

The Putting-out System of Production in the Ming and Qing Periods: With a Focus on Clothing Production (I)

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I. Introductory Remarks

It is a well-established fact that the “putting-out system” was operating in handicraft industries during the Ming 明 and Qing 清 dynasties, and in the course of the debate about the “germs of capitalism” that has been continuing in Chinese historical circles since the start of 1955, a considerable number of studies would seem to set high value on the historical significance of the existence of this “putting-out system” as a “germ of capitalism.” But to the best of my knowledge only a small number of critiques of these high appraisals of the putting-out system have appeared in China, one of these being Peng Zeyi 彭澤益, “Yapian zhanzheng quian Qingdai Suzhou sizhiye shengchan guanxi de xingshi yu xingzhi” (see n. 10).¹⁾ I too am unable to subscribe to the view that would regard as a “germ of capitalism” the so-called “putting-out system,” whereby merchant capital (commercial capital prior to the period of modern capitalism) controlled the production process of small producers by monopolizing the distribution process of which the latter were part.

II. The Category “Putting-out System”

The “putting-out system” (*Verlagssystem*) is a mode of management whereby the merchant capital that monopolistically controls the distribution process linking small producers, the market where their products are sold and the market where they obtain their raw materials—that is to say, the merchant capital of monopolist wholesalers—makes direct advances of raw materials to small producers for them to process and then collects from them the finished products, thereby also gaining control of the small producers’ production process.

In the case of premodern merchant capital, the primary method of profit-making was to sell purchased products in their original form without adding any new value and to gain a commercial profit from the difference in buying price and selling price that resulted from the commercial activities, peculiar to merchant capital, of buying cheaply and selling dearly. But once the

small producers' conditions of production have attained a certain level of development, merchant capital, on the premise of these conditions, will not only continue to pursue its original mode of profit-making, but will also undertake new modes of profit-making. The merchant will, in other words, keeping operations under his own control, make advances of unfinished goods in his possession to small producers as a form of raw material which he later retrieves after having had the small producers add new value to them by processing and then sells at a profit. The small producer, on the other hand, will process within the scope of his domestic operations, and using labour resources in his own possession, the raw material advanced to him on the basis of his relationship of trust with the wholesale merchant, deliver the finished goods to the latter in return for "wages," and thereby become a "*de facto* wage labourer." once the above type of production relationship and a mode of management based thereon have been established, this is known as a "putting-out system."

It should be noted that in substance this "*de facto* wage labour" does not yet constitute a form of wage labour characteristic of capitalistic modes of production, whereby wages are paid in an equal exchange for labour, but on a phenomenal level it represents "*pro forma* wage labour" paid for in the form of wages.

The putting-out system is a global phenomenon to be widely observed in the economic history of Western Europe, Japan and many other regions throughout the world, and in terms of research history it was first educed and defined as a specific category of production on the basis of certain phenomena in the history of Western Europe. Therefore, in order to elucidate the putting-out system in China during the Ming and Qing dynasties, I first wish to describe briefly when this form of production evolved in Western Europe, what its actual content was, and how it died out, and also to consider its characteristics, so as to gain a lead for comparing the putting-out system in Western European history with that of Ming and Qing China.

III. The Putting-out System in Western European History

The existence of the putting-out system in Western European history may be recognized in two periods under medieval feudal society and in the period of transition to modern capitalist society. What merits our attention here is the fact that the putting-out system during the former two of these three periods was peculiar to medieval society.

1. The Putting-out System during the Early Period (12th to 14th Centuries)

Woollen drapers in the towns and cities of Flanders, which monopolized an enormous foreign trade market (by means of so-called "preindustrial monopolization, and elsewhere in Belgium, France and England not only prevented the small producers of the woollen handicraft industry from having direct contact with the

market, but also lent them funds at high interest, thereby placing them under the control of a harsh form of putting-out system and accompanied by the leasing of looms and a piecework payment system that “plunged them into slavlike conditions.”²⁾ In addition, there were some merchants who augmented this production control by a type of putting-out system with their direct management of handicraft factories of a considerable scale that took on the finishing process. However, although the management of such handicraft factories exhibited phenomena similar to manufacture in capitalist production when considered in light of the external features of its mode of management, in reality its production relationships did not coincide with the relationship obtaining between capital and wage labour in modern capitalism.

I should point out that in the present study this type of management under factory production organized by wholesale dealers and the putting-out system as defined in II above will together be referred to as “production organized by wholesale dealers” in a broad sense.

An indispensable precondition for this control of small producers and their production by woollen drapers was the fact that, as a result of development in the woollen handicraft industry, the numerous specialized stages in the production of woollen goods by small producers had each achieved social independence. But by the fourteenth century the guilds of handicraftsmen, headed by the weavers of the artisans’ class, had initiated their struggles with the merchants’ guilds, and consequently this early system of production organized by wholesale dealers fell into decline.

2. Production Organized by Wholesale Dealers during the Period of Absolute Monarchy (15th and 16th Centuries)

Petty foremen and artisans were migrating from the towns to the countryside in the so-called urban exodus in search of emancipation from the guild system and unrestricted conditions for handicraft production, but the wholesale woollen drapers, who had become the urban nobility under absolute monarchy, set out to check this exodus and regain control of the artisans, and in concert with the authorities of the absolute monarchy and with the wholesale merchant guilds as their base they gained control of production by small producers in the villages. Later, however, following the so-called bourgeois revolution by the bourgeoisie, not only did the control exerted by the guild system over small producers of handicrafts collapse, but the putting-out system also went into decline.

3. Production Organized by Wholesale Dealers as a Secondary Phenomenon Subordinate to the Capitalist System during the Period of Transition to Modern Capitalism (17th and 18th Centuries)

The free self-managing peasant class grounded in free ownership of land

that had developed from within and in resistance to the feudal social system and had arisen through the emancipation of serfs dissolved as a result of mutual free competition in the “modern dissolution of the peasant class,” thereby creating the proletarian masses, and production relationships of the capital system and capitalist modes of production such as manufacture gradually evolved. During the course of this process and on the basis of these historical and social conditions, production organized by wholesale dealers also came to be practised in certain sectors as a secondary phenomenon subordinate to capitalist modes of production.

However, this method of management, whereby the merchant has direct control of production, “cannot by itself contribute to the overthrow of the old mode of production [*viz.* feudal mode of production], but tends rather to preserve and retain it as its precondition,” and “[t] his system presents everywhere an obstacle to the real capitalist mode of production and goes under with its development.”³⁾

When considering the origins of modern capitalism, we may single out the following three distinctive facts from our above survey of the historical vicissitudes of production organized by wholesale dealers in Western Europe:

(i) Production organized by wholesale dealers was originally dependent upon the feudal social system and represented a mode of production characteristic of feudal precapitalist merchant capital predicated on the existence of this system, and it is by no means a mode of production that first emerged during the period of transition from feudal society to modern capitalist society.

(ii) The petite bourgeoisie composed of free self-managing peasants grounded in free ownership of land and small producers of handicrafts, who developed from within and in resistance to the feudal social system, quickly achieved class dissolution oriented towards a capital-wage labour relationship as a result of their mutual free competition, and as manufacture and other modes of production of the new period underwent dialectical developments on the basis of the establishment of this historically irreversible relationship such that they totally transformed the old feudal social system and advanced along “the really revolutionizing path”⁴⁾ leading to the establishment of modern capitalism, production organized by wholesale dealers disappeared.

(iii) Therefore, granting that merchant capital in late medieval Western Europe did possess enormous sums of money and the urban handicraft guilds were the bearers of the fruits of hitherto developments in clothing production technology, by its very nature production organized by wholesale dealers, which brought together these two parties, was nevertheless not at all able to become an active driving force in the formation of modern capitalism, and “production organized by wholesale dealers” was not a “germ of capitalism.”

IV. Nishijima Sadao's Views on the Putting-out System of Production

In the years 1947–49 Professor Nishijima Sadao 西嶋定生 published a series of studies (which he had begun writing during World War II) on China's rural cotton industry during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries).

