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JAPANESE FARM MANUALS: A LITERATURE OF DISCOVERY

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Introduction

Nōsho (farm manuals) constitute a multi-faceted genre that emerged in the Edo period (1600–1868) and has remained viable ever since. While conceived in a variety of textual formats, *nōsho* derived in common from a documentary impluse: a concern to record for posterity, in an ethnographic mode, the performance of farming and husbandry. Farm manuals not only were written and read by (and to) rural peoples, they were produced and enjoyed by townspeople as well, as a sort of pastoral literature. Moreover, the genre was exploited as a medium of social commentary and criticism, and quite a few farm manuals were published under the auspices of religious associations or social rectification movements.

My intention in this article is to introduce and review Edo-period *nōsho* in a way — admittedly broad — that incorporates and penetrates the several kinds and levels of contextual relationships constituting the genre as a whole and its individual members.[1] In order to delimit and organize the discursive possibilities of this topic, I will focus on four basic sets of contextual relations: reference, intention, intertextuality, and coherence. By reference is meant the relation of textual units to non-literary events (Becker 1979: 212). Intention is defined as the relations of the author to "the context of the text, the medium, and to the hearers or readers" (*ibid.*). It comprises both the point of view of the author and those of the hearers or readers of a text (*ibid.*: 216). Intertextuality describes the relation of a text to other texts, "since part of the context of any text is, more or less, all previous texts in a particular culture, especially texts considered to be in the same genre" (*ibid.*: 212). Finally, coherence refers to the internal organization of a text; to the "relation of words, phrases, sentences and larger units of the text to each other" (*ibid.*: 216).

None of these kinds or levels of contextual relations constitutes an exclusive analytical strategy. Rather, they are complementary, even overlapping,

categories which help to facilitate textual analysis, and are referred to here, albeit usually implicitly, as a means of illuminating the contours and critical features of the *nōsho* genre and its constituent texts.

I am more interested in exploring the textual and contextual properties of *nōsho* than in mining their contents for facts to assist in the reconstruction of Edo-period agriculture. Any one farm manual incorporated descriptions, interpretations, and comparisons of concrete socio-cultural experiences and events — past and present — related to agriculture. Each farm manualist, furthermore, contributed to an ongoing dialogue about the propriety of certain agricultural practices and rural lifestyles. And, *nōsho* being, more or less, durable material objects, these dialogues continued across time and space, addressing and responding to generations of writers and readers historically and geographically, remote as well as near.

The Setting

What were some of the outstanding coincident events which provoked the emergence of the *nōsho* genre in the Edo period? Given that the great majority of the several hundred farm manuals available for our perusal[2] deal in some way with cash crops, the growth of the market economy may be identified as one such event. The commerical cultivation of rapeseed, rice, and cotton increased from the early 1700s on, and by the following century, villages had already begun processing agricultural products as well, reflecting the gradual shift of market-oriented activities from the major urban centers to the outlying areas (See Hanley and Yamamura 1977: 69-90). Farm manuals themselves were commercial agricultural productions inasmuch as they were the marketable — in the sense of published — handiwork of farmers and persons with an investment in farming and husbandry. While most farm manualists encouraged the financial solvency of farm households, fewer insisted that agriculture itself should be a wholly profit-making operation.

Related to the growth of the market economy was the large-scale land reclamation program inaugurated in the 1720s by the *bakufu* as part of the Kyōhō Reforms.[3] *Shinden kaihatsu* (arable land reclamation) was perceived as an expedient means of raising agricultural productivity and, by extension, tax revenues. The program in large part was financed by merchants, whose investments were openly solicited. The *bakufu*'s emphasis on the primacy of agriculture effectively quickened the need for agrarian reforms, and farm manuals were among the materials used to instruct farmers in the ways of improved agricultural techniques and equipment. Of course, the substantial technological advancements in water control and irrigation organization made the land reclamation program feasible in the first place.

Another catalyst in the emergence and publication of farm manuals was the perceived destablization of the village community, not only under the

influence of the market economy, but as a result of crop failures, famine, and peasant unrest. The publication of *nōsho* peaked during crisis periods, such as the crop failures and subsequent famines of the 1730s, 1750s, 1780s, and 1830s. Many, if not most, farm manuals were written specifically in response to local disturbances. Some authors, many of them landowners with much to lose, provided their readers with famine–relief strategies, including diagrams for distinguishing poisonous from edible weeds, herbal antidotes, food preservation and storage methods, and recipes for *miso* and gruel. Farm manuals in part constitute a study of people in crisis by people in crisis.

The motive of commercial interest altered the style and aim of agriculture, and virtually all the farm manualists were in agreement that the mental terrain inhabited by rural peoples needed reclamation as well before new techniques could be successfully adopted. They demanded that farmers cultivate an attitude of preparedness to a hitherto unprecedented degree. To anticipate and adjust to unfavorable climatic or market conditions was to control them, or at least to cushion their aftermath. The *nōsho* authors supported the idea that forecasting mitigates uncertainty and yields more control. Nakamura Yoshitoki (1704?–1871?), one among many like–minded writers, pointed out that forecasting and preparedness involved considering every possible form of obstruction and then devising a schedule of alternative activities (1977: 115).

The process simultaneously engendering and engendered by preparedness was identified in *nōsho* as *hatsumei-kufū*. This was an exercise that farm manualists encouraged and one which provided the incentive for their own literary efforts. *Nōsho* writing itself constituted a process of discovery and innovation, as the diverse range of information communicated by the authors called for a variety of rhetorical devices and narrative strategies. *Hatsumei* refers to bringing into being something new or previously dormant as a result of *kufū*, which is the process of synthesizing, through deliberation, one's ideas and experiences. If the beginning of *hatsumei–kufū* is perplexity, artifice is its completion. Tsukada Yōeimon declared that farmers must exploit the opportunities for invention provided by hazards and risks. In *Teisei Yosan Hisho* (Revised Handbook on Sericulture, 1789), he pointed out that since silkworms do not fare well in cold rainy weather, farmers must contrive ways in which to warm them (in Sugi 1979: 46). Similarly, the author of *Bōfūfō Biyōdan – Suisaigo Nōka Tsuiroku* (How to Protect Against Wind and Wave Damage; Advice for Farm Householders on Flood and Fire Damage, 1860s), presented various strategies to prevent, offset, or defend against natural and man-made calamities. Nakamura Yoshitoki (1703?–1781?) further suggested, in *Kōsakubanashi* (The Analects of Farming, 1776), that the many ideas, discoveries, and inventions of veteran farmers be compiled for future reference. The eventual publication of *Kanyō Kufūroku* (A compendium of Essential Innovations, 1826), by Udono Chōkai, not only

appears as a belated "response" to Nakamura's suggestion, but also bespeaks the by then high value placed on the activity of *hatsumei–kufū*.

A psychological byproduct of *hatsumei–kufū*, as intimated by the farm manualists, was an optimism fostered by the recognition and exploitation of individuals' skills, capabilities, and potentials. Farmers were told that the only way out of their present predicament was through *hatsumei–kufū*. Some farm manualists declared that for farmers to hoe and sow solely to produce tax rice was tantamount to forfeiting and sqandering their innate potential. Others recommended that farmers refine themselves and their families through scholarship. Others specifically advocated that they read farm manuals, some of which were abundantly illustrated and written in a simple vernacular to facilitate the farmers' comprehension of them.

