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The Organic Agriculture Movement (Teikei) and Factors Leading to its Decline in Japan

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日本における有機農業運動の展開過程と産消提携の停滞要因

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Abstract

Teikei is the Japanese version of a worldwide movement known as Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). Teikei is a relationship where both consumers and producers can directly interface with each other in a co-partnership of shared responsibility and values. In Japan today, there is generally among consumers a poor understanding as to what constitutes an organic market. With this backdrop, Teikei is not expanding the movement and is even facing stagnation and decline. As Teikei stagnates, the odd phenomenon is that simultaneously the organic market is growing as various businesses enter the organic market. So why is Teikei not able to capitalize on this expanding organic market?

Government certification through Japanese Agriculture Standards (JAS) has actually resulted in a reduction in the number of former organic farmers. This combined with changes in society, has led to an overall stagnation of the Teikei movement. Present social conditions have greatly undermined people's willingness to get involved with Teikei. Women have entered the workforce in large numbers and this has undercut Teikei's primary source of volunteer service. In general, people are too busy these days and tend to avoid collective tasks that are necessary in Teikei. With circumstances like these, it has proven difficult for Teikei to replace turnover in the organization and expand its mission. Teikei is also burdened by internal problems such as periodic over-production, with a tendency to dump the excess produce on customers. In addition, the volunteer duties of running the organization often prove wearisome and difficult for many members. All these factors provide disincentives for Teikei's expansion.

Teikei must adapt to the growing competition in the organic market. Large producers and distributors are entering the market and this is pushing Teikei to re-evaluate its role in the market or face being marginalized. These new businesses focus on providing organics without requiring the consumer to join an organization and fulfill certain work requirements. Even farmers have sought out alternative marketing avenues outside of Teikei, thus again, freeing the consumer from having to be involved in a task-based organization.

要約

産消提携は、消費者と生産者の双方が責任と価値観の共有によって結びついている関係性であり、CSAとして知られている世界的な運動の日本版である。今日の日本では、様々なビジネスが参入する

ことで有機農産物市場が拡大している一方で、産消提携は、停滞と衰退に直面している状況である。産消提携は、なぜこの拡大する有機農産物市場に適合することができないのであろうか？

有機 JAS の施行は、一定の有機認定農家を創出したが従来の有機農家の数の減少をもたらした。このことは、社会における変化とあいまって、産消提携運動の総体的な停滞につながる事となった。近年の社会状況の変化は提携に参加する人々の意欲を阻害する方向に働いた。女性の社会進出は提携を支えてきたボランティアサービスを困難にし、共同購入などの協働作業を避ける傾向を広げることとなった。また、提携の原則からもたらされる生産過剰などの構造的な問題も参加者に消耗をもたらした。これらの要素が産消提携の阻害要因となって現れている。

有機農産物市場の拡大とビジネス化によって消費者の便宜は増加する一方で、国内の地域環境と有機農業を守る方法として産消提携はその役割を増している。提携の将来は、今日の困難にどう適応するか、食・環境の安全問題と様々な社会問題との関わりをいかに保つかに係っている。

Key Words organics (有機農産物、オーガニック産品) Teikei (産消提携：CSAのプロトタイプ)
organic markets (有機農産物市場、オーガニック産品市場)

1. The Present State of the Consumer-Producer Partnership (Teikei)

As the model of “community supported agriculture” spread in America, this concept was re-introduced to Japan through an Environmental White Paper published in 1999, from which the local governments in Japan began to consider this idea for the first time. Notwithstanding this introduction in 1999 to Japan, it has been widely acknowledged among parties involved, that originally CSA stemmed from a partnership between consumers and producers in Japan. In fact, at least one researcher in the U.S. has confirmed that Teikei in Japan was first introduced into Switzerland, and then after expanding there, it was brought into other parts of Europe and the US.¹⁾ With Teikei spreading to different regions, it should be understood as a movement emerging spontaneously in accordance with the necessities of each region.

Ironically, Teikei in its home country of Japan has been stagnant or declining for years, while conversely, the number of companies dealing in organics has been increasing, and in line with this, there has been an increase in consumer interest in organics. In other words, a decrease in the number of participants in Teikei has not reduced market interest in organics, as evidenced by the growth seen in the organic distribution system as well as its further diversification outside of traditional “safe-food market.” The current movement for local production and local consumption is a part of this diversification process, and it has indirectly influenced Teikei by calling for a reconsideration of the traditional consumer-producer relationship within Teikei. It is still unclear however, as to whether this local production-consumption movement can become a viable business model that significantly expands the distribution of organic agricultural products.