(i) “Shina shoki mengyō shijō no kōsatsu” 「支那初期棉業市場の考察」 (A consideration of the early cotton market in China), *Tōyō Gakuhō* 『東洋學報』, Vol. 31, No. 2 (1947).

(ii) “Mindai ni okeru momen no fukyū ni tsuite” 「明代に於ける木棉の普及に就いて」 (On the spread of cotton during the Ming dynasty), I-II, *Shigaku Zasshi* 『史學雜誌』, Vol. 57, No. 4 (1948), Nos. 5–6 (1949).

(iii) “Jūroku-, jūnana-seiki o chūshin to suru Chūgoku nōson kōgyō no kōsatsu” 「十六・十七世紀を中心とする中國農村工業の考察」 (A consideration of rural industry in China with a focus on the 16th and 17th centuries), *Rekishigaku Kenkyū* 『歴史學研究』, No. 137 (1949).

(iv) “Shina shoki mengyō no keisei to sono kōzō” 「支那初期棉業の形成とその構造」 (The formation of China's early cotton industry and its structure), *Orientalika* 『オリエンタリカ』, No. 2 (1949).⁵⁾

In both their documentation and theorization, including the wide range of historical sources adduced and their careful analysis and logical structure, these articles set a new standard in the study of China's economic history in postwar Japan, and it may be said that for those who have followed in his wake (even those who, like myself, do not necessarily agree with his conclusions) Nishijima's achievement was such that advances in the study of Ming and Qing economic history would have been impossible without the progressive development, through scholarly criticism and comment, of the research methods that he formulated.

According to these articles by Nishijima, the basic factors underpinning the establishment of the rural cotton industry in China during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are to be sought in: (i) exploitation of peasants by despotic state power, (ii) ultra-small peasant management under a despotic land system, and (iii) activities of merchant capital dependent upon these two foregoing factors. With regard to these three factors that purportedly underlay the rural cotton industry in China at the time, I have on a previous occasion put forward a different view on the question of exploitation of the peasants by despotic state power in which I took into account the structural links obtaining between this exploitation and the growth of productive forces in the second factor of peasant management and focussed in particular on the historical perspective suggested by the conflict between these two factors,⁶⁾ but here I propose to examine the third of

the above three factors, namely, the activities of merchant capital, with a focus on the production of goods relating to clothing by means of a putting-out system during the period prior to the Opium War.

1. Nishijima's Assertion That There Are No Historical Sources Positively Proving the Existence of a Putting-out System of Production

I shall first take up for consideration passages in Nishijima's writings that touch on the putting-out system. Firstly, according to article (iv), which undertakes a factual analysis of the early Chinese cotton industry, although there were some instances in the early cotton industry that spread during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the lower delta regions of the Chang-jiang 長江 (Yangtze River 揚子江), especially in Songjiang 松江 prefecture, in which the entire production process was carried out within a single management unit (that is, within a single peasant household), the predominant mode of management was one in which the three management units of ginning (whereby cotton fibre is separated from seeds and waste material by means of a cotton gin), spinning, and weaving had become socially separate and specialized activities, with each being performed independently, and on the subject of weaving, which was a widely established sideline activity for peasant households in rural villages, Nishijima first quotes the "Bufu" 布賦 by Xu Xianzhong 徐獻忠, a provincial graduate (*juren* 舉人) of the Jiajing 嘉靖 era (mid-16th cent.) in Huating 華亭 county, Songjiang prefecture (contained in Chongzhen 崇禎's *Songjiang fu zhi* 松江府志 6, "Wuchan" 物產), and then elaborates on it as follows:

According to this ["Bufu"], the cotton cloth that the peasant woman had taken great pains to weave was taken to market by her husband. It then vividly describes how, upon entering the market, he would eagerly proclaim the excellence of his cloth in the hope of obtaining a high price for it, while in an attempt to have it purchased by merchants he would fawn upon them as politely as if he were attending on his father, and once it had finally been bought as a result of these efforts, he would heave a sigh of relief. (*Chūgoku keizaishi kenkyū* [see n. 5], p. 853)

Nishijima also quotes the following passage from "Songwen" 松間 by Qin Shan 欽善 of the first half of the nineteenth century,⁷⁾ found in the *Huangchao jingshi wenbian* 皇朝經世文編 28 ("Huzheng" 戶政 3: "Yangmin" 養民):

Entrusting their life to the thin cotton yarn, they [weave cloth and] starve two days out of three. If they take the cloth to sell at the market, it is as cheap as dirt. [Therefore the cloth shops] are called "death shops."

Then, in view of the fact that this passage would indicate that the "cloth

shops" (*buzhuang* 布莊) or wholesalers who bought the cotton cloth were detested to such a degree that they were called "death shops" (*shazhuang* 殺莊), Nishijima emphasizes firstly the establishment of a ruthless buyers' market based on merchant capital⁸⁾ in the following terms:

The impoverished small peasants required a short-term turnover of capital, for which reason they specialized, and at the same time they had to submit to the control of powerful commercial capital in the raw material sector, in the interstices between the different units of specialization, and in the finished goods sector. (*Ibid.*, p. 854)

Secondly, Nishijima goes on to state that at the present point in time no historical sources positively proving the existence of a putting-out system during the period in question have yet been discovered.

It is still difficult to discern here any setup that might be described as a putting-out system or advance system, that is to say, a setup whereby the peasants' weaving industry was organized around the commercial capitalists and through the lending of raw materials or equipment funded by the latter's investment capital. (*Loc. cit.*; italics added).

He then cites the following passage from the *Songjiang fu zhi* 4 ("Fengsu" 風俗), printed in Zhengde 正德 7 (1512):

Spinning and weaving are not limited to the [surrounding] villages, but are also found in the towns [of Songjiang prefecture]. Village women go early in the morning to market with cotton yarn, which they exchange for raw cotton, and then return home. The following morning they again leave [the village for market] with cotton yarn, and [in this manner they works so hard that] they have no spare time whatsoever. As for weaving, they complete one bolt [of cloth] in about one day, and there are some who [work] all night without sleeping. The peasants' [annual] harvest [is exhausted] once they have paid [taxes] to the government and repaid interest [on their debts to usurers] and already before the year is over, their homes are empty. Therefore, their food and clothing are totally dependent upon this [income from spinning and weaving].

Nishijima's comment on this passage is again circumspect:⁹⁾

At first sight the circumstances of the village woman who went early in the morning into the town to sell her cotton yarn and returned home with raw cotton, and then went again the following morning with cotton yarn and returned with more raw cotton, would suggest the existence of an organized

putting-out system. But since it is unclear whether or not the merchants who handed over the raw cotton and the merchants who received the cotton yarn were identical, and since it is also unclear whether the remuneration that she received was payment [for her goods] or wages [for her labour], one is unable to conclude from this that the peasants' sideline activity was incorporated into a setup similar to a putting-out system. (*Loc. cit.*)

2. The Basis of Nishijima's Assertion That There Existed No Putting-out System of Production

We have seen in the above that whereas on the one hand in the cotton cloth market merchant capital had gained control over peasant producers in a manner characteristic of a buyers' market, on the other hand there are no historical sources from this period that would clearly indicate that merchant capital, utilizing its overwhelming dominance in product transactions, had embarked on more direct control of production through a form of putting-out system and was exercising control over the direct producers or peasants in their capacity as *de facto* wage labourers in its putting-out system of handicraft management and Nishijima explains the reason for this in the following terms:

The weaving industry in rural villages,¹⁰⁾ which was, namely, a sideline activity for peasants, was a so-called handicraft-type management setup in which labour was provided by the women and children in the peasant's own family while the peasant had complete ownership of raw materials, equipment and workplace and sold the finished products under the condition of obtaining payment in return, and in essence it was strictly a sideline activity for peasants; the peasants had still not been emancipated from the landowners, nor were they independent industrial operators, and it may be considered difficult to detect therein any so-called putting-out system of management setup in which a single merchant entrepreneur organized the collection and distribution of the products of various producers under his control, let alone any form of factory-style handicraft production corresponding to manufacture. (*Ibid.*, p. 856)