Land reclamation, as one solution for increasing revenue, was also a major impetus behind the invention and application of new technologies. Since the fields easiest to reclaim had already been claimed by the 1660s, the establishment of *shinden* nearly a century later was accompanied by new farmtool designs and cultivation and irrigation methods, given the intractable geography and inferior soils of the barren land. And, because as much depended on how as what to cultivate, detailed agricultural calendars and work itineraries were necessary. *Shinden* settlers, among whom were included paroled convicts and migrant workers, were often ignorant about agricultural matters. There was, in short, a need for specialists or veteran farmers both to write informative farm manuals and to spread their knowledge throughout the countryside.

While many agricultural consultants limited their range of activity to a particular domain, others traveled marathon distances in their efforts to educate farmers. Some were employed by provincial rulers to design farmer–education curriculae, to oversee and advise land reclamation projects, or to engineer the revitalization of foundered villages. Yet others were members of religious or social reform organizations through whose local networks agricultural know–how was disseminated. Dozens of *nōsho* were published and distributed under the auspices of these organizations, among which included Shingaku (Heart-Mind Learning), *sōmō no kokugaku* (grass-roots nativism), Se(ri)gaku (Intrinsic Nature Learning), and Hōtokukyō (Benevolence Recompensation Mission).[4] Their founders and members were motivated by the same climate that nurtured the writer in those agrarianists who eventually authored and published *nōsho*. It was, to summarize, a climate consolidated by such developments as the unification of the country under the Tokugawa, the rise of the merchant class as a predominant social force, the confusion of self-sufficiency with self-interest under the influence of the market economy, the gradual erosion of "traditional" cooperation and solidarity, and the shortage of steady agricultural labor as more peasants engaged in commercial activities.

Authors and Audiences

While recognizing that each *nōsho* represents a unique coincidence and interpretation of the events provoking the emergence of the genre as a whole, several "categories" of authorship may be distinguished. Furushima Toshio, a doyen of Japanese agricultural history, has grouped farm manualists into three broad categories: Confucian scholars and other literati; provincial and local administrators of the samurai class; and educated members of the farmer class, notably wealthy, landed cultivators, merchant–farmers, and village headman. He also suggests a fourth category of sorts comprising "maverick" farm manualists, such as the renowned Okura Nagatsune (1768-1856?), who were professionals in the sense that they made writing and consulting their livelihood (In Miyoshi 1982: 27-28). These are by no means exclusive categories, as there were persons who forsook their samurai status, immersed themselves in Confucian studies, and took to farming. Ōhara Yūgaku, the founder of Sei(ri)gaku and a leading agriculturalist, was one such person. There also were a number of townspeople and traveling merchants who wrote *nōsho*.

In a recent work, Miyoshi (1982: 28) notes that Furushima's second and third categories are virtually identical and offers some refinements thereof. Miyoshi suggests that the second group should consist of persons writing from the vantage point of the government bureaucracy with the aim of educating — or more literally, indoctrinating — farmers and securing the annual tax. The third group, he continues, should comprise persons writing from the cultivator's point of view and addressing the subject of agricultural productivity. Miyoshi concludes that, all in all, it is more meaningful to draw a distinction between farm manuals written by scholars and those written by persons directly involved with agricultural affairs, be they farmers or administrators. My addition to the fray is a category of farm manual authorship comprising those individuals who, regardless of their birthright and level of scholarship, wrote as spokesmen for religious or social rectification movements.

Regardless of whether farm maualists wrote as representatives of certain social classes or special interest groups, they did not take social relationships for granted but constantly referred to them in shaping the narrative structure of the texts. A case in point is *Seiryōki* (The Seiryō Chronicles, 1628), one of the earliest extant *nōsho*. I dwell on this prototypical text at length because it is filled with themes more extensively addressed by later farm manual writers. The work was named after Doi Seiryō (1546-1629), the ruler of Omori Castle in Iyo province, and is a record of events during his lifetime.[5] The contents consist largely of conversations between Doi and the author, Matsuura Sōan, a priest and Doi's most trusted confidant.

One problem Doi found especially insidious was, in his words, the envy of the peasants for the material prosperity of the townspeople. He lamented the

vicious circle of farmers who shirked their farming chores, failed to meet their taxes, gave up farming for peddling, and went bankrupt, only to return to the hoe. Also foremost in his thoughts was the possibility of peasant uprisings. Doi sought to convince the peasants, who during his lifetime constituted a body of hereditary servants, that agriculture was paramount. He ordered several capable men, including Matasuura, to undertake a comparative field study of his domain and the surrounding provinces. Based on their findings, he could then determine the appropriate reforms (Matsuura 1980: 160, 179).

The fieldworkers conducted extensive interviews with veteran and inexperienced farmers alike, and took copious notes. Their reports convinced Doi that a coercive policy of freezing the peasants to the land would only increase the chances of their absconding or even rebelling. The survey also revealed that there were only a few farmers who knew their occupation inside and out, just as there were only a few who were completely ignorant about agricultural matters. Very rare were innovative and foresightful farmers who used their ingenuity to improve existing methods. The majority of peasants simply imitated mediocre others, and thus erroneous and unproductive practices were multiplied and perpetuated.

What Doi bemoaned most was the absence of resourceful farmers. Few, he decried, could determine the appropriate time for sowing, distinguish superior from inferior seeds, or differentiate soil types. He grouped peasants into three categories based on their level of skill: outstanding, average, and incompetent. The latter especially were singled out for reform. Doi never doubted that they could be rehabilitated. Given their propensity to imitate, all the peasants needed was a good example to follow. He agreed with Matsuura that praising and rewarding outstanding individuals — "in every village there are at least two or three" — was like planting tall and fibrous hemp plants among scrubby little mugworts. "Regardless of their original dispositions, the mugworts will grow straight and tall, like the hemp in their midst" (*ibid.*: 15, 164). While the belief that individuals mirrored their environment was shared and voiced by virtually all those farm manualists who ventured into the realm of social commentary, *nōsho* writers in the later half of the Edo period prescribed more pragmatic measures than Doi.

Doi and Matsuura singled out areas in need of reform but provided little in the way of concrete, practical advice regarding better farm tools and cultivation methods. Admonishments and reprobations alone, however, do not amount to social reform, and, by the same token, agricultural advice and innovations themselves are ineffectual unless disseminated and implemented on a systematic basis. Doi's solution to this dilemma was to consolidate a familial political system based on *jin* (benevolence) and *shin* (faith) (*ibid.*: 146). Generally speaking, *jinsei* (benevolent government) was an outcome of the manner in which a ruler mollified the ruled. It was not a system based on the principle of occupational reciprocity promoted by later farm manualists.

Doi was bent on maintaining the existing status quo in order to offset a pervasive sense of insecurity[6] and to insure food surpluses as a means of defense precautions (*ibid.*: 83). In keeping with the tenets of *jinsei*, peasants were to identify themselves as members of a harmonious, extended family headed by a benevolent househead, in this case Doi. He referred to farmers a children and to himself as their "mother." Other local and village leaders he denounced as "stepmothers," aloof and uncaring (*ibid.*: 126, 155). Doi singled these officials out for reform as well, since corrupt administrators only fomented the rebellious ire of the peasants, although he also maintained that the opposite effect was equally as likely: "If farmers are made to fear their ruler, then like little fish when boiled for a long time, they become completely boneless" (*ibid.*: 126).