The crucial difference between distribution, in the general market and the Teikei market, is that the consumer's face in the general market remains unseen by the farmer. On the other hand, as markets include consumption, Teikei has purposefully created a market where consumers could interface with producers. Yet in Japan today, there is generally among consumers a poor understanding of what constitutes an organic market, instead there is

a sort of limited healthy-food markets or safe-food markets. These safe-food markets are only for the occasional consumption of organics, which add variety to home cooking and give consumers more selection. However, they do not guarantee everyday availability of organics - as provided to Teikei participants. These non-Teikei safe-food markets support the present model of organic farming in Japan.

Under the present circumstances, What are the challenges with which Teikei as a movement is faced now? If one compares the stagnation of the Teikei “movement” with the current attention given to organics by corporate interests, one can better understand the problems with which Teikei is faced. In the present environment, large companies have entered into agricultural production and it is evident that these businesses want organic farming to be a category somewhat distinct from conventional farming. Furthermore, since the rate of home cooking is declining and that of dining-out and taking-out is increasing, it seems likely that consumers would welcome the participation of the distribution industry and the food-service industry into the organic market. However it remains uncertain, as to whether the food-service industry can create successful organic businesses.

How do the following circumstances affect Teikei and how do they relate to each other: international influences from abroad, the movement for local production and consumption, trends in organic business, internal factors particular to Teikei, and an examination as to whether recent concerns over food safety and the environment can push Teikei forward?

2. Present Conditions and Problems in Teikei

After the enforcement of the Japanese Agricultural Standards for organics (JAS), the number of certified organic producers and the size of the domestic market became clearer. In March of 2004, before the implementation of organics JAS, organic farmers numbered approximately 10,000. Afterwards, the actual number of certified organic farmers accounted for only about 4,000 - according to statistics of JMAFF (The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan). However, when calculated, the official monthly number of certified organic farmers actually goes below 3,000 (as certification requires annually renewal). 2) It should be noted that this number only represents certified organic farmers, as it is widely known that a substantial number of producers in Teikei continue organic farming on their own - without JSA certification.

Teikei has traditionally supported organic farmers, and currently they face certain difficulties, as illustrated by Table 1, which shows changes in the number of Teikei participants in the famous organic farming region of Hyogo, Japan. Moreover, although members are increasing in number in the Hyogo organic agriculture association to which many of Teikei organizations in Hyogo prefecture belong so that it may see in a Table 1, this is based on the increase in farmers.

Consumers believed that it would be easier to get organics after the implementation of JAS organic standards, but findings revealed fewer organic vegetables on some shop shelves. 3) The primary reasons for the decline in Teikei participation entail various internal and external factors, such as changes in Teikei’s participants, changes of the larger organic market, and changes in the society as a whole. These factors have led to a reduction in the number of Teikei participants - even as channels for distribution of organics have increased.

Today, activities such as collective-direct-purchasing (which entails joint tasks and cooperation among members) have stagnated and many organizations such as labor unions, co-ops, and university student self-governing associations, have withered as membership numbers have declined. In contrast, less rigid organizations such as environmental protection groups, welfare-related NPOs, and other similar groups, which do not require rigid organizational rules, are more open to free participation on the simple basis of one's values, volition and availability.

Table 1 Changes in the number of Teikei participants Unit: Person (household)

Teikei groups	Year of establishment	Maximum number of participants (or number of participants at start) →1996→2004→2007
Consumer groups		
Group A	1974	1300→450→350→240
Group B	1976	500→340→235→160
Group C	1976	900→500→300→200
Group D	1980	530→280→180→140
Group E	1983	280→150→130→80
Group F	1986	250→200→not collected
Organic distributors with membership system		
A	1990	200→1200→1620→1680
B	1994	300→700→dissolved
Hyogo Organic Agriculture Association.	registered as NPO in 2001	groups : individuals (2001) 30 : 60 (2004) 54 : 177 (2007) 85 : 220

Sources: Brochure of the Hyogo Organic Agriculture Association and interviews done by the author

The notion that obstacles manifest more from the inside than from the outside may contain considerable political nuance in this case. 4) In order to understand Teikei's internal operation, it is necessary to examine aspects related to the participants in Teikei, as well as Teikei's internal dynamic. These include: living habits and lifestyles of members, different uses of time, a general social avoidance of collective tasks, and problems of turnover and replacement of longstanding members within Teikei (as these are the people most able to identify and influence the future direction for Teikei's).

3. Motivation and Direction of Teikei Movement since 1970s

(1) Birth of the consumers outside of the general market

In the early 1970s, some consumers found that general markets did not provide organic products even in spite of demand. At the same time, consumers realized substantial inconsistencies between the real value of organic produce and their market price; furthermore, they realized a lack of the appropriate standards for assessing the value of these organic produce. In general market, quality is assessed by appearance only, and since organics incline to have less than perfect appearance, their superior nutritional value and better taste is not properly appraised. Accordingly, appearance has been accepted as the only determinant of value for farm products at the point of sale in the general market, and this asymmetry of value can only be resolved at the store itself. Thus, as consumers become better informed they would realize value beyond mere the appearance and begin to understand that conventional farming methods lead to inferior products.

