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Some Observations on the Lineage Groups in Japanese Villages

Yasushi Naka

Among the Japanese sociologists, there have been ever-lasting discussions on the lineage groups called *Maki* which are found in many rural villages. The discussions have been particularly concentrated on the constituent persons of the group: its ranges and variations, the relationships between the group and the family unit so called *Iye*, and the social functions of the group on the communal life in the rural villages. The central problems of the discussions, however, are to analyze the changing character and process of the group in the context of the rural village life.

The author of this paper has been studying several *Maki* groups of the rural villages in the central part of Japan, that is, the villages near Lake *Suwa*, *Nagano* prefecture. The paper consists of the following parts, the main purposes of which are to present the descriptive studies of recent several *Maki* groups and of their changing characters.

- 1) Introduction
- 2) The *Maki* groups in *Minami-majino-mura*
- 3) A *Maki* group in *Ôguma-mura*
- 4) A *Maki* group in *Kami-kaneko-mura*
- 5) Conclusion

Up to the present, the relationships between a head *Iye* and other *Iye* groups in a *Maki* group have been generally defined by the principle of domination and subordination because of the financial reasons existing among them. However, the author presents his new findings which he obtained through his research stated above and deals with these relationships from the point of view of the diversified conditions both inside and outside of the *Maki* group. He believes that the structure of *Maki* group is regulated by these conditions or dynamic relationships which have an important influence upon the formation and character of the group.