In conclusion, Nishijima's own understanding is expressed in the following manner:

It has already been noted that as long as tenant farmers, representing ultra-small peasant management, were in charge of this early cotton industry, any avenue whereby they might break free from their constraints and advance in new directions was blocked while they remained subjected to the fetters of a constrictive land system and the oppression of commercial capital. In other words, not only had an independent self-managing peasantry such

as might be put in charge of this new industry not been provided for, but it was also impossible for this new industry to create as a force of its own an independent self-managing peasantry. For example, the reason that not only are manufacturing modes of production not to be observed in the early cotton industry, but even a form of putting-out system as a mode of production control by commercial capital is not to be found, must be understood in the context of this nonindependent status of the producing class. In other words, in the case of the putting-out system, even though it may be a form of control by preindustrial capital, in its implementation it results in the commercial capitalist's placing a certain trust in the producers while the producers obtain a guarantee of profit returns. But the nature of the producing class in the early cotton industry as described above was such that for the commercial capital that controlled it even the conferment of such trust was rendered unnecessary because of the nonindependence of the producers. To wit, not only did commercial capital, as was described earlier, have a stranglehold on the producing class at the beginning and end of the production process, but it also intervened in and exploited the interstices provided by the division of labour in the production process that had resulted from the producing class's nonindependent insecurity of livelihood, and for the commercial capitalists it was the nonindependent existence of the producing class that constituted the wellspring of their own self-enrichment. For this reason, it would at this stage have been absurd for commercial capital itself to take steps to place even a modicum of trust in the producing class and grant them a guarantee of profit returns. This is the reason for the absence of a putting-out system, and the cause behind this may be seen in the shackles of a land system that made the producing stratum unable to resist the domination of commercial capital. (*Ibid.*, pp. 863–864)

Next, Nishijima summarizes the situation on the basis of the factual elucidation provided by articles (i), (ii) and (iv), and in article (iii), which discusses the historical significance of China's rural cotton industry that spread in the lower delta regions of the Yangtze, he makes the following comments on the relationship between the direct producers or peasants in the weaving industry and local merchant capital and on the possible existence of a form of putting-out system.

Travelling cloth merchants do not have direct control over producers. Direct control over producers is exercised by the cloth shops or dealers (*buzhuang*) that come between producers and travelling cloth merchants and operate wholesale stores. The producers, who are ultra-small farmers, sell cotton cloth to the cloth dealers from want of their daily food. The cloth dealers, taking advantage of this weakness of theirs, cut the buying price as much as possible and increase their own intermediary profit. For this reason the cloth

shops become objects of hatred and were even known as death shops.”

The structure of this transaction market determines the form of control exercised by commercial capital over the producers. The producer completely loses his independence and ends up apprehensively watching every look and move of the cloth dealer. As for the cloth dealer, it is all the more to his advantage the less independent the position of the producer is. It is to be surmised that even though the rural cotton industry in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was controlled by commercial capital, documentary materials sufficient to prove the existence of an advance system, a mode of management for control of production by commercial capital, have not been discovered so far because *it did not yet actually exist*. If this should indeed prove to be the case, then the reason for this must be sought in the above circumstances. It could be said, in other words, that rather than placing trust in the producers and making them responsible for production as well as guaranteeing them the receipt of their products by means of an advance system, cutting the price of their products still more by leaving the producers in the above wretched conditions without any guarantees and reinforcing their nonindependence would have been a means of further increasing the intermediary profits of the cloth dealer. Was it perhaps not for this reason, then, that the like of an advance system, which would have provided at least some guarantee of livelihood in the face of such conditions, was unable to evolve? In short, it may be supposed that even an advance system was still not in evidence because the producers, who were ultra-small peasants without any security of livelihood, were therefore at the mercy of control by commercial capital and their subservience to the latter was just too pronounced.

Thus insofar that in its structure the rural weaving industry in this region represented the sideline production of ultra-small peasants, the modes of specialization to be found there were not aimed at improving production efficiency on the basis of modern rationalism, but were born of the shortening of the reproduction cycle arising from the indigence of the peasants' livelihood, and each management unit was, moreover, prevented from any further development because of its repetition of simple reproduction. What is more, this was due to the fact that they were subjected to the control of powerful commercial capital not only at the two poles of the raw material sector and finished goods sector, but also even in the interstices between each unit of specialization, and for this reason they continued their unstable production in unregulated conditions that did not even show evidence of an advance system. (*Ibid.*, pp. 741–742; italics added)

In order to ensure accuracy concerning the subject matter of our inquiry, I have quoted Nishijima at some length, and the above passages represent almost all that he has to say about the putting-out system.

As is evident from the above quotations, it is maintained by Nishijima with regard to historical facts firstly that, in its relations with the peasants representing simple commodity producers in the rural cotton industry in sixteenth-and seventeenth-century Jiangnan 江南, merchant capital controlled a buyers' market at each stage of the distribution process surrounding each management unit in the social division of labour and oppressed the producers quite harshly, and secondly that nevertheless this oppression by merchant capital only manifested itself through commodity transactions in the distribution process and there have not been found any historical sources indicating that merchant capital itself embarked on a form of putting-out system. Thirdly, as regards how these facts should be understood, Nishijima puts forward the view that as long as the direct producers in China's rural cotton industry at the time were ultra-small peasants bound to a despotic land system, merchant capital, rather than guaranteeing these "nonindependent" producers the receipt of their products, was able both to control the interstices between the units of social specialization in the production process with its "powerful commercial capital" by leaving untouched and even reinforcing the producers' "nonindependence" and to increase its intermediary profits in the distribution process, and therefore a putting-out system was unable to evolve.

V. Previous Critiques of Nishijima's Views on the Putting-out System of Production

The first person to voice doubts about Nishijima's above views on the putting-out system was Hatano Yoshihiro 波多野善大 in an article entitled "Chū-gokushi haaku no zenshin—Nishijima Sadao shi no kenkyū seika ni tsuite—" 「中國史把握の前進—西嶋定生氏の研究成果について—」 (Advances in our grasp of Chinese history: On the results of Nishijima Sadao's research; *Rekishigaku Kenkyū*, No. 139 [1949]). Hatano writes as follows:

However, the question remains whether or not commercial capital and usurious capital were completely uninvolved in the production process. Although the fact that production was on a rather small scale and the social division of labour was quite advanced increased the opportunities for the exchange of non-equivalents by commercial capital representing preindustrial capital, as pointed out by Nishijima, it would also seem all the more likely to have provided commercial and usurious capital with a chance to gain control of the producers. It would appear likely that there was some involvement in production on the part of commercial and usurious capital, even if it would have been only on a rudimentary level. For example, the statement that "village women go early in the morning to market with cotton yarn, which they exchange for raw cotton, and then return home," a statement frequently encountered in gazetteers of Songjiang prefecture, can

but with difficulty be interpreted in the manner of Nishijima to mean only that the women sold yarn and bought raw cotton, and it might also be conjectured that they received raw cotton in exchange for yarn. Although dating from a little later during the Qianlong 乾隆 era, Kitamura Hironao 北村敬直 has discovered a passage in the *Xijin zhi xiaolu* 錫金識小錄 according to which cloth dealers laid in raw cotton which they then exchanged for the cloth of weavers. In this regard there would at any rate seem to be a need to make further efforts in sifting through the historical sources and to inquire into the matter more closely. (*Op. cit.*, p. 53).

