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Shift in the Character of the Eight Banner Organization  
in the Ch'ing China

By Yoshio Hosoya

The Eight Banner organization is usually understood to be a part of the bureaucratic mechanism under the powerful control by the emperor, that is, a military and administrative institution. In the period from the end of the sixteenth century to the Manchu conquest of China in the early seventeenth century, however, the Eight Banners were the state organization of the Manchus based upon their tribal community system. To speak in a more abstract way, each prince of imperial blood was lord of his banner/banners or arrows (*niru*), subordinate units of a banner. In other words, the Eight Banners were a group of organizations of feudal control by the banner princes, not to be regarded as a bureaucratic system under a single control by the emperor. When we examine the Eight Banners between 1644 and 1722 based upon the above facts, the banner princes are found still enjoying possession of their own banners or arrows, while the emperor apparently did not govern all of the banners and arrows. Furthermore, the control of banners by the banner princes seems to have been of a nature threatening to undermine the power of the emperor. The Eight Banners thus continued to be an organization of feudal control, which was later transformed into a bureaucratic system by a series of reforms made in the reign of Emperor Yung-cheng, 1723-1735.

A Typical Bureaucrat of the Early Sung China

By Shūichi MATSUI

The Shih 石 family, since it moved to Feng-fu County 奉符県 of Yen-chou 袁州, kept steadily building up its own economic and social status until its presence in the political and bureaucratic circle was firmly establi-