Education and Youth in Modern Japan: INOUE Yuijirō from the Hikata Region
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Ascertaining how the people believed and acted during the time when Japan was welcoming in the modern age is a major task. This paper focuses on the situation and living conditions in regional society as a means of gaining a true picture of this situation. To this end, it concentrates on those who at this time were to be the next generation, namely, the youth of the day. It also attempts to take a brief look at the correlation between regions and the center (Tokyo) in the process of investigating the actions of these youths.

More specifically, the object of this study is the Tosō region, a region that the author has researched in depth in the past. This research has involved research for "Ohara Yugaku to sono Shukhen (Ohara Yugaku and his Environs)" centered around KIMURA Motō, and research on temple schools and Japanese mathematics also undertaken around the same time. In particular, the focus of this study centers on Hikata-machi, Katori gun, in present-day Chiba Prefecture and on INOUE Yuijirō from Ooaza Manzai (formerly Manzai village).

At the time when INOUE Yuijirō was growing up, the regional structure was undergoing huge transformation as reforms were being implemented at the end of the Edo Period and drastic changes were taking place in people's sense of values. And all around him there were also various people actively engaged in the study of Neo-Confucianism and the Japanese classics.

INOUE was educated at home and in the neighboring town and with the objective of rebuilding and developing regional society by means of education he started out by devoting his energies to the opening, operation, and curriculum of a public elementary school. Once that school was on track he next turned his energies to establishing various kinds of schools that would serve as middle schools for the youth living in the region. He also promoted the starting of school-type study groups for ordinary villages, including those from the poorer social strata. While on the one hand he adopted a cautious attitude toward the educational policy of that time (in particular, educational control of the democratic movement), on the other hand he based his activities with a close eye on the situation in the region where he lived and was a young leader.

During this time INOUE also went to Tokyo to study and survey middle level educational institutions there. He also invited a young man from Keio Gijuku as a teaching staff.