Later generations of farm manualists stressed the horizontal nature of social groups, which were coordinated according to the principle of occupational reciprocity. This was the underlying theme of *Yuigon* (Posthumous Notes, 1833), one of several *nōsho* written by Fuchizawa En'eimon (1793?–1878), a merchant-farmer from Hachinohe *han* in Rikuchū province. Fuchizawa resorted to anatomical metaphors in declaring that all social relationships were reciprocal in nature since they were interdependent on transactions of goods and services. "The four classes[7] are to the social body what the eyes, tongue, ears, and nose are to the human body" (1980: 142). His point was that no one class was superior to another in terms of its function and social utility.

Fuchizawa wrote at a time, several centuries after Doi, when the view that the four–class hierarchy was but a product of historical custom had gained currency. Class distinctions were regarded as differences in occupation and not necessarily as echelons in a fixed status hierarchy, although the fact that farmers were second to the samurai in social rank was often invoked by him and his contemporaries for rhetorical effect. Fuchizawa touted his own enterprise as a model of and for the ideal form of social organization. Fuchizawa ran a *sake*–brewing industry in addition to his farming activities. Its success, he explained in *Yuigon*, depended on the synchronization of class functions: the farmers produced the rice, the artisans manufactured the brew, the merchants distributed the *sake*, and the samurai maintained the public peace so that these tasks could be smoothly executed.

The problems addressed by the farm manualists were ramifications of those which provoked the emergence of the *nōsho* genre itself. Many writers regarded the shortage of agricultural labor as one of the most urgent issues to resolve. It was necessary, they professed, to maximize the available manpower not only by synchronizing class functions, as Fuchizawa recommended, but also by capitalizing on the talents and capabilities of individual farmworkers. Apart from encouraging *hatsumei–kufū*, the author of *Kōsakubanashi* for one, advocated assigning farm workers to tasks which suited

their personalities and temperaments as a means of avoiding inefficient and slipshod labor.

> There is a wide variety of daily work. Some of it is backbreaking and some of it is easy and even fun in comparison. Similarly, there is a wide variety of laborers: some like work of a routine, monotonous nature, while others cannot bear such dullness. Some laborers are skilled in detailed work while others simply are unable to handle complex matters. Then again, some laborers work diligently without supervision; others loaf on the job if they are unsupervised.
>
> Encouraging laborers to work hard requires tact and discretion on the part of the househead. Most important is the necessity of matching a given assignment with the requisite number of workers. For a job requiring about thirty laborers, first dispatch twenty then gradually increase their number by seven or eight. This way, twenty-seven or twenty-eight laborers will work competitively and finish in good spirits the work of thirty men. On the other hand, if forty workers are initially dispatched and ten later subtracted, the competitive spirit of the remaining thirty will be broken and the job might not even be completed (Nakamura 1977: 112, 114).

Other farm manualists noted the effect of the weather on farmworker performance.

> On sunny days, break the laborers into small groups and on overcast days, keep them together in a large group. The sun has a way of making people cheerful and cooperative, while cloudy gray days cause them to grow melancholy. Therefore, on overcast days, laborers should work together as one group (Kinoshita 1978: 201).

A number of farm manual authors, particularly those writing in the latter half of the Edo period, took their analysis of worker psychology further and provided vignettes of ideal-type laborers in an effort to streamline the job-assignment process. The last chapter in *Yuigon*, for example, consists of a series of thumbnail sketches of Fuchizawa's six chief clerks. One entry reads, "Genzo is witty, very capable, educated, knowledgeable, and has wide-ranging interests. Since he possesses an excellent sense of judgement, he should be appointed as a negotiator or counselor." Another notes, "Kankai is a bit dull-witted but obedient. He makes relatively few mistakes or errors. It is best to assign him to look after the needs of the farmers and to serve as a guidance counselor" (Fuchizawa 1980: 167). Regardless of whether or not Fuchizawa was describing actual men in his employ, this kind of realistic touch made his and similar *nōsho* more accessible as models for emulation. While Genzo himself may have been an exceptional individual, Fuchizawa

was, in effect, listing the qualifications for the office of negotiator or counselor.

Kōsakubanashi was one of many farm manuals composed as a series of dialogues, in this case between a veteran farmer and the author, the forementioned Nakamura Yoshitoki, a village headman. Casting a venerable old man or veteran farmer as the narrator was a textual strategy frequently employed by *nōsho* writers. This device allowed information and ideas to be presented in a catechistic way, thus anticipating and theoretically neutralizing any doubts held by the readers and hearers. Other ways in which Nakamura heightened the evocative force of his narrative was by telling, through the "old man," entertaining and edifying tales. He also invited the endearment and empathy of his readers by injecting liberal doses of self-effacement throughout his work. The afterword, for instance, begins with the caveat, "Farmers will probably laugh when they read this book" (1980: 117). Without pausing to explain why, Nakamura confides to his audience that he was born out of wedlock, and continues:

> When I was eighteen I inherited my ancestor's land. I lived with my old mother and cultivated the paddies, seeking the advice of veteran farmers as to the best farm tools and techniques. I gradually gained experience and insight in agricultural matters. The present text is but a private journal, and although it was not originally intended for public eyes, many people have expressed an interest in reading it. Thus, since I have no secrets to hide, I have published it for your perusal (*ibid.*).

The frankness of authors such as Nakamura reveals that they regarded their readers as an audience of peers or confederates, and not subordinates. By the mid-eighteenth century, farmers were not regarded as children in need of discipline, as Doi, over two centuries earlier, had maintained, but adults in need of training and professional advice. However, regardless of their date of publication, most farm manuals included biographical sketches of at least the author and often the other protagonists as well. Descriptions of the geography, climate, and general circumstances of each locality under consideration were also provided. These were measures which underscored the authenticity of the content and imbued them with authority.

One objective shared in common by farm manualists, particularly those writing from the 1700s onward, was to correct the "false social consciousness" of farmworkers that was leading many of them to ruin. They sought to both raise the self-esteem of tillers and change their public image.

> People who do not know anything about farming might think that it's lowly, despisable work. However, much as tilling appears base and menial from the outside, peasants are second only to samurai in social status. For us farmers, there is no other kind of work that surpasses

> what we do, and we must regard agriculture as a very important occupation (Nakamura 1980: 111).

Many a farm manual, in fact, is seeded with such rousing proclamations as, "Agriculture is the foundation of the country," and, "There is no more honorable occupation than farming." The very ubiquity throughout the *nōsho* genre of these and similar exhortations, suggests that what they purported was actually quite problematic. That is, there was a disjunction between the importance of farmers as the atlantes of society and their real social esteem and economic well-being. In their efforts to boost the recognition of the social import and professional dignity of tilling, the farm manualists made an effort to endow agriculture with what Carroll, in a different context, has referred to as "extraordinary powers of latent virtue, uniquely capable of redeeming society from incipient decay" (1977: 14-15). One *nōsho* writer even proclaimed that farming was tantamount to performing meritorious deeds, and that land reclamation was synonymous with social salvation. If ruined fields were restored to productivity and hitherto barren land made arable, then farm households would prosper and society itself would be stabilized (Yoshida 1979: 106-20, 187-88).