The above-mentioned passage discovered by Kitamura Hironao presumably corresponds to the following description of the cotton industry in Wuxi 無錫 given by Huang Ang 黃印 his *Xijin shi xiaolu* 1 (“Beican” 備參 1: “Lizuo zhi li” 力作之利), composed in Qianlung 17 (1752):¹¹⁾

Among the five counties of Chang [zhou] 常 [州] prefecture,¹²⁾ it is only our county [of Wuxi] that does not cultivate cotton, yet the profits from cotton cloth are lucrative in our county alone and are unmatched by other counties. The peasants are able to live from [the harvest of] their rice crop only during the three [tenth, eleventh and twelfth] months of winter. Once they have paid the farm rent [to the landlord after the autumn harvest], they polish the remaining [unhulled] rice and store it away, and they [also] take [some rice] to the pawnshop and exchange it for their [pawned winter] garments. In spring they close their doors to spin and weave, and live by *exchanging cloth for rice*, for there is no longer any surplus rice in their homes. When the tasks associated with growing rice approach in the fifth month, they again [pawn] their winter garments in exchange for the rice that had been in pawn and take it home. This is popularly called “rice for planting” (*zhongtian fanmi* 種田飯米). Then in autumn, if it should rain a little, the sound of weaving [can be heard] throughout the village, and they take the cloth [to sell at the market], *buying rice* on which to live. Therefore, even if our county should have a year’s bad harvest, the peasants will not suffer greatly provided that cotton has ripened elsewhere. There are three grades of cotton cloth [woven by the peasants]. That of which one bolt is three *zhang* 丈 [in length] is called *changtou* 長頭, while that of which one bolt is two *zhang* [in length] is called *duantou* 短頭, and both of these [the producer] *exchanges [directly] for* [the merchant’s] *raw cotton*. That of which one bolt is two *zhang* and four *chi* 尺 [in length] is called *fangchang* 放長, and [the producer] *exchanges it [directly] for* [the merchant’s] *rice and money*. A merchant with a shop will *take in* this [cloth] and pack and transport it to be sold in places such as Huai [an] 淮 [安], Yang [zhou] 揚 [州], Gao [you] 高 [郵] and Bao [ying] 寶 [應]. The amount traded in one year is no less than several hundred thousand or several million [bolts]. There has long been a saying among the people of Hui [zhou] 徽 [州] (Xin’ an

新安) that “Hankou 漢口 has wharves for boats, Zhenjiang 鎮江 has wharves for silver, and Wuxi has wharves for cloth,” and although it is a vulgar expression, it is not without foundation. Shop-owning merchants who have a cotton cloth store will make a fortune within a few years. (*Italics added*)

In the first half of the above passage the phrases “exchange for rice” (*yimi* 易米) and “buy rice” (*maomi* 買米) are both used, but in neither case is it specifically stated that the producer received raw cotton in exchange from the “cotton cloth store” (*huabuhang* 花布行), and therefore this could represent an instance in which the merchants who handed over the raw cotton and the merchants who received the cotton yarn or cloth were not identical. But if one focusses on the cloth that the producer peasants traded in order to obtain the subsistence commodity of rice, the raw cotton, rice and money obtained by the producers are associated with different finished products (*changtou*, *duantou* and *fangchang*) and, in particular, mention is made of raw cotton alongside rice and money, and this fact would probably indicate, as is reflected in my above translation, that there were also instances in which cotton cloth and raw cotton were exchanged directly without money being involved.¹³⁾ Therefore, the situation described here clearly differs from that in the *Songjiang fu zhi* of the Zhengde era, where it was “unclear whether or not the merchants who handed over the raw cotton and the merchants who received the cotton yarn were identical,” and it indicates that there were also instances in which the merchant receiving the cloth and the merchant handing over the raw cotton were the same. In such cases too the cloth producers would naturally have received from the merchant not only raw cotton but also money and rice in order to acquire use-values necessary for their livelihood. The fact that whereas only rice and money were given in exchange for the presumably nonstandardized *fangchang*, raw cotton too was given to suppliers of the assumedly standardized *changtou* and *duantou* is also worthy of note in that it hints at the possibility of the development of a closer relationship at some time in the future between producers who had become capable of producing standard commodities and the “cotton cloth stores.”

Following Hatano’s above comments, the next person to touch directly on Nishijima’s views on the putting-out system was Fujii Hiroshi 藤井宏 in a series of articles entitled “Shin’an shōnin no kenkyū” 「新安商人の研究」 (Studies of Xin’an merchants), I-IV (*Tōyō Gakuhō*, Vol. 36, Nos. 1-4 [1953-54]), which were written on the basis of materials relating to the distribution of commodities during the Ming and Qing periods. In the first of these articles, Fujii writes:

When we come to the Zhedong 浙東 region, many prefectural and county gazetteers of the Ming and Qing periods refer to local products such as hempen, ramie and silk cloth, but it is not known what degree of market production they had attained, and it is to be surmised that they were probably less than sufficient to meet local demand. It is worth noting, however, that in

the Yongzheng 雍正 -era *Taishun xian zhi* 泰順縣志 2 it is stated that “it is rare for women workers to do embroidery, and they are accustomed to only spin and weave; if they are poor and unable to buy raw cotton or ramie, they spin and weave for others and thereby eke out a living,” and an almost identical passage is contained in the Qianlung-era *Wenzhou fu zhi* 溫州府志 40, where it is followed by the statement that “the ‘double-shuttle cloth’ (*shuangsuobu* 雙梭布) of Yongjia 永嘉 county and the twill of Luoqing 樂清 county are superior to that of other counties.” These passages may be safely considered to hint at a type of putting-out system, which would undoubtedly have attained a considerable level of market production. (*Tōyō Gakuhō*, Vol. 36, No. 1, pp. 21–22).

The above-mentioned Yongzheng-era *Taishun xian zhi* was printed with a preface dated Yongzheng 7 (1729), and if the “others” alluded to in the above quotation from this work (*viz.* “if they are poor and unable to buy raw cotton or ramie, they [are supplied with raw materials and] spin and weave for *others*”) refers to wholesaler capital, then it would indicate that the small producers came to be supplied with raw materials and to take up spinning and weaving because they found themselves in “impoverished” and economically “nonindependent” social circumstances, a fact that attracts our attention in that it points to a situation contrary to that posited by Nishijima.

Thereafter, the next comments on Nishijima’s research on the rural cotton industry in China are to be found in Kitamura Hironao, “Nōson kōgyō to denkosei no tenkai—Min-Shin shakai-keizaishi no shomondai—” (see n. 10), and Saeki Yūichi 佐伯有一, “Nihon no Min-Shin jidai kenkyū ni okeru shōhin seisan hyōka o megutte—sono gakusetsushiteki tenbō—” 「日本の明清時代研究における商品生産評価をめぐって—その學說史的展望—」 (On the evaluation of commodity production in Japanese studies of the Ming and Qing periods: An overview of research history; in Suzuki Shun 鈴木俊 and Nishijima Sadao, eds., *Chūgokushi no jidai kubun* [see n. 11]). Kitamura writes:

Criticism of Nishijima’s research...does not yet seem to have gone so far as to take research one step further by means of this criticism. Therefore, in order to further advance the [study of the] socio-economic history of the Ming and Qing periods, one must begin above all by first squarely confronting Nishijima’s research and criticizing it *in toto* both theoretically and factually. (Kitamura, *op. cit.*, p. 461).

