in the Song period by clarifying the central role of the fu-lao (village elder) in the local society according to historical source materials. The fu-lao, considered as literati, being well accepted in the local society, acquainted with agricultural affairs, water conservancy and registration of inhabitants in their districts, took the initiative in such religious services as the praying gods for rain and other worship ceremonies of folk cult. The district magistrate undertook administrative tasks within their own jurisdiction, after consulting the fu-lao on the local situation and made that the basis of their administration. The enforcement of the collection of taxes and corvée duties could not simply be fulfilled by the hands of clerks and village-heads recruited by the corvée system. Fu-lao had knowledge of actual conditions of peasants, and extortion of heavy taxes by the clerks were recognized as incompatible to their beliefs. The absolute authority of Song dynasty, deeply rooted in the local society was possible with fu-lao’s knowledge, their leadership quality, which made this system of control possible.

A Source of Wei-bi-ren-zhi-si (威逼人致死) Provision

by Yoshiro Takahashi

There was a provision entitled Wei-bi-ren-zhi-si (威逼人致死) in laws during the Ming and Qing dynasties. It is a provision that allows investigation of criminal liability of an oppressor, in the case where a victim due to unbearable mental and/or physical oppression, commits suicide. This provision, a characteristic of China, has been understood to exist in the laws of Ming and Qing but not in Tang dynasty. In fact, such scholars of criminal law as Shen Jia-ben (沈家本) and Xue Yun-sheng (薛允升), and Japan’s Chinese criminal law historians such as Shigeo Nakamura (中村茂夫) and Shuzo Shiga (滋賀秀三) agree on the case.

However, in Tang-lü-shu-yi (唐律疏議) and Volume 18 of its
revision Song-xing-tong (宋代経) there is a provision similar to Wei-bi-ren-zhi-si.

If one oppresses by force, terrifies, and, as a result, kills or injures a person, depending on the situation, it can be applied to the laws of intentional, brutal, or unintentional murder/injury.

The reason why this provision has not been understood to precede Wei-bi-ren-zhi-si of Ming and Qing dynasties is not only that the interpretation of this provision and its application to shu-yi (絮議) was rather ambiguous but that the enforcement of this law was unknown.

In this paper, I examined the provision's practices in the decisions, handed down from the South Song dynasty and proved that this was the provision that precedes Wei-bi-ren-zhi-si to investigate the criminal liability of a person who caused a suicide. At the same time, I discussed that this provision had something to do with the trend of suicide since South Song dynasty and that it was abolished in the Yuan dynasty in which an action that caused suicide was no longer regarded as criminal.

A Loan to China and the Japanese-American Cooperation:
The Case of the Grand Canal Improvement Project

by Katsuhiro TAKAHASHI

The significance behind joint Japan-United States cooperation can be clarified by analyzing the loan to China intended for the reconstruction of the Grand Canal by the Industrial Bank of Japan Ltd. and the American International Corporation (hereafter AIC) in 1917.

During World War I, relations between Japan and the United States had been strained due to such issues; Japanese immigration, naval armament, and the Open Door policy toward China. Within the Japanese business community, in particular, Baron