

THE TOYO GAKUHO

Vol.95, No.3 - December 2013

(THE JOURNAL OF THE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT
OF THE TOYO BUNKO)

On the Supporters of the Wang Mang Government Regime as Seen
from its Relationships with Scholars

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It has been said that the policies of the Han Period Wang Mang 王莽 regime were unrealistic and meaningless; nevertheless, within the process in which he came to power, Wang Mang received support and was able to implement his policies and assumed the throne. Wang Mang's policies were also praised by his contemporaries. This article takes up the subject of exactly who were the supporters of Wang Mang and examines the background to their support, in an attempt to grasp the meaning of the Wang Mang regime for contemporary Han Period society.

While it is a fact that the frequent popular movements praising Wang Mang during the reign of Former Han Emperor Ping Di 平帝 were staged by the supporters of Wang Mang, these performances did reflect the participants' evaluation of Wang's policies and their expectations concerning his leadership abilities. Who were these supporters and why did they invest their hopes in the Wang Mang regime? To answer these questions, the author investigates the relatively large amount of source materials concerning the scholars (*zhusheng* 諸生) active at the time.

During that time, there was a great deal of interest in politics on the part of the *zhusheng* residing in the capital of Chang'an; and it was Wang Mang's intention to grant them favors and act as their patron. Within this context, Wang Mang planned to utilize *zhusheng*, by having them participate in ceremonies, so to dramatize the superior spirit and mentality of Confucianism. In this manner, *zhusheng* placed their hopes in the leadership of Wang Mang, participated in popular movements of support and thus became an important

part of his regime.

Turning to the question of why *zhusheng* attached themselves to Wang Mang, the author examines the historical background of scholars active in the capital from the last decades of the Former Han Dynasty on into the era of Wang Mang's Xin Dynasty. The nominal purpose of all *zhusheng* for being in the capital was to become high level bureaucrats in the central government, but in reality, only a very few could ever accomplish that dream. For the majority, the actual purpose of studying in the capital became efforts at personal refinement or developing advantageous personal connections. As far as the Wang Mang regime was concerned, it was an excellent opportunity for the sons of powerful families to experience the influential power of the government and take back to their homes stories of Chang'an's power and splendor. In other words, *zhusheng* became the means by which stable relations could be established between the central government and powerful leaders in the provinces, and those *zhusheng* and powerful families who welcomed such relations formed the backbone of the Wang Mang regime.

The Formation and Implementation of Personnel Provisions by Top Provincial Executives during the Qing Period

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Under the Qing Dynasty, the appointment of local government officials generally depended on the central government—the emperor and the Minister of Personnel (Libu 吏部). But there were two main problems with this method: 1) there would be long periods of vacancy before local officials could be replaced and 2) the central government had difficulty in assigning the right person to the most suitable position, because it did not understand conditions on the ground. Consequently, the rules for the appointment of local government officials were reformed between the late Kangxi 康熙 and mid-Qianlong 乾隆 Eras.

Local government appointments involved four elements: 1) the names of the administrative division and the post within it, 2) the characteristic feature of the post's location (*chong* 衝, *fan* 繁, *pi* 疲, *nan* 難), 3) importance and