The interest shown by farm manual writers in raising the prestige of farmers and farmwork was at the same time tempered by an apprehension of the explosive potential of rural peoples. The apparent paradox at work here is the very human propensity to exalt as divine that which is feared as the devil. Rural customs were not merely matters for objective observation but had gained particular topical urgency in the light of village destabilization and peasant unrest. The same *nōsho* writers who described farmwork as an honorable profession also adopted, on occasion, an attitude of disdain toward the farmworker. Loquacious when it came to proclaiming the virtues of farming and husbandry, they were more hesitant in their praise of the cultivator. Some went so far as to accuse farmers of indolence, willfulness, and licentiousness. The general opinion was that farmworkers were less noble than their occupation and, therefore, had to be educated and trained as a means of improving their work performance. Although the interest shown in rural life was not altogether an expression of humanitarian concern for disenfranchised people, some farm manualists did design and help implement welfare programs out of a professed compassion and civic conscience.

Collectively, the *nōsho* writers opined that their society was facing a crisis of immense proportions and that one of the most expedient resolutions was the rectification of rural Japan and its inhabitants. In their view, the physical environment was not just an economic resource, but a cognitive resource as well, in the sense that it was saturated with symbolic meaning (cf. Chaney 1979: 52-53). The observation of natural phenomena, for instance, could be developed as the art of forecasting. Weather forecasts helped to mitigate

uncertainty and guide decision–making: when to, where to, what to, and how to cultivate which crops. Nature was perceived, albeit inchoately, as an ensemble of "texts," which, like *nōsho*, were to be read and studied. However, just as it is necessary to know an alphabet and grammatical rules in order to read a book properly, farmers had to be taught the cues by which to interpret natural phenomena.

Miyanaga Shōun (1732-1803) was one of many farm manualists to include a chapter on weather forecasting in his *nōsho*.

> If the kites chirp in the morning, it will rain in the near future. If they chirp in the evening, fair weather will prevail.
>
> When the color of the setting sun is red, rain is in the offing. A yellow sun forecasts a typhoon, while a hazy blue one signals wind and rain. If the sky at sunset appears red, windy days may be expected. A yellow sky signals thunderstorms ahead.
>
> Should mushrooms spout up in the morning after many days of rain, clear weather will soon prevail, but if they come up in the evening, the rain will continue (Miyanaga 1979: 192, 197).

Provided the weather could be forecasted with a modicum of accuracy, work schedules appropriate for varying weather conditions could be planned in advance.

Farm manualists in general emphasized that agricultural productivity was contingent upon the synchronization of work and weather and upon a greater exactitude in timed routines. Simply put, labor must be measured and scheduled if it were to be made more productive. A substantial portion of the contents of farm manuals, therefore, was devoted to comprehensive daily, monthly, and yearly work schedules for groups of workers, farm couples, or single cultivators. Time itself was regarded as a finite resource requiring judicious use. One of the slogans repeatedly voiced by *nōsho* writers of every generation was, "Conserve time." Juding from the holiday activities prescribed along with the work agendas, the authors realized that recreation was just as time–consuming as work and thus equally in need of supervision. The comprehensive managment and control of time was one of the most expedient means available of streamling the performance of farming and husbandry.

Nostalgia and Social Reform

Farm manuals were books of change. *Nōsho* writers were concerned with the process of becoming or making: incompetent farmers, through education and training, could become outstanding farmers. Likewise, barren fields could be made productive, and foundered villages revitalized. Their preoccupation with change in all its aspects is nowhere more evident than in those

moments when they waxed nostalgic. The nostalgia of the farm manualists did not stem from a fear of social change nor was it a fatuous form of self-indulgence. Its sources were in the discontinuities and dislocation wrought by social disturbances and cataclysmic natural disasters, and in the attendant perceived threats to the integrity of the web of shared assumptions which ordered village and household life.

Nostalgia is a barometer of present moods. It is not a product of the past but uses or appropriates a particular past which is defined in contrast to certain present exigencies (Davis 1979: 12, 113). What nostalgia does is to juxtapose "the uncertainties and anxieties of the present with presumed verities and comforts of the lived past" (*ibid.*: 141). This does not mean that it necessarily "arrests or inhibits present purpose and action" (*ibid.*). Rather, nostalgia, as a lucid expression of dissatisfaction with the present on the grounds of some remembered plenitude, is just as adequate a revolutionary stimulus as any other (Jameson 1972: 53).

In Edo–period *nōsho*, the nostaligic experience constituted a dialogue between past and present in which a select past was transmuted into a means for engaging the vexatious present. By framing their apprehensions in nostalgia, farm manualists were able to address present exigencies in a way that blurred the focus of social criticism. In a tale told by an "old farmer" about a customary annual party at which the househead thanked his employees for their hard work, Miyanaga Shōun alluded to the changing social relations of production, the high rate of abscondence, and resultant labor shortage.

> The standard fare for ages on this [annual] occasion has been salt-broiled salmon. An old farmer explains the significance of this particular dish.
>
> 'The matter of feeding the workers salmon . . . has to do with the intrinsic nature of this fish. Salmon . . . swim upstream from the ocean — which they enter in the spring and leave in the fall — back to the very place where they were born, as though they were returning to their *furusato* [native place]. Other fish, however, do not possess this intrinsic faculty of steadfastness. In short, by treating his employees to salmon, the househead demonstrates his heartfelt desire that their grandchildren too will work for his household. The maintenance of old ties is thereby insured (1979: 214-15).

Miyanaga went on to lament the fact that local customs no longer guided social relations. "Nowadays, this practice [of serving salt-broiled salmon] has all but disappeared. My household is the only one perpetuating this custom" (ibid.: 215). Elsewhere, he deplored the disappearnce of thatched farmhouses, "now that farmers have taken to roofing their houses with expensive wooden planks. Consequently, farmhouses are losing their farmhouse–ness. What a pitiful state of affairs!" (ibid: 213). Miyanaga was

disturbed by the gradual loss of traditional values which he, nostalgically, felt had been superior to those replacing them. His tale, as a mode of relating to the past, was designed to be assimilated into the personal experience of his readers and hearers. If not salmon dinners themselves, then the collective memory of salmon dinners (and thatched farmhouses) would forge a chain of tradition linking one generation to the next, thereby offsetting disruptive social changes.

The farm manualists acknowledged change but were determined to control it by restoring "a sense of socio–cultural continuity with respect to that which had verged on being rendered discontinous" (Davis 1979: 104). Expressed through the *nōsho* medium, nostalgia eased the way for change to be assimilated into rural society as it could not have been had it remained unexploited as a vehicle for social commentary and consigned to purely private feeling (cf. *ibid.*). Nostalgia was one of the modes, replete with its peculiar symbols, in which farm manualists addressed and engaged the present. It facilitated the implementation of local solutions to general problems by appealing to a collective identity of place and, concomitantly, a more permanent sense of community. Farmers, moreover, as ideal types, embodied tradition. Not only were they the sole inheritors of an ancient and venerable livelihood, but their very bodies bore witness to the physical intimacy of the contact with nature that agriculture demands. The symbolic value of this situation was not overlooked by the farm manualists, as demonstrated by the following passage from *Nōgyōdan Shūi Zatsuroku* (An Agricultural Miscellany, 1816).