Kitamura then lists the basic issues in Ming and Qing socio-economic history that need to be elucidated through the medium of Nishijima’s research:

The first point is the question of the modes of being of the small peasants who

were the direct producers and their nature; the second point is the commodity economy, that is, modes of commodity distribution, commercial capital, and its relationship to the production process; and the third point is the question of urban guilds. Lastly, the fourth point is the question of the class struggles of peasant and town labourers, which must be considered on the basis of a comprehensive understanding of the above issues. (*Ibid.*)

However, with regard to the second point, especially the relationship between merchant capital and the production process, Kitamura goes no further than to point out that “although with respect to the distribution process Nishijima delimits the relationship between commercial capital and the direct producers to a purely buying-and-selling relationship mediated by the market,” the aforementioned Hatano deals with the question of “whether or not commercial capital was indeed completely uninvolved in the production process,” and Kitamura makes no mention of the putting-out system. Saeki too devotes considerable space to Nishijima’s research, but he presents no views of his own on the putting-out system and merely writes with reference to Hatano’s views that “because a cotton exchange system appears in the *Xijin shi xiaolu*, [Hatano] questions whether the existence of a putting-out system can be absolutely rejected.”¹⁴⁾ Taking up a paper entitled “Shinsho Soshū no jigō keiei o megutte” 「清初蘇州の字號經營をめぐって」 (On factory management by wholesalers in Suzhou during the early Qing) which I read at the Kyōto University Oriental History Colloquium in January 1952, Saeki also writes, “In 1952 Tanaka Masatoshi attributed the system of control by commercial capital, whereby commercial capital in towns took charge of the processing industries (finishing process) in towns while controlling the cotton industry in villages, to the existence of factory-managing wholesalers, or manufactures, in Suzhou.” It should be pointed out, however, that although I did use the term “putting-out system” when referring in the paper in question to the participation of factory-managing wholesalers in the lustring process, I did not define it as a manufacture.”¹⁵⁾

Next, in an article entitled “Minmatsu Shinsho Kōnan nōson shukōgyō ni kansuru ichi kōsatsu” 「明末清初江南農村手工業に關する一考察」 (A consideration of rural handicraft industries in Jiangnan in the late ming and early Qing) which I published in 1961,¹⁶⁾ I first ascertained through an analysis of historical sources the establishment of a buyers’ market monopolized by a truly preindustrial merchant *class* (not individual merchants) that falsified weights, used bad money and employed all manner of extra-economic means to deceive and defraud, and secondly I described the conditions under which such merchant capital existed:

Thus merchant capital (both local capital and the capital of travelling merchants) was completely outside the production process—without, therefore, being able to act as an active force in historical developments—and extracted and monopolized transfer profits from the distribution

process alone, but this was possible only *on the precondition* of the specifically closed nature of rural economic society governed by landlord-tenant relations—that is to say, the limited scope of the market and the small producer peasants’ resultant chronic lack of means of payment—while on the other hand merchant capital utilized the premodern forms of production in the society in question and extra-economic exploitation as a parasitic base *in accordance with which* it carried out premodern (*viz.* landlordlike) exploitation of small producer peasants *in the form of prices*. (Tanaka Masatoshi, *Chūgoku kindai keizaishi kenkyū josetsu* [see n. 6], 2nd imp., p. 93).

But notwithstanding the above delineation of merchant capital in the late Ming and early Qing, I went on to point out thirdly in the context of a historical overview of relations between merchant capital and small peasant management that in a trading relationship characterized by a buyers’ market

it was not the pongee wholesalers but the raw silk wholesalers that played the most important role in the rural silk-reeling and silk-weaving areas of Jiangnan, and in the first half of the eighteenth century a temporary form of putting-out system was being undertaken by these raw silk wholesalers, who gave peasants unsold raw silk to weave, while by the mid-nineteenth century a permanent putting-out system of production was to be seen in the silk-twisting process. (*Ibid.*, p. 96)

As an example of the putting-out system being used as a temporary measure¹⁷⁾ I quoted the following passage from a poem by Shen Bocun 沈泊村, a metropolitan graduate (*jìnshì* 進士) of Yongzheng 11 (1733) from Guian 歸安 county in Huzhou 湖州 prefecture, recorded in the *Shuanglin jì zengzuan* 雙林記增纂 9 (“Wuchan”):

Merchants accumulate raw silk but do not know how to weave; they put it out to peasants and fix the price in advance. [As the peasants sit] facing the shuttle, the dragon-and-phoenix patterns appears, twisting and turning, and they weave one bolt after nine months (days?) of painstaking labour. ([Gloss in original text])—If they have surplus raw silk, the wholesalers will put it to weavers, from whom they then collect the silk, and thus they make compound profits.)

Then, as an example of the same system of production as a permanent institution, I quoted the following passage from the *Zhenze zhen zhi* 震澤鎮志 2 (“Fengsu”) of Suzhou prefecture, printed in Daoguang 道光 24 (1844):

There are some who both twist yarn and weave pongee. In the case of twisting, if they do it using their own raw silk and sell the finished product to a wholesaler this is called “warping at home” (*xiangjing* 鄉經), while if they

receive raw silk from the wholesaler to twist on his behalf and receive wages for it, this is called “warping for wages” (*liaojing* 料經).

Prior to this Yokoyama Suguru 横山英 had published “Shindai ni okeru senpugyō no keiei keitai” 「清代における踹布業の経営形態」 (Management modes in the lustring industry during the Qing dynasty)¹⁸⁾ in 1960 and “Shindai ni okeru hōtōsei no tenkai—senpugyō no suiteen katei ni tsuite—” 「清代における包頭制の展開——踹布業の推轉過程について——」 (The development of the labour-contracting system during the Qing dynasty: On the evolution of the lustring industry)¹⁹⁾ in 1962, and then in 1968 Terada Takanobu 寺田隆信 published “Soshū senpugyō no keiei keitai” 「蘇州踹布業の経営形態」 (Management modes in the lustring industry in Suzhou).²⁰⁾ These were all studies which, on the basis of new materials contained in the *Jiangsu-sheng Ming-Qing yilai beike ziliao xuanji*²¹⁾ published in 1957, presented concrete analyses of factory management by wholesalers in the lustring industry in Suzhou and touched on the participation of merchant capital in the finishing process of lustring in the production of cotton cloth, a subject with which I intend dealing in Part II of this article. Yokoyama has also written a study entitled “Shindai no toshi kinuorimonogyō no seisan keitai” 「清代の都市絹織物業の生産形態」 (Modes of production in the urban silk fabric industry during the Qing dynasty)²²⁾ which contains a most instructive analysis of the manner in which production was controlled by urban merchant capital, and this too I shall discuss in Part II.

Notes

- 1) Tanaka Masatoshi 田中正俊, “Chūgoku rekishi gakkai ni okeru ‘shihonshugi no hōga’ kenkyū” 「中國歴史學會における〈資本主義の萌芽〉研究」 (Research on the “germs of capitalism” in Chinese historical circles), in Tanaka Masatoshi, *Chūgoku kindai keizaishi kenkyū* 「中國近代經濟史研究」 (Studies in China’s modern economic history; Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai 東京大學出版會, 1973, rev. ed.² 1981).
- 2) Nakaki Yasuo 中木康夫, “Shōgyō no hattatsu to girudo seido no hen’yō” 「商業の發達とギルド制度の變容」 (The development of commerce and changes in the guild system), in Ōtsuka Hisao 大塚久雄, Takahashi Kōhachirō 高橋幸八郎 and Matsuda Tomoo 松田智雄, eds., *Seiyō keizaishi kōza* 「西洋經濟史講座」 (Lecture series on European economic history), Vol. 1 (Iwanami Shoten 岩波書店, 1960).
- 3) K. Marx, *Das Kapital*, Bd. III (Institut für Marxismus-Leninismus beim ZK der SED, *Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels Werke*, Bd. 25; Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1964), S. 347; *Capital*, Vol. III (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1959), p. 329. Similar views may also be seen in the writings of George Unwin and Henri Pirenne; see Ōtsuka Hisao, Takahashi Kōhachiro and Matsuda Tomoo, eds., *op. cit.*, and Ōtsuka Hisao, “Iwayuru toiya seido o dō toraeru ka” 「いわゆる問屋制度をどう捉えるか」 (How is one to comprehend the so-called putting-out system?). *Shakai Keizai Shigaku* 「社會經濟史學」, Vol. 46, No. 2 (1980).
- 4) K. Marx, *loc. cit.*
- 5) In the following, I shall refer to these articles by the numbers given here. They were subsequently included in Nishijima Sadao, *Chūgoku keizaishi kenkyū* 「中國經濟史研究」 (Studies in China’s economic history; Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1966), and the titles of (i) and (iv) were changed to “Chūgoku shoki mengyō shijō no kosatsu” 「中國初期棉業市場の考察」 (A consideration of the

early cotton market in China) and “Chūgoku shoki mengyō no keisei to sono kōzō” 「中國初期棉業の形成とその構造」 (The formation of China's early cotton industry and its structure) respectively, while a 9-page “Addendum” (d. 10 Jan. 1966) was also added to Part 3 “Shōhin seisan no tenkai to sono kōzō” 「商品生産の展開とその構造」 (The spread of commodity production and its structure) composed of these four articles.

