

**A PEASANT SAGE OF
JAPAN; THE
LIFE AND WORK OF
SANTOKU NINOMIYA**

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A peasant sage of Japan; the life and work of Sontoku Ninomiya by Tadasu Yoshimoto

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TADASU YOSHIMOTO

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THE LIFE AND WORK OF SONTOKU
NINOMIYA

TRANSLATED FROM

THE HŌTOKUKI

BY

TADASU YOSHIMOTO

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1912

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Dedicated

TO

MY FATHER AND MOTHER

WITH A GRATEFUL HEART



AN APPRECIATION

SONTOKU NINOMIYA was born in Kayamamura in 1787 and died in 1856 at Imaichi. His life of seventy years was one of continuous fighting against the most disheartening circumstances, and of extraordinary self-sacrifice for the benefit of the people and in the service of his country.

Nature, not man, was his teacher. He grew up in the pretty village of Kayama, the sublime mountain Fuji-san towering in the distance, and the beautiful fields of Kozu spreading far and wide towards the sea. Hence one of his short poems ran :

" No sound, no scent,
Yet Heaven and Earth
Proclaiming always
Unwritten Sacred Laws."

The " Hōtokusha " is one of Sontoku's most important social organisations. It is a co-operative credit society founded with a high moral purpose ; and it was started about twenty

years before similar societies were formed by Schulze, Delitzsch, and Raiffeissen in Germany.

Sontoku worked during the last generation of the Feudal Period, one of the darkest times in the history of Japan, and the condition of the country called forth Sontoku's cry for Sincerity, Industry, Economy, and Service, and his remarkable life of self-sacrifice.

KOSUKE TOMEOKA,

Hon. Sec. of the Hotoku Society.