> Embracing themselves to keep warm, so intensely cold is it, the farmers set out for the paddies before dawn. And when the sun finally rises, they pause for a moment to watch the glorious spectacle (Miyanaga Shōkō 1979: 326).

Nostalgia also figures as a major incentive for modern–day studies of Edo–period farm manuals. *Kinsei Nōsho ni Manabu* (Learning from Edo-Period Nōsho, 1977), for example, constitutes a critique of mechanized agriculture from the vantage point of "farmers with topknots." The author–editor, Iinuma Jirō, a Kyoto University professor, believes that Edo farm manuals offer an opportunity to get an "undistorted" view of the "essential, fundamental form" of Japanese agriculture. He characterizes Japan's rapid post-war economic development as an unfortunate case of throwing the baby out with the bath water: too many traditional ideas and practices have been discarded in the name of modernization. Iinuma claims that the purpose of the book is to help restore the integrity of pre-industrial agricultural wisdom (1977: 3-4). His views are strikingly similar to those held by the Edo-period *nōsho* writers. In both cases, by encapsulating certain features, practices, and lifestyles as "tradition," the authors inadvertently have contributed to the

undermining of tradition's authority. Tradition itself, in its most elementary form, is described by Pocock as,

> an indefinite series of repetitions of an action, which on each occasion is performed on the assumption that it has been performed before; its performance is authorised — though the nature of the authorisation may vary widely — by the knowledge, or the assumption of previous performance (In Giddens 1979: 200).

The isolation and encapsulation of tradition in specific phenomena or performances evinces its displacement by other phenomena and performances embodying social change. And, coupled with an increasing number of literate and critical individuals, it also exposes tradition to questioning, interpretation, and ultimately, selective maniupulation on a broad scale. What then Iinuma and Edo–period farm manualists actually advocate is not traditionalism, or, for that matter, antiquarianism, but rather a consciousness of tradition (nostalgia) organized to promote, guide, and authorize social change (See Giddens 1979: 199-201).

The Ghosts in the Texts

Japanese agricultural historians, Iinuma included, acknowledge the important influence of Chinese farm manuals in shaping the contours and contents of Japanese *nōsho*. *Nōgyō Zensho* (Encyclopedia of Farming, 1697), credited as being Japan's earliest commercially published farm manual, contains extensive borrowings from several Chinese *nōsho*, particularly Xu Guangchi's (1562-1633) *Nongsheng chuanshu* (A General Treatise on Agricultural Administration, 1639).[8] Xu's treatise was cited by numerous Japanese *nōsho* writers, who probably did not read the original but learned of it and other continental farm manuals from Japanese sources — namely, *Nōgyō Zensho*, itself a widely quoted and plagarized text.

Another direct literary antecedent of Edo-period *nōsho* are the herbology handbooks introduced to Japan from China during the Nara period (654–794) and possibly earlier. Access to these texts, however, remained the prerogative of the literary elite until the Edo period, when the rate of literacy increased throughout the population. Also the Japanese herbology texts written under continental influence were more or less limited to the nomenclature and description of medicinal herbs. Herbology texts continued to be published throughout the Edo period, and many farm manuals included chapters on medicinal herbs.

Among the Confucian literati, Kaibara Ekiken (1630–1714) was a pivotal figure in the development of the farm manual genre. In his two treatises, *Saifu* (Herb Taxonomy) and *Yamato Honzō* (Japanese Herbs),[9] Kaibara attempted to

synthesize the more pedantic, nomenclatural study of herbs with a detailed, purposeful exploration of the natural world. He abjured the elitist bias of herbology and wrote his two books with the education of farmers foremost in his mind. Kaibara was an early advocate of *Jitsugaku* (useful or practical learning), a mode of inquiry which gained especial cogency from the mid-Edo period onward and set the tone for *nōsho* rhetoric. *Jitsugaku* was predicated on an empirical conception of reality; one which was verifiable by actual things. Kaibara put his ideas to task by assisting Miyazaki Yasusada (1623–97) in the publication of the latter's *Nōgyō Zensho*. He wrote the preface, contracted with publishers on Miyazaki's behalf, and had his elder brother Rakuken (1625–1702) edit the entire text.

It seems that Kaibara introduced Miyazaki, a farmer of some means, to the Chinese *nōsho* from which he drew so heavily. While both men wrote for a rural audience whose livelihood they sought to improve, their approaches to agricultural reform were quite different. For Kaibara, agricultural research and farming were activities by which to improve oneself morally and benefit society (Okada 1979: 278–79). For Miyazaki, "the economic importance of agriculture both to the individual farmer and to the country as a whole" was a primary concern (Marti 1977–78: 60).

In a more synchronic vein, the *nōsho* genre may be regarded as the rural literary counterpart to the popular literature flourishing in Edo, Osaka, and Kyoto. Ihara Saikaku's (1642–1693) "ethnographic fiction" about the exploits of the buoyant townspeople was imbued with an economic realism. His were not only good stories, but they also contained pertinent information on effective business practices and procedures. The majority of *nōsho* available for our perusal were similarly reflexive texts, inasmuch as they reflected, and reflected upon, the social milieu from which they emerged and, in turn, mediated. Like Saikaku's edifying tales for townspeople, farm manuals often incorporated didactic tales designed to foster a constructive attitude toward farmwork and to boost the self-esteem of farmers.

The intertextuality of *nōsho* also resides in the dialogical mode of discourse employed by the authors. This textual strategy effectively revalorized and supplemented their empirical observations by engaging the readers or hearers, and the characters within the texts, in a creative interlocution with the various problems raised (cf. La Capra 1980: 250). This quite literally is demonstrated by *Nōgu Benriron* (A Discourse on the Utility of Farm Tools, 1824), wherein Ōkura Nagatsune asked his readers to submit illustrations of useful farm tools and equipment not included in his catalogue. He even provided the name and address of the Osaka bookseller to whom the pictures were to be sent (Ōkura 1977: 136).

The dialogical aspect of *nōsho* is manifested on several levels, and on more levels in some *nōsho* than in others. I have already noted how, through nostalgia, farm manualists conducted a dialogue between the past and the

present. Likewise, their comparisons and contrasts of farm and merchant households constituted a dialogue between the traditional and the modern, respectively. Konishi Atsuyoshi (1767–1837), a veteran farmer and Hirata school nativist, referred to agriculture as constituting a "natural labor," and declared that farm households were therefore free of the turbulent competition typifying merchant households (Konishi 1979: 371–72). Farm manual writers who were farmers pursuing a commercial sideline, such as Fuchizawa, tended to focus on the principle of occupational reciprocity. The dialogue between past and present, tradition and modernity, was conducted both within a given *nōsho* and across the genre as a whole.