According to the notes appended to these articles as they appear in *Chūgoku keizaishi kenkyū*, the initial drafts of (i), (ii) and (iv) were completed during World War II on 10 August 1942, whereafter they were subsequently revised for publication in academic journals and then included in the aforementioned work with minimum emendments undertaken between 29 December 1965 and 2 January 1966, while (iii), a theoretical summary, as it were, of Nishijima's research into the history of China's rural cotton industry that discusses the historical character of China's rural industry primarily during the 16th and 17th centuries, was initially completed after the war in October 1948 and emended on 28 December 1965. Here I follow the versions found in *Chūgoku keizaishi kenkyū*.

According to the “Addendum” mentioned above, “the questions dealt with in each chapter of Part 3 of the present work have their basis in my graduation thesis ‘On the spread of cotton during the Ming dynasty and Songjiang cotton cloth,’ which I submitted to the Faculty of Letters, University of Tokyo, in August 1942” (*Chūgoku keizaishi kenkyū*, p. 904), and the fact that the basic structure and documentation behind these studies, which could be said to have opened up a new phase in postwar research history, had already been completed during the war and the groundwork of the “postwar era” was already being prepared might be said to entail issues that cause those of us who have followed in Nishijima's footsteps to ponder deeply on the historical conditions of scholarly endeavours.

In addition, prior to the appearance of the above articles, Nishijima published “Shōkōfu ni okeru mengyō keisei no katei ni tsuite” 「松江府に於ける棉業形成の過程について」 (On the formation of the cotton industry in Songjiang prefecture; *Shakai Keizai Shigaku*, Vol. 13, Nos. 11–12) in March 1944. This is a short article summarizing Nishijima's research into the cotton industry in Songjiang, but it has not been included in his *Chūgoku keizaishi kenkyū*.

- 6) Tanaka Masatoshi, “Ajia shakai teitairon hihan no hōhōronteki hansei” 「アジア社会停滞論批判の方法論的反省」 (Methodological reflections on criticism of the stagnation theory of Asian society), in *id.*, *Chūgoku kindai keizaishi kenkyū josetsu* 『中國近代經濟史研究序説』 (An introduction to the study of China's modern economic history; Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1973, rev. ed.² 1981); *id.*, “Jūroku-, jūnana-seiki no Kōnan ni okeru nōson shukōgyō” 「十六・十七世紀の江南における農村手工業」 (Rural handicraft industries in 16th- and 17th-century Jiangnan), in *ibid.*; and *id.*, “Chūgoku—keizaishi” 「中國——經濟史」 (China: Its economic history), *Ajia Keizai* 『アジア經濟』, Vol. 19, Nos. 1–2 (1978).

According to Nishijima, the despotic imperial authorities exacted heavy land taxes from the ultra-small peasants bound to a despotic land system, as a result of which the peasants concentrated their productive endeavours on domestic industry other than agriculture, which was linked to the land, the direct and primary target of the exaction of land taxes, and thus the rural cotton industry spread as a sideline occupation to supplement the peasants' household finances; therefore, as long as there was no change in the imperial authorities' exaction of taxes based on a despotic land system, any further “development” of rural industry was impossible.

In my above articles, I made the following criticisms of this view of Nishijima's. Firstly, as far as issues of fact are concerned, peasant operations in China have since ancient times involved a strong and organic liaison between agriculture and domestic industry, and not only agricultural produce but also products of domestic industry were made objects of taxation in kind among the three types of taxes (land tax, corvée labour and tax in kind) under the despotic emperors' exploitation; thus domestic industry in peasant operations was also from the first an object of exploitation by the despotic authorities. Therefore even though it may be possible to say on a phenomenal level that from the 15th and 16th centuries onwards the intensification of “external” exploitation in the villages of Jiangnan acted as a “cause” that produced the “result” of the

development of the rural cotton industry, the precondition for this phenomenon that served as the basis of its realization was the historical development of productive forces within peasant operations. In other words, the relationship between peasant operations and despotic tax exploitation should be understood not only as a casual relationship, but also as a structural relationship insofar that it was only on the premise of the greater “endogenous” development of productive forces that the still greater intensification of the despotic authorities’ exploitation of the fresh results of this development became possible. Moreover, as exploitation by the despotic authorities, landlord power and also merchant capital (to be dealt with in Part II of this article) was intensified on the precondition of the development of productive forces in peasant operations, the structural contradictions obtaining between the direct bearers of these productive forces (peasants and weavers) and the exploiters were exacerbated and inevitably the peasant struggles and the struggles of urban weavers grew more violent. This jolted the despotic land system, and history was propelled in the direction of the transformation of this land system. The above constitutes the main gist of my criticism of Nishijima’s views.

- 7) That Qin Shan lived in the first half of the 19th century is evident from the *Huangchao jingshi wenbian* compiled by He Changling 賀長齡 and printed in Daoguang 道光7 (1827), where, in a section on “Names of Living Persons” at the beginning, we read, “Qin Shan, styled Jitang 吉堂: man of Lou 婁 county in Jiangsu 江蘇; has *Jitang wengao* 吉堂文藁[to his credit].”
- 8) Throughout his writings Nishijima uses the term “commercial capital” (*shōgyō shihon* 商業資本), but insofar as it signifies the category of preindustrial capital” as defined by Ōtsuka Hisao, it is probably more appropriate to use the historical category of “merchant capital” (*shōnin shihon* 商人資本).
- 9) The following passage, similar to that quoted above from the Zhengde-era *Songjiang fu zhi* 4 (“Fengsu”), is also quoted by Nishijima from the Tianqi 天啓 *Haiyan xian tujing* 海鹽縣圖經 4 (“Fangyu pian” 方域篇1.4: xian fengtuji” 縣風土記):

The merchants purchase raw cotton from neighbouring prefectures and set up rows of shops. The peasants of our [Haiyan] county use [the raw cotton] to spin and weave, making yarn and cotton. They go to market early in the morning, exchange [their cotton yarn and cloth] for raw cotton, and return home, using it to spin and weave. The following morning they again take [their cotton yarn or cloth to market] and exchange it [for raw cotton], and [they work so hard that] they have no spare time whatsoever.

Referring to this same passage, Qian Hong 錢宏, in his “Yapian zhanzheng yiqian Zhongguo ruogan shougongye bumen zhong de zibenzhuyi mengya” 鴉片戰爭以前中國若干手工業部門中的資本主義萌芽 (Some germs of capitalism in the handicrafts sector in China prior to the Opium War), *Zhongguo Kexueyuan Lishi Yanjiusuo Disansuo Jikan* 中國科學院歷史研究所第三所集刊 No. 2 (1955; subsequently republished in book form, also in 1955, by Shanghai Renmin Chubanshe 上海人民出版社), does not consider the merchants from whom the “peasants” received raw cotton and the merchants to whom they delivered their cotton yarn or cloth to have been separate merchants, and instead considers them to have represented one and the same merchant capital in the form of “cornermen” (*baomaizhu* 包買主). In addition, Fu Yiling 傅衣凌, in “Mingdai Jiangnan fuhu jingji de fenxi” 明代江南富戶經濟的分析 (An analysis of the economy of wealthy households in Jiangnan during the Ming dynasty), *Xiamen Daxue Xuebao* (Shehui Kexue Ban) 廈門大學學報 (社會科學版) (1956–1; later revised and included in *id.*, *Mingdai Jiangnan shimin jingji shitan* 明代江南市民經濟試探 [An inquiry into the civil economy in Jiangnan during the Ming dynasty], Shanghai Renmin Chubanshe, 1957), quotes from the Yongzheng-era *Zhejiang tongzhi* 浙江通志 102 (“Wuchan” 2) a similar passage taken from Zhu Guozhen 朱國楨’s (*Yongchuang xiaopin* 湧幢小品) dating from the late Wanli 萬曆 era (early 17th cent.) and interprets it as an account of “the exchange of raw cotton for cotton cloth and yarn,” while Xu Daling 許大齡, in “Shiliu shiji, shiqi shiji chuqi Zhongguo fengjian shehui neibu zibenzhuyi de mengya” 十六世紀、十七世紀初期中國封建社會內部資本主義的萌芽 (Germs of capitalism within Chinese feudal society in the 16th century and early 17th century), *Beijing Daxue Xuebao* (Renwen Kexue) 北京大學學報 (人文科學) (1956–3; later included in *Zhongguo Renmin Daxue Zhongguo Lishi Jiaoyanshi* 中國人民大學中國歷史教研室, ed.,

