

A Study on Structural Changes of Chinese Local Plays
in Chiang-nan 江南 through about
the 15 th and 16 th Centuries (II)

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In Chapter 1 of this article (printed in *The Memoirs of the Institute of Oriental Culture* 60, 1973), I observed various types of local plays in Chiang-nan 江南 through about the 15 th and 16 th centuries. In Chapter 2 (printed in this number), I have further investigated the organization of above-mentioned local plays ((1)~(3)) according to the materials found in "Ming-chou Wu-shih Chia-chi" 茗洲吳氏家記, a kinship book in An-hui 安徽, in the 16 th century. As to the problems, I could recognize undermentioned various facts.

(1) In common with the plays treated in (1), (2), (3) in Chapter 1, the entire management of each play was undertaken by autonomous organization known as *she-hui* 社会, *miao-hui* 廟会, etc.. The governing body of such *hui* 会, consisting of plural number of *she-hu* 社戶, or a council system made up with *she-shou* 社首, was generally dominated by the elders within each local village. Business affairs and management of the *hui*, were usually carried out under a rotation and shift system by these *she-hu*. In many cases, especially in the cases of consanguineous villages, consisting of minority clans, often found in Chiang-nan, the elders of village-community were, at the same time, the leaders of influential kinship groups, and the organization or property of village-plays were often under the control of powerful clan. In Ming-chou village, for example, the members of organization for *she-miao* plays, were usually selected exclusively out

of members of family Wu 吳氏, the most powerful clan of this village. This indicates that the organization of *she-miao* play in Chiang-nan, were constructed on the basis of blood relationships.

- (2) On the other hand, the organization of the *she-miao* play, was maintained, in part, in connection with local administrative system, such as *li-chia* 里甲, under which all the taxes and labour services to the public were imposed on village people according to the land-book, called *huang-ts'e* 黃冊, that was to be compiled on the basis of every local administrative section, called *li-chia* 里甲, in every ten years. In the village of Ming-chou 茗洲, for example, the *she-huo* 社戶, belonging to the family Wu 吳, the supporter of the village play, often fulfilled the responsibility for compiling the land-book, the so-called *huang-ts'e* 黃冊, in the capacity of *li-zhang* 里長, the chief of the local administrative section. In consequences, the structure of local plays in consanguineous villages in Chiang-nan, was supported not only by the private power of minority clan, but also by the public power of the local administrative authority.

In short, the controls of land-owner class over the organization of village plays were, more or less, strengthened in Ming 明 period, in comparison with those in Yüan 元 period. In the following chapters, I shall proceed to investigate what changes might have been brought in the local plays through the trends of strengthening of the controls by gentry class.