The *nōsho* writers engaged each other in dialogues traversing texts and generations. An outstanding example of this variant of intertextuality was the mixed reception of *Nōgyō Zensho* among farm manualists. In fact, Miyazaki's text served subsequent writers as a sounding board, since by provoking criticism as well as praise, it helped to propagate a wide range of research and opinion on the subject of agriculture. Itō Masanari (1779–1868), an agriculturalist dedicated to village revitalization, informed his readers that some of the methods described in the six *nōsho* he had consulted, one of which was *Nōgyō Zensho*, were not applicable to northeastern agriculture. Thus, he presented in *Nōgyō Mōkun* (Beneficial Agricultural Teachings, 1840), only those techniques which his own field trials and observations confirmed as the most expedient and appropriate for Wakasa province (Itō 1978: 283). The Miyanagas, father and son, pointed out that since the Kyushu-born Miyazaki had no firsthand knowledge of cold-climate agriculture, he sometimes offered spurious advice (Miyanaga Shōkō 1979: 278-79; Miyanaga Shōun 1979: 25). And Ōkura Nagatsune, while praising Miyazaki in his many *nōsho*, was wont to note that the contents of *Nōgyō Zensho* were outdated, since so much had changed in the century since its publication. One of the most important functions of *Nōgyō Zensho* lay not in its advisory capacity, but in providing a framework and methodology which facilitated the compilation of subsequent farm manuals dealing with more timely and locally specific needs. The *nōsho* genre as a whole allowed agriculture-related issues to be raised and debated on a scale not otherwise possible.

Most farm manualists acknowledged the *nōsho* and other works they consulted in the course of writing their own texts. Between the two of them, the Miyanagas named and/or borrowed from at least sixteen Chinese texts (classics, *nōsho*, medical treatises, histories, herbology books, literary anthologies), and named, quoted, or paraphrased a half-dozen Chinese scholars, poets, and legendary figures, not to mention an even greater number of Japanese personages. The latter included provincial officials, emperors, *shōgun*, famous warriors, poets, and literati. They also quoted numerous Japanese works, including their own, and drew especially heavily from *Nōgyō Zensho*. Unlike this self-consciously erudite pair, most *nōsho* authors

acknowledged their sources not simply to display how well-read they were, but also to provoke their readers and peers into objectively comparing local methods, techniques, constructions, tools, administrative procedures, and lifestyles.

The practice of mentioning or discussing other farm manuals also helped to enhance the writers' authority and draw attention to the orginality of their inventions. The author of *Nōgyō Jitoku* (Farming for Self-Sufficiency),[10] Tamura Yoshishige (1790–1877), boasted that his invention of planting a reduced number of seedlings surpassed all others in efficacy. He underscored the originality of his method by pointing out that it was one which was either absent from, or mentioned only in passing in, the many farm manuals he had consulted in preparing his own (Tamura 1981: 24-25, 28-29).

Another level of intertextuality in the *nōsho* genre consists of the way agricultural historians today have attempted to group individual farm manuals into definitive categories. Collectively, their efforts constitute a recontextualization of *nōsho*, making generalizations about the genre and its individual members possible and productive. The meaning of farm manuals, in short, also exists within and between their assigned categories.

The divisions of authorship suggested by Furushima have been extended as types of *nōsho*: scholastic, bureaucratic, or journalistic. Miyoshi reviews several other *nōsho* categories. Farm manuals may be classified as either "Chinese-style," or "bureaucratic," or "Western-style," or "democratic" (1982: 29). They may be separated into three groups: *bakufu* or *han* administrative handbooks, household-centered chronicles augmented by each succeeding generation, or instructional manuals for a general readership (ibid.: 30). *Nōsho* may also be divided according to the circumstances of their publication and distribution: those which were woodblock-printed and widely distributed; those which were hand copied and distributed among a smaller number of readers; and those which were private manuscripts shared among consociates. These are by no means fixed divisions, for many originally private manuscripts were later published, often within the author's lifetime, and, contrarily, some *nōsho* written for a general readership remained unpublished for decades. Moreover, some farm manuals were pirated or reprinted on folding fans and sold as souvenirs (Kawana 1979: 85; Nagakura 1981: 274).

Regional characteristics offer another basis for *nōsho* classification. Did an author write about agriculture in advanced, backward, or in-between regions? These distinctions were made by the farm manual writers themselves. Ōkura, for one, often noted how comparatively advanced the western provinces were and that new agricultural techniques spread eastward from the west. Related to this division is one based on geographical scope. Was a *nōsho* based on the agricultural situation in a specific locale and written in response to local needs, or was it based on a comparative review in agricul-

tural practices throughout the country and offered as a general handbook? (Miyoshi 1982: 31). Farm manuals may be categorized by climate as well: handbooks for cold–weather agriculture versus those for warm–weather agriculture. Finally, classification may proceed on the basis of composition: there were *nōsho* consisting of a veteran farmer's experience and advice, those based on a writer's own fieldnotes, and texts which were compendia of methods and techniques used throughout Japan (*ibid.*). All of the above are not exclusive, but cross–cutting categories, each with a specific analytical function.

Individual farm manuals may be productively regarded, with respect to both intertextuality and coherence, as representing the manifold textual strategies possible within the *nōsho* genre. Each format — almanac, diary, travelogue, calendar, leaflet, household code, farm tool catalogue, memorandum, didactic treatise, fieldnotes, prose poem — constituted a distinctive, chosen mode of communication or discourse. Farm manualists, in my view, purposefully chose the mode within which to transcribe their fieldwork experiences and ideas depending on their intentions both in and for the text.[11] Their awareness of the independent importance of narrative design was not tacitly acknowledged but made explicitly problematic, for they considered the rhetorical possibilities of each mode before actually writing their texts. Take for example, *Kōsaku Sashinan Shugeika* (Verses on Expeditious Farming Techniques, 1837), which was written in *waka*, or thirty-one syllable verses. The author, the aforementioned Itō Masanari, gathered information about agricultural practices in Tanabe *han* from a village headman and transcribed them into what he modestly called "awkward *waka*." He and his acquaintances then circulated copies of the verses throughout villages in Tango province.

Itō claimed that the verses were intended to serve as a mnemonic learning device for his village readers and hearers. However, he confessed, since some of his ethnographic data could not be adapted to the *waka* format, he simply omitted them (in Itō 1978: 289). He wrote *Nōgyō Mōkun* three years later to supplement his earlier poetic effort, though he apologized in the afterword that it too was but a "jumble of poorly crafted phrases which an old friend urged me to publish" (*ibid.*). Itō was aware of the rhetorical possibilities of narrative design and the performative potential of the *waka* format. *Waka* offered a way of doing things with data and words that, more than any other format, facilitated thorough understanding on the part of farmers. By the same token, Itō's fidelity to *waka* took precedence over the completeness and comprehensiveness of his data. A three-way trade-off between form, substance, and intention governed the conception and execution of *Kōsaku Sashinan Shugeika*.[12]

The farm manualists consciously addressed the questions that all writers must answer: What shall I say? In what order? With what emphasis? What

shall I omit? What kind of language will give my choices form? In a farm manual *cum* agricultural calendar, an author focused almost exclusively on detailing daily/weekly/monthly/seasonal/annual chores and holiday activities. A *nōsho* composed as a household code contained information crucial to the security and continuity of a farm household. The applicability of this knowledge was not limited to the any one farm household, but was extendable to farm households at large. The published text, in short, was not an individual household's code so much as it was a code for farm households in general. The verisimilitude of such texts — Fuchizawa's *Yuigon*, for example — enhanced their evocative force by spinning an aura of self–sufficiency around the contents so that they could be attended to seriously as models for emulation (cf. Chaney 1979: 66).