Zhongguo zibenzhu yi mengya wenti taolunji 中國資本主義萌芽問題討論集, [Collected discussions on the question of the germs of capitalism in China; hereafter *Taolunji*], Vol. 2 [Beijing: Sanlian Shudian 三聯書店, 1957]), comments on a similar passage in the Zhengde *Huating xian zhi* 華亭縣志 3 (“Fengsu”) that it refers “not to instances when [the merchant] used silver to purchase cotton cloth from small producers, but to instances when he supplied raw materials [in exchange for their cotton cloth].”

In addition to the above-cited Zhengde-era *Songjiang fu zhi*, Zhangde-era *Huating xian zhi*, Tianqi-era *Haiyan xian tujing* and Yongzheng-era *Zhejiang tongzhi*, statements to the effect that “[the peasants] went to market early in the morning, exchanged [their cotton yarn and cloth] for raw cotton, and returned home” are to be found in many other local gazetteers of Jiangnan, including the Qianlung-era *Pinghu xian zhi* 平湖縣志 and Guangxu 光緒 *Shimen xian zhi* 石門縣志, and this means that there exists a wide range of materials that make it difficult to reject out of hand the occurrence of the direct exchange of raw materials and finished products. But at the same time it might also be surmised that for this very reason, when referring to the individual trading of finished products and raw materials by means of money, locutions similar to the above may have been used rather indiscriminately. On the actual content of the above materials, Hatano Yoshihiro 波多野善大 was later to write as follows: “Four instances may be posited: (i) cotton yarn was sold to the yarn dealer and raw cotton was bought from the raw cotton dealer; (ii) the merchant who bought cotton yarn also dealt in raw cotton, and raw cotton was purchased with all or part of the money received from the sale of cotton yarn to this merchant; (iii) the raw cotton dealer did business by exchanging cotton yarn and raw cotton at a certain rate, and cotton yarn was exchanged for raw cotton at his shop; and (iv) the raw cotton dealer operated his business by handing over raw cotton to the peasants (as an advance of raw materials) and either paying them wages for spinning or making them part with their cotton yarn at a certain rate in exchange for the raw cotton that he had handed over (their wages having been paid in the form of raw cotton), and the peasants either delivered their cotton yarn to this raw cotton dealer and received wages and more raw cotton in return, or else they handed over a certain percentage of their cotton yarn in return for the raw cotton received previously and received more raw cotton... For it to be a putting-out system, it must have been (iv). But was this indeed the case? The phrase ‘to exchange cotton yarn and cloth for raw cotton’ also appears during the Qing dynasty in works such as the *Xijin zhi xiaolu* 錫金識小錄 1 (“Beican” 備參 1) and *Liyuan congshua* 履園叢話 23 (“Huan mianhua” 換棉花), and it would seem to be similar to (iii) in meaning.” (Hatano, *Chūgoku kindai kōgyōshi no kenkyū* 『中國近代工業史の研究』 [Studies in the history of China's modern industry; Tōyōshi Kenkyūkai 東洋史研究會, 1961], pp. 32–33).

- 10) Weaving in China's cotton industry at this time was of course not confined to the villages, and in article (iii) Nishijima defines the urban weaving industry in relation to the rural weaving industry in the following terms:

The mode of management of the weaving industry in the towns would seem to have been far more advanced than that in the villages. When compared with the weaving industry in the villages, which was bound to the land system, remained to the end a form of nonindependent sideline production without ever being emancipated from the land, and repeated simple reproduction, that of the towns was in the hands of independent professional operators, its organization showed some signs of a form resembling manufacture [characteristic of capitalistic enterprise], and since its products included high-grade goods, its techniques would doubtless also have been superior. Thus outwardly the weaving industry in the towns gives the appearance of having been far more advanced than the weaving industry in the villages... However, what is important is that these urban professional weavers (*jihu* 機戶) essentially did not by any means find themselves in a completely independent position. Such an interpretation would at first sight seem to run counter to the facts. But that they were able to conduct stable operations as order producers was because they were backed by a guarantee of government procurement, and moreover the source of the silver supplied to the cloth-

forwarding labour service (*bujie* 布解) to pay for this government procurement came from the tax paid as a monetary substitute for the cotton cloth that, properly speaking, the rural weavers were supposed to deliver as tax to the authorities. Thus the urban professional weavers were engaged, as it were, in the production of tax-quota cloth as the proxies of rural weavers, and behind the urban professional weavers' application to the production of tax-quota cloth was the firm presence of rural weavers who had achieved commodity production. The dual nature of the rural weavers, who, although having achieved commodity production, had still not been emancipated from the land system and remained tied to the burden of excessive land taxes, constituted the basis of the urban professional weavers' production of tax-quota cloth. In the final analysis, even though the urban weavers conducted stable operations by producing tax-quota cloth, they were in fact a misbegotten product of the antinomical circumstances obtaining between the two characteristics of commodity production and excessive land taxes that were inseparably linked to the rural weaving industry, and the urban weavers themselves did not have an autonomous base as independent professional operators. (*Chūgoku keizaishi kenkyū*, pp. 741–745)

The premises on which the above delineation of the urban weaving industry is based are discussed in detail in Nishijima's article (iv), but this thesis of his, according to which the basic character of the urban weaving industry was determined by the production of tax-quota cloth, which guaranteed its operations, can but with difficulty be said to be based on a comprehensive analysis. In this regard Fujii Hiroshi 藤井宏 has written in the "Postscript" to his "Shin'an shōnin no kenkyū 新安商人の研究 (Studies of Xin'an merchants), 4 (*Tōyō Gakuhō*, Vol. 36, No. 4 [1954]), pp. 141–144, that "as long as one does not positively prove that the high-grade cotton cloth produced by the [urban] professional weavers had almost no general market apart from tax-quota cloth, Nishijima's theory does not hold true. I believe that the cotton cloth produced by [urban] weavers had a considerable private market apart from tax-quota cloth." Then, having given the reasons for this view of his, Fujii continues; "When considered in this manner, the high-grade cotton cloth produced by the professional weavers of Songjiang prefecture had acquired quite extensive markets both at home and abroad, and it may be assumed that they were not overwhelmingly dependent on tax-quota cloth for their demand. It is [also] to be surmised that rather than protecting the [urban] professional weavers as a source of permanent demand, the tax-quota cloth was almost like a form of tax in the way that it placed pressure on the professional weavers, and it is to be supposed that the important significance of tax-quota cloth lay rather in this latter point." Fujii then criticizes Nishijima on two counts: (i) the production of tax-quota cloth did not have the function of stabilizing and protecting the operations of urban professional weavers, but rather exploited and oppressed them; and (ii) in resistance to this, the urban professional weavers developed their own extensive markets for high-grade cloth both at home and abroad.