The general market often excludes products of limited quantity, and these items are then distributed via direct purchase or direct marketing. Establishing these direct connections with consumers (sanchoku) has been crucial for organic producers, but the “direct marketing” concept may incline people to think they are getting lower pricing via the elimination of the intermediaries during distribution. Yet, lower pricing has never been a central pillar of Teikei. Rather connecting farmers and consumers who share common values has been the priority. In Contrast with this approach, conventional co-ops and farmers’ cooperatives (Seikyo and Nokyo) hesitated to use the Teikei expression of “co-partnership” for their direct marketing schemes in the early days, since their organizing principle was about lower prices.

(2) Tracing the development of producers and consumers

As stated previously, the organic farming movement started and developed as a consumer-farmer co-partnership (Teikei), with natural food shops in many localities, also supported the movement. Besides these outlets for organic products, small publishers such as JICC (at that time), Hakuju-sha, Aki-shobo, and San-ichi-shobo advocated organic farming and alternative life-styles by providing like-minded publications. Grassroots political actions also helped the organic movement grow, as in the case of the farmers of Sanrizuka, they came to adopt organic farming methods during their struggle.

One can observe several Teikei developmental periods commencing in the 1970s, when farmers in Takahata, Yamagata Prefecture, Ichijima (today’s Tanba City in Hyogo Prefecture), and Miyoshi in Chiba Prefecture, started their action by meeting with consumer groups. These meetings ultimately led to Teikei’s management style of today. The second period began in the 1980s when consumer groups, seeking organic products, spread from big cities towards smaller cities, and the Teikei movement grew by linking these new consumer groups with farmers. Later, Teikei underwent another period of expansion, development, and diversification, as each Teikei adopted a management system and the structure suited to their growth and locality. Table 2 tracks Teikei’s developmental stages by tracing historical archives of the Japanese Organic Agriculture Institute’s Soil and Health Magazine - which played a prominent role in the Teikei movement.

The description column of Table 2 notes two separate developmental approaches, one is direct marketing aimed at eliminating intermediaries and lowering prices for consumers, another is Teikei, which sought to support organic

farmers and expand the movement. The later entries describe Teikei's further diversification in the 1990s and current orientation towards organic business, while still adhering to the principles of Teikei.

Table 2 Development of Teikei movement

Description	Author or Title, References
Organic Agriculture movement is a civil movement	Yasuda, S. (1975) Food and Health (Tabemono to Kenko), Vol.32, Nihon Yuki Nogyo Kenkyukai:p.28
Organizational co-partnership between producers and consumers	Yasuda, S. (1978) Soil and Health (Tsuchi to Kenko), Vol.65, Nihon Yuki Nogyo Kenkyukai, p.5
Ten principles for Teikei	Nihon Yuki Nogyo Kenkyukai(1978)The 4th National Meeting for Organic Farming.
The way of Teikei: between producers and consumers	Nihon Yuki Nogyo Kenkyukai(1981)Soil and Health (Tsuchi to Kenko), Vol.111: the Last Page "Material for Seminar"
There is no perfect Teikei, but many are following the guiding principles	Ichiraku, T. and Amano, K (1986) Soil and Health (Tsuchi to Kenko), Vol.169:p.20
Shifting the focus of the movement towards consumers	Ichiraku, T. (1987)Soil and Health (Tsuchi to Kenko), Vol.169:p.20
My consumer-producer co-partnership Teikei (stable price and supply)	Ohira, H. (1988) in Soil and Health (Tsuchi to Kenko), Vol.195: p.17
Considerations in the tendency of over-production	Subcommittee Meeting Bulletin, Soil and Health (Tsuchi to Kenko), Vol.203:p.24
Organic farming boom: Crisis of Teikei?	Suga, S. Soil and Health (Tsuchi to Kenko), Vol.208:p.1
Movements based on collective purchase are facing difficulties	Tsuchida, T. (1996) Soil and Health (Tsuchi to Kenko), Vol.279:p.10
Need for revising principles of Teikei	Kubokawa, M. (1996) Soil and Health (Tsuchi to Kenko), Vol.282:p.1
Teikei and Standards	A Word to JOAA, Soil and Health (Tsuchi to Kenko), Vol.297:p.9
Has the revision of JAS legislation and a supplementary decision "to give special consideration to Teikei" been put into practice?	Honjo, N., Kubota, H. and Yokota, S. (2000) Soil and Health (Tsuchi to Kenko), Vol.324:p.30

During the developmental period of the thirty years, interval factors in Teikei have led to unresolved problems that still to this day have created dissatisfaction in both farmers and consumers. Such difficulties were evident in the 1980s as overproduction became a natural result of stable prices and fixed contracts, and this overproduction will continue to be a challenge for Teikei's future.

