-Ch'ing tsou-i* 皇清奏議 Bk. 35.
- (62) *Hunan-sheng-li ch'eng-an* 湖南省例成案, Hu-lü, markets, Bk. 34, quoting a memorial of Lu Chuo 盧焯, 'In grain purchases for the granaries, allow officials and merchants to deal between themselves, strictly forbid brokers, and not allow a rise in price.' 採買倉穀聽官商各自交易嚴禁牙行不許高抬時價.
- (63) Ch'üan Han-sheng, *The problem of expensive rice in Ch'ien-lung 13*. (See previous citation in note 2).
- (64) In a 請減穀價興水利疏 *Memorial requesting reduction in price of grain and enlargement of irrigation* (*Huang-ch'ao ching-shih wen-pien*, Bk. 38, civil administration 13, agricultural administration, last part), Chao Ch'ing-li 趙青黎 says:  
 'The high price of rice at present is in fact the result of gradual accumulation. For a rapid rise is due either to a poor year or an official purchase; once the purchasing is over, or the poor year gives way to a good one, the price invariably falls somewhat. But if we look at the former price in the times when it was not yet high, the price had risen a little. Then, after three or five rises and falls and three or five excessive accumulations, we find a great discrepancy with the original price. It is always the way that the price rises day by day, and year by year. 今日穀價之貴, 實由漸積使然, 蓋其驟貴也, 或因歲歉, 或因採買, 而及其採買既過, 歉歲復熟, 價非不稍減, 然以視從前未貴時之原價, 固已略浮其值矣, 如此經三五次起落, 三五次浮積, 而視原價, 固已大懸絕矣, 日貴一日, 年貴一年, 習以成常.  
 He is pointing out that the present very sudden rise is simply part of a long term tendency to rise.
- (65) Report by An-ning 安寧, superintendent of the imperial silk factory, Soochow, recorded in *Kao-tsung shih-lu* 高宗實錄, Bk. 136, Ch'ien-lung 26, 5th month, day *keng-hsü* 庚戌.
- (66) Conversion based on the account in *Li-yuan ts'ung-hua*, Bk. 1, value of silver: 'When I was young, one tael of silver did not exceed 800-900 *wen* in large cash.' 餘少時, 每白銀一兩, 亦不過換到大錢八九百文. Ch'ien Yung was born in Ch'ien-lung 24 (1759).
- (67) Conversion based on the comparative rate, given in the same section of the above same work, where the comparative value in Chia-ch'ing 1 (1796) is noted as 1 tael of silver = 1,300-1,400 *wen*. But this comparison is based on the time when the value of cash reached its lowest point, so it should, I think, in practice, be revised somewhat upwards.
- (68) Conversion based on the comparative rate given in *I-pan-lu tsa-shu*, Bk. 6, rise and fall of silver and cash:  
 'Before Ch'ien-lung 40, both silver and cash were used in my district. The silver in current use was *yuan-ssu* 圓絲. 1 tael of silver was exchanged for 700 *wen* coins, and there was no change for several decades.' 乾隆四十年以前, 我邑銀與錢並用, 銀通用圓絲 (原註, 紋銀論申五色), 銀一兩兌錢七百文, 數十年無所變更.
- (69) Conversion based on rate given in same work, same Bk.:  
 'After Ch'ien-lung 50, 1 tael of silver was exchanged for 900 (*Wen*) coins. (乾隆) 五十年後, 銀一兩兌錢九百.
- (70) See Sasaki Masaya 佐々木正哉, 阿片戰爭以前の通貨問題 (*Currency questions before the Opium War*), 東方學. 8, 1954.
- (71) See article by Ch'üan Han-sheng in note 63.
- (72) Included in Hung Liang-ch'i, *Ch'üan-shih-ko wen chia-chi* 卷施閣文甲集, no. 1, statements of views. From the 30's of the Ch'ien-lung period, Hung Liang-chi lived in many different places, so this passage should probably be regarded as a general and theoretical investigation all over China, rather than due to his personal experience in his native Ch'ang-chou.
- (73) Wang Hui-tsu, *Ping-t'a meng-hen lu*, under Ch'ien-lung 59.