In addition, as is pointed out by Kitamura Hironao in his "Nōson kōgyō to denkōsei no tenkai—Min-Shin shakai-keizaishi no shomondai—" [農村工業と佃戸制の展開——明清社會經濟史の諸問題——] The development of rural industry and the tenant farming system: Issues in the socio-economic history of the Ming and Qing; in *Shakai-Keizaishi Gakkai 社會經濟史學會*, ed., *Sengo ni okeru shakai-keizaishigaku no hattatsu* [戦後における社會經濟史學の發達] [The development of the study of socio-economic history in the postwar period (*Shakai Kaizai Shigaku*, Vol. 20, Nos. 4–6), Yūhikaku 有斐閣, 1955]), the function of handicraft guilds and their relationship to state power should also be taken into account as factors that determined the character of urban professional weavers in a both supporting and repressive manner. See also Li Hua 李華, "Ming-Qing yilai Beijing de gongshangye hanghui" 明清以來北京的工商業行會 (Industrial and commercial guilds in Beijing since the Ming and Qing), Peng Zeyi 彭澤益, "Cong Mingdai guanying zhizao de jingying fangshi kan Jiangnan sizhiye shengchan de xingzhi" 從明代官營織造的經營方式看江南絲織業生產的性質 (Looking at the nature of production in the silk industry in Jiangnan from the management methods of government-run weaving during the Ming dynasty), and *id.*, "Yapian zhanzheng qian Qingdai Suzhou sizhiye shengchan guanxi de

xingshi yu xingzhi” 鴉片戰爭前清代蘇州絲織業生產關係的形式與性質 (The form and nature of production relationships in the silk industry in Suzhou during the Qing dynasty prior to the Opium War), all contained in Nanjing Daxue Lishixi Ming-Qingshi Yanjiushi 南京大學歷史系明清史研究室 ed., *Ming-Qing zibenzhuyi mengya yanjiu lunwenji* 明清資本主義萌芽研究論文集 (Collected papers on the study of the germs of capitalism in the Ming and Qing [hereafter: *Lunwenji*]; Shanghai Renmin Chubanshe, 1981).

- 11) This material is also commented on in Qian Hong, *op. cit.*, and Jian Baizan 翦伯贊, “Lun shiba shiji shangbanqi Zhongguo shehui jingji de xingzhi—jianlun Hongloulou zhong suo fanying de shehui jingji qingkuang—” 論十八世紀上半期中國社會經濟的性質——兼論『紅樓夢』中所反映的社會經濟情況—— (On the nature of China’s social economy in the first half of the 18th century: With reference to socio-economic conditions reflected in the *Hongloulou*), *Beijing Daxue Xuebao* (Renwen Kexue) (1955–2; subsequently revised and included in *id.*, *Lishi wenti luncong* 歷史問題論叢 (Studies of questions in history; Beijing: Sanlian Shudian, 1956; Renmin Chubanshe 人民出版社, 1962 [enl. & rev. ed.]). A Japanese translation by Hatano Tarō 波多野太郎 of this article by Jian may be found in Suzuki Shun 鈴木俊 and Nishijima Sadao, eds., *Chugokushi no jidai kubun* 中國史の時代區分 (The periodization of Chinese history; Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1957), pp. 77–162.
On the subject of this same material Koyama Masaaki 小山正明 comments in his “Minmatsu Shinsho no daitochi shoyū—toku ni Kōnan deruta chitai o chūshin to shite—” 「明末清初の大土地所有——特に江南デルタ地帯を中心として——」 (Landownership in the late Ming and early Qing: With a special focus on the Jiangnan delta region), 2 (*Shigaku Zasshi*, Vol. 67, No. 1 [1958]), that “it could be said to indicate that the operations of contemporary tenant farmers were organized with self-sufficiency as the underlying systematic principle. Therefore, the rural handicraft industries that had achieved commodity production were for purchasing the minimum use-value (rice) necessary to supplement what was missing from these self-sufficient operations, and it must be said that as a system the operations of these tenant farmers represented not a commodity economy but a self-sufficient economy.” But in view of the fact that this passage appears in the *Xijin shi xiaohu* alongside the statement that “they weave cloth and spin cotton at home and have no other work” to be discussed in Part II of the present article, it must be acknowledged that this self-sufficient economy as a systematic principle was being infiltrated by developments characteristic of a commodity economy.
- 12) The five counties of Changzhou prefecture at the time were Wujin 武進, Wuxi 無錫, Jiangyin 江陰, Yixing 宜興 and Jingjiang 靖江.
- 13) Kong Jingwei 孔經緯, in “Zhongguo fengjian shehui shougongye zhong de zibenzhuyi mengya” 中國封建社會手工業中的資本主義萌芽 (Germs of capitalism in the handicraft industries in Chinese feudal society), *Xinshixue Tongxun* 新史學通訊 (Dec. 1955; later included in *Taolunji*, Vol. 1), interprets the phrase “both of these [the producer] exchanges [directly] for [the merchant’s] raw cotton” (*jie yi huan hua* 皆以換花) to mean that “they take raw cotton in exchange.”
- 14) Saeki’s use of the term “cotton exchange system” is probably based on the cotton exchange system that was established between cotton-exchange merchants and weaver-peasants in the Chita 知多 and Iyo 伊予 districts of Japan in the first half of the 19th century, whereby white cotton cloth was exchanged for raw cotton (see Kajinishi Mitsuhaya 梶西光速, Ōshima Kiyoshi 大島清, Katō Toshihiko 加藤俊彦 and Ōuchi Tsutomu 大内力, *Nihon shihonshugi no seiritsu* 『日本資本主義の成立』 [The establishment of Japanese capitalism; Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1955], pp. 99–100), but as we saw in n. 9, Hatano subsequently came to adopt a negative view concerning evidence for the establishment of a putting-out system in the passage in question from the *Xijin shi xiaohu*.
- 15) A brief reference to my “Shinsho Soshū no jigō keiei o megutte” may be found in Ōshima Toshikazu 大島利一, “Tenkō kaibutsu no jidai” 「天工開物の時代」 (The age of the *Tiangong kaiwu*), in Yabuuchi Kiyoshi 藪内清, ed., *Tenkō kaibutsu no kenkyū* 『天工開物の研究』 (A study of the *Tiangong kaiwu*; Kōseisha 恒星社, 1954), p. 46.
- 16) In *Wada hakushi hoki kinen Tōyōshi ronsō* 『和田博士古稀記念東洋史論叢』 (Collected studies on East Asian history in honour of Dr. Wada [Sei 清] on his 70th birthday; Kōdansha 講談社, 1961). Later included under the new title of “Jūrokū, jūnana-seiki no Kōnan ni okeru nōson shukōgyō” in my

Chūgoku kindai keizaishi kenkyū josetsu (see n. 6).

- 17) For this reason it is to be surmised that the “nine months” in the original text is an error for “nine days.”
- 18) In *Tōyōshi Kenkyū* 『東洋史研究』, Vol. 19, Nos. 3–4 (1960–61).
- 19) In *Shigaku Zasshi*, Vol. 71, Nos. 1–2 (1962).
- 20) In *Tōhoku Daigaku Bungakubu Kenkyū Nenpō* 『東北大學文學部研究年報』, No. 18 (1968); later included in *id.*, *Sansei shōnin no kenkyū* 『山西商人の研究』 (Studies in Shanxi merchants; Tōyōshi Kenkyūkai, 1972).
- 21) Jiangsu-sheng Bowuguan 江蘇省博物館, ed., *Jiangsu-sheng Ming-Qing yilai beike ziliao xuanji* 江蘇省明清以來碑刻資料選集 (Selection of epigraphical materials since the Ming and Qing in Jiangsu province [hereafter: *Beike ziliao xuanji*]; Beijing: Sanlian Shudian, 1959).
- 22) In *Shigaku Kenkyū* 『史學研究』, Nos. 104–105 (1968). Yokoyama’s three articles were subsequently included in *id.*, *Chūgoku kindai no keizai kōzō* 『中國近代化の經濟構造』 (The economic structure of China’s modernization; Aki Shobō 亞紀書房, 1972).