The *nōsho* writers' intentions in and for their texts were complemented and clarified by their treatment of them. Thus, farm manuals designed for the benefit of provincial administrators were written in a scholarly *kanbun*, a stiff prose abounding with Chinese ideographs. *Kōsaku Kōdensho* (Memorandum on Farming, 1698) was one such *nōsho* compiled as an administrative reference book for use by local officials. The pithiness of the Chinese–style prose complemented the author's terse, point–by–point synopsis of the necessary procedures for rice cultivation in Tsugaru *han*. The author, Ichinoe Sadaemon, a low–ranking samurai, wrote this text in response to a succession of crop failures plaguing Tsugaru agriculture since 1692. He emphasized that "farmers must not be left to fend for themselves during periods of foul weather and crop failure," and that "village officials must use this present memorandum as a syllabus for farmer education" (Ichinoe 1983: 497-500).

Other *nōsho* were written in a colloquial language suitable for an untutored audience. Hirata Atsutane, who utilized farm manuals as a propaganda medium in his efforts to propagate grass–roots nativism, purposefully had his adopted son rewrite one *nōsho* in "rustic Japanese" when asked by the author for editorial assistance.[13] Ōkura Nagatsune made a point of writing in vernacular so that his works could be easily comprehended by his rural readers and hearers. In *Nōgu Benriron*, he called attention to his use of local terms for fertilizer, and asked his more erudite readers not to fault him for choosing idiomatic language over "difficult words" (Ōkura 1977: 136).

Aside from the importance of introducing efficient farm tools to farmers, the significance of *Nōgu Benriron* and other similar *nōsho* lies on yet another level. By paying attention to farm tools in the context of their proper usage — that is, as tools for farming and not as weapons wielded by rebellious peasants[14] — the farm manualists showed that farmers possessed a technical jargon and special equipment like any other profession. This very point was made by the Confucian scholar, Hirose Hidenari (1767–1829), in his introduction to *Nōgu Benriron*. Hirose compared Ōkura's catalogue to a book he once read on samurai weapons, and noted that just as that book introduced

progressive military equipment, so Ōkura's text was a compendium of beneficial agricultural tools and devices (in Ōkura 1977: 131). As dictionaries and encyclopedias of the agricultural profession, farm manuals helped to portray farmers and their work in a respectable light. The devices that farmers invented, constructed, and employed were evidence of their intelligence and ingenuity. Moreover, with respect to narrative structure, a greater or deeper textual coherence was achieved through the use of a colloquial language the same as that used by the people who figured as both the subject and object of *nōsho*.

If the more ethnographic farm manuals were descriptive records of, and models for, rural life, the illustrations accompanying many of them, some by well-known *ukiyoe* artists, were representations of the rural experience. *Nōsho* illustrations complemented, in an instructive and emulative capacity, the written narrative, and increased the concreteness, authority, and evocative force of a farm manual by clarifying what words alone were incapable of doing. Some *nōsho*, in fact, were published as pictorial broadsides. The block–printed illustrations were not only "worth a thousand words," so to speak, they more effectively informed readers of, among other things, the exact shape, dimensions, and proper use of a given farm tool; or the correct way to space transplanted rice seedlings; or the ideal farmhouse construction and placement for *shinden* settlements.

The illustrations themselves constituted a mode of cognition or knowing. They attested, in most cases, the authors' firsthand observations of agricultural life and communicated their understanding and interpretation of the rural experience. The physical mobility of the farm manualists — their fieldwork and participant–observer activities — contributed to the psychic mobility of their readers and hearers. *Nōsho* illustrations were not only utilized as visual or mnemonic aids, but constituted topoi in their own right. One exemplary farm manual in this respect is *Okumin Zue* (A Pictorial Ethnography of Rural Tsugaru, 1788–89), written and illustrated by Hirano Sadahiko (1738?–1806). The composition of this *nōsho* was provoked by the ruinous aftermath of a crop failure followed by peasant unrest. The *daimyō* of Tsugaru *han*, alarmed at the impoverishment and instability, undertook to revitalize village life and agriculture. One of his first steps was to dispatch Hirano on a fact–finding tour of the *han*. Hirano fastidiously recorded and sketched all that he observed of rural life: people, clothing, farmtools, draft animals, fishing gear, woodcutting techniques, vehicles, dwellings, festivals, and flora and fauna. He also drew up a glossary of local terms and a list of place names.

One of the first illustrated entries in *Okumin Zue* is titled, "Farmerette" (Figure 1).

> Women who wish to preserve their eyebrows on into their old age are often found with their heads wrapped in a *furoshiki* [scarf]. Although

Figure 1

> the scarf in the picture is a plain white one, dyed and patterned scarves are occasionally worn.
>
> This woman is wearing a quilted coat made of indigo–dyed hemp embroidered from the shoulders to the cuffs. A narrow sash is wrapped twice around her. This sash is known as an *obitana* ["belt-shelf"], as it is used for carrying infants piggy–back style. The woman is also wearing *monpe* [baggy pants] and is barefoot. In her right hand is an iron kettle filled with boiled tea, which she is taking to the paddies to drink with a lunch of fried rice.
>
> Hanging from her waistband is a flint and steel tool of ancient design used for starting fires. It is also used to light tobacco, smoked by both men and women, which is kept in the *tarako* [small pouch] hanging at her side. *Tarako* derives from *tarekomeru*, which means 'to hide inside [a bag] hanging from the hips.'
>
> A laughing child is clinging to her with one hand and waving with the other. Boys and girls alike wear the same kind of costume (Hirano 1977: 139–40).

More than the objective appearance of a certain Tsugaru farm woman is conveyed by the illustration and its caption. ("Caption" because the written portion comments on the picture, as opposed to the picture illustrating a point made in the narrative. The picture–as–topos convention is further evident here in Hirano's etymological aside on the *tarako*.) "Farmerette" was not a freehand sketch of a peasant woman, but a carefully crafted, idealized portrait of Tsugaru farm women and their way of life. Hirano's marvel, moreover, betrays his urban origins — he was born and raised in Edo before finding employment as a mounted policeman and foreman in Tsugaru. This and the other pictures in *Okumin Zue* provided Hirano's intended readers, the *han* officials, with a vicarious experience of the "ethnographic Other." Their curiosity notwithstanding, the more the administrators knew about the peasants, the better prepared they were to deal with them in the least antagonistic and most expedient way possible.

Conclusion

Farm manuals were at once products and providers of access to a wide range of knowledge, and their collective identity as a distinct genre cannot be denied. They were written on the basis of the author's own agricultural expertise, or that of veteran farmers, and incorporated information from other *nōsho*, past and present, as well. Farm manuals were made available to different audiences through several channels of distribution. The popularization of knowledge formerly the privilege of an elite readership was paralleled by the popularization of access to that knowledge. In addition to the coinci-

dent events already cited provoking the emergence of the *nōsho* genre, was the evolution of new reading and hearing audiences. Because potentional readers and hearers help "produce" specific types of writing, *nōsho* thus were conceived in a variety of literary formats. Just as the farm manualists, cognizant of a cultural mission, sought to shape the conduct of their particular audience, so audiences helped to shape the narrative structure and design of farm manuals. Any one *nōsho* was the product of a certain collaboration, for the text emerged from the interpersonal encounters comprising fieldwork as well as from the interlocutions between generations of writers and readers. Farm manuals were intended as models of and for agricultural life and their contents were meant to be taken seriously by administrators and the administrated alike. What Thornton has noted about narrative ethnography in Africa equally pertains to Edo-period *nōsho*.

