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The Collapse of the Yellow River Dikes during the Transition
Period from Former to Later Han Dynasty and
Liu Xiu 劉秀's Regime

by Sakae HAMAKAWA

What influence did the Yellow River dikes collapsing twice have on the society during the transition period from former to later Han dynasty? This question has not been fully discussed. Among the few studies on this subject, Hans Bielenstein and Kimura Masao emphasize that the destruction of the dikes was a major cause of the fall of Wang Mang's regime. I feel this view is open to further analysis. In this article, I analyzed this theme from a different viewpoint.

During the transition period, influential families throughout the country built forts to defend themselves from local bandits. However, this measure of self defense could not be seen in the plains south of the Yellow River and north of the Huai River (Huaibei plain 淮北平野) when the Red Eyebrows 赤眉 invaded the region. As there were several cases, though exceptional, in which people were captured but then released by the bandits after winning their sympathy, it is probable that influential families did not exist in this area.

This can also be assumed from the feud between Liu Xiu and Liu Yong 劉永. Although Liu Yong was holding the strategic position of Sui Yang 睢陽 in the Huaibei plain, being closest to

the throne among the Liu clan, he was defeated by Liu Xiu who was expanding his power in the Hebei plain 河北平野. This was because Liu Xiu was able to gather the influential families of the Hebei plain, whereas Liu Yong could not in the Huaibei plain.

Since the Warring States Period, the Huaibei plain possessed vast superiority in population, economic power, and etc. over the Hebei plain. However, judging from the above-mentioned situation, it is evident that the area had gradually lost its advantage. It was the collapse of the Yellow River dikes that caused the decline. The influential families had evacuated the area to escape inundation caused by unrepaired dikes. Obviously, resistance against the bandits was no longer possible, moreover, there was no potential for Liu Yong to expand his power.

The collapse of the Yellow River dikes had an influence on the society not as a direct cause of Wang Mang's fall, but as a primary factor for Liu Xiu to establish the Later Han dynasty.

The System of Autumn Assizes and Its Regulations during
the Qing Dynasty: Analysis of Qianlong and Jiaqing period

by Takuji TAKATŌ

The Autumn Assizes (*qiushen* 秋審) in the Qing 清 were the institution whereby the advisability of carrying out or reducing the punishments of criminals imprisoned for the death penalty in every district of China was considered with every case being judged on its own merits. Only over the course of time with the accumulation of precedents, criteria were established to aid in judgment and in particular it appears that the Autumn Assize regulations (*Qiushen tiaokuan* 秋審條款) utilized from the Qianlong 乾隆 period (1736-1795) to the end of the Qing dynasty played an important role in administering this task. However the Autumn Assize regulations underwent changes over the course of time and the system of criteria were not fixed. This being so, important