> Through effective use of textual format (chapter and section headings, captions, lists and tables), vocabulary, appropriate resonances with other genres . . ., subtle metaphors and other rhetorical strategies, the textual discourse . . . effectively and convincingly fuse[d] the generalities of categories . . . with the particularities of perception (1983: 517).

I have not explicitly examined changes in the *nōsho* genre over the course of the Edo period, more for thematic and organizational reasons than for theoretical ones. Suffice it to say that the genre as a whole embodied change since individual authors wrote about different agricultural practices in different places at different times. This is not to say that a given farm manual is a "snapshot" of agricultural life somewhere: whatever patterns of, say, social interaction that appear in one or a category of *nōsho* are there because the authors have already examined such interactions over time in preparing their texts. Consequently, in the process of reading the available *nōsho*, I am in turn able to discover several "meta-patterns," or patterns within patterns.

One predominant meta-pattern is an increasing preoccupation with time control and a greater exactitude in timed routines. If we agree with Marx that the control of time as a scarce resource and its quantification are distinctive features in the formation of a capitalist economic order, then a thorough study of the definition and uses of time in *nōsho* should yield new insights into the nature and process of Japan's modernization. Like time, tradition also was perceived and exploited as a limited resource, as I have discussed.

The increasing sophistication and detail of work schedules compiled on the basis of crop cycles, household size, weather forecasts, and later, market activity, helped to liberate farm workers to some extent from the relentless rhythm of the natural world as well as market fluctuations. To anticipate and adjust to unfavorable (and favorable) conditions is one way of controlling them, in the sense of being prepared to deal with them. Theoretically, the

more artifice, the more control. As I have noted, artifice is the completion of *hatsumei–kufū*, an exercise in invention and discovery encouraged by farm manualists, whose overall attitude toward farmers became more respectful as the period wore on. Related to progress in time management and forecasting was an increase in the temporal and spatial depth of the planned future. *Nōsho* in general were written for posterity by authors who were cognizant of their role as historical agents, and served as a means of measuring a household's village's, or region's progress. An exemplary case in point is a farm manual written in 1829 and updated yearly through 1951 (See Satō 1982: 56). Finally, one blanket feature of *nōsho* was the absence of anti-technology rhetoric. While some authors may have questioned the factors and intentions motivating the development and use of new technologies, they did not categorically denounce them or doubt their potential.

Farm manualists did not write simply to explore problems but to discover solutions for them. Miyanaga Shōkō likened agriculture to setting out to sea in a tiny boat, faced with the danger of a sudden squall (1979: 272). The collective effort of the *nōsho* writers was to make that boat as seaworthy as possible.

NOTES

1. Two scholars writing in English who have examined farm manuals to some length are Thomas Smith (1959, 1970) and Jeffrey Marti (1977-78). Smith deals with *nōsho* in terms more narrowly defined than mine. He tends to dissociate the farm manualists from the social reform activities of their day, and maintains that they had no interest in religious or philosophical issues, as their sole concern was with "material problems" (1970:127). Smith refers to them collectively as "technologists," a term whose connotations — objective, rational, agnostic, scientific — support his thesis more than they accurately described Edo-period *nōsho* writers. Marti examines *nōsho* in discussing the changing attitudes toward agriculture, in theory and practice, from about 1700 onward. He focuses in particular on the moral (Confucian and Nativist) content of several farm manuals.

2. Several of the *nōsho* anthologies available are *Kinsei Chihō Keizai Shiryō*, *Nihon Nōsho Zenshū*, and *Tsuzoku Keizai Bunko*. The interested reader is directed to Satō Tsuneo's (1980, 1982) bibliography of Japanese farm manuals and *nōsho* bibliographies for further reference.

3. The Reforms were initiated during the Kyōhō period (1716–36) by the eighth *shōgun* Yoshimune (1648–1751), and constituted the *bakufu*'s first large-scale attempt to buttress the agrarian economy with a policy of financial retrenchment, price controls, and extensive land reclamation.

4. Shingaku, founded in 1729 by Ishida Baigan (1685–1744), had a highly visible profile in rural Japan and by the 1830s maintained nearly 140 colleges in thirty-four provinces, sixty–two of them in farm villages. *Sōmō no kokugaku* refers to the school of nativism established by Hirata Atsutane (1776–1843), who sought to propagate nativist thought throughout the countryside by dwelling on its more emotional, religious, and practical aspects. Sei(ri)gaku, founded by Ohara Yūgaku (1797–1858), was an agrarian reform movement which encouraged village autonomy and self-sufficiency. Finally, Hōtokukyō is the name of a village revitalization movement of a religio–economic nature founded by Ninomiya Sontoku (1787–1856), who was also an agricultural consultant. Members of these organizations either wrote farm manuals or collaborated with *nōsho* writers in an effort to popularize their teachings among rural peoples.

5. What I refer to as *Seiryōki* is actually the seventh volume of this twelve–volume work. It is titled *Shinmin Kagami Gesshū* (Agricultural Precepts for the Peasants) and deals exclusively with agricultural affairs.

6. Apart from peasant uprisings, Doi also feared the invasion of his territory by enemy soldiers, a threat that Edo–period farm manualists did not ponder.

7. The social hierarchy was characterized by status distinctions between the *shi* (samurai) on the one hand, and the *nō* (farmers), *kō* (artisans), and *shō* (merchants), in that order, on the other.

8. *Seiryōki* of course was written earlier but its readership was limited to Doi's circle.

The other Chinese manuals are: the Qin Dynasty *Lüshi chunqiu* (Lü's Spring and Autumn Annals), by Lü Xiawei; the Western Han *Si Shengzhi shu* (Si Shengzhi's Manual); the Eastern Han *Simin yueling* (The Four Classes and the Seasons), by Cui Shi; Gu Sixie's *Qimin yaoshu* (Essential Techniques for Farmers, 532-45); Chen Fu's *Nongshu* (Farm Manual, 1149); *Nongsang jiyao* (Essentials of Agriculture and Silk Production), decreed by Kublai Khan in 1273 and completed in 1286; and the Yuan Dynasty *Nongshu* (Farm Manual) written by Wang Zheng (Hara 1981:2-8).

9. *Saifu* was completed in 1704 and published in 1714, and *Yamato Honsō* was published in 1708.

10. This farm manual, edited by Hirata Atsutane, was written in 1841 and published about ten years later.

11. My distinction here is between an author's intentions *in* the text *cum* medium of instruction and those *for* the text *cum* vehicle of transmission.

12. Sase Yojiemon's (1630-1711) *Aizu Utanōsho* (Versified Aizu Farm Manual, 1703) is another case in point. Where Itō's *waka* version preceded his more conventional *nōsho*, Sase rendered an earlier farm manual into 1670 verses in an effort to make it more accessible to unschooled farmers (Sase 1982:9).

13. The farm manual in question is *Nōgyō Yowa* (Discussions on Agriculture, 1828) by the aforementioned Konishi Atsuyoshi. See also my article, "Sexy Rice: Plant Gender, Farm Manuals, and Grass-Roots Nativism," *Monumenta Nipponica* 39(3), 1984.

14. The *bitchū kuwa* (Bitchū spade), for example, was outlawed in some *han* for the reason that it was also used as a weapon by rebelling peasants (Horio 1977:154). This lightweight spade greatly simplified the task of preparing fields for planting, as its fork–like shape kept the muddy soil from clumping as it did on single–blade spades.

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