4. Internal Problems of Teikei

(1) Reconsideration of face-to-face relations

Though the expression of “relations based on visible faces” is now well established in the general market, Teikei has never advocated this “visible face” concept. Rather, Teikei supports authentic face-to-face relationships, and merely putting pictures of producers on shop shelves for direct selling is not sufficient. The original meaning of such face-to-face relationships was to confirm mutually the supply and the receipt of products, and the existence of the farmer and the consumer.

It may be a too narrow-minded to think that people cannot trust one another simply because they have never met and are not acquainted with. Is it not impossible for producers and consumers to trust each other even if they have never met? Certainly, they can create confidence in their unknown counterparts by exchanging information through network-systems, since contracts have long been established between farmers and consumers. Alternatively, one may trust a certain distributor by a reputation for handling high quality products. Presently, there are various means to assure safety without directly knowing the other party. Can a reduction in consumer assistance on farms and knowledge of farming practices, be offset through increased diversification of agricultural awareness through other means? Can the diffusion of such awareness by these other means be called a movement?

Producers and consumers are portrayed in Teikei as having “trusted relations for life”. In practice however, organic consumers have freedom of choice to find products from anywhere when there are shortages. On the other hand, though some organic farmers have several marketing options, most do not have contracts with the general market, as their produce is not suited to that market. Thus, the relations between the organic farmer and the organic consumer are asymmetric.

Since consumers have freedom of choice, it is all the more important that they make concerted effort to study the consumer movement: to physical assist in farm work, to assist in distribution, to campaign for enlightening consumers and so on. On the other hand, have producers conducted activities, for instance in their villages, for the Teikei movement? It seems likely that, in order to protect their own sales, they might have made only half-hearted efforts encouraging and welcoming new farmers into the system. In other ways, the lack of study by farmers compared to that of consumers reflects in the lower use of natural soaps (instead of synthetic detergents) among farmers. These examples exposes lack of effort by farmers, since production volume is dependent solely upon consumer demand there has actually been a tendency among many farmers to limit their efforts to production only, and not on the overall development of Teikei.

The original function of organic farming and agriculture in general is not only the production and supply of food, but also the preservation of healthy environment. In order to make the organic market function properly, besides just supplying products, it is essential for the organic movement to find a relationship in which both consumers and farmers can foster healthy environment. If farmers and consumers can maintain their face-to-face relationship it is good, but the form of the relationship can be displayed in diverse ways, as the essence of Teikei

is not defined by the continuity of any particular model. As recipients of the environment, consumers and producers stand on the same ground and share a mutual foundation and mutual goals, yet this truly mutual and equal relationship cannot be attained when farmers merely supply products and consumers simply purchase them.

As to the size of Teikei groups, there is a principle to avoid large-scale units. However, Teikei has never actually clarified what constitutes appropriate size and what specific dimensions should be avoided. Similarly, there has been no discussion on what consumer-producer proportions would best facilitate smooth management. Furthermore, as a movement that fundamentally envisages expansion, it has avoided discussing to what extent purchasing power should be concentrated to support production.

Furthermore, consumers are constantly complaining that their duties are too demanding. Most of these complaints are concerned with distribution tasks, such as the obligatory work of sorting and distribution after delivery. The aim of collective purchasing is not to assemble for the task of distribution, but rather to centralize purchasing power.

(2) Problems on Pricing and Adjustment of Quantity

Teikei has long tried to find the best possible way to trade organic produce and sustain organic farming, and largely owing to the difficulties of organic farming consumers were asked to accept the wishes of the producers. Accordingly, many Teikei groups were inclined to give producers precedence over consumers in the management scheme. This is evident in the expectation that consumers will accept whatever the farmers produce and deliver. 5) To what extent is this kind of agreement different from a straight cultivation contract? Is the consumer's acceptance of all farm produce a mere contract for reserving produce or is it the minimum necessary condition for realizing Teikei?

Essentially, markets have the ability to set prices and organizations determine quantity. Accordingly, the cultivation plan and the purchase of all farm produce by consumers were originally intended to create proper quantity to secure the farmer's income. Yet in spite of these efforts, excess supply became problematic for many Teikei groups from the early days because fixed prices and the promise of the consumers to purchase the entire harvest resulted in the farmer planting as much as the contracts could bear - ultimately too much. Hence, Teikei failed to implement quantity controls.

Though consumers agreed to purchase all produce that were grown by the farmers, this agreement was not solely for the benefit or convenience of the farmer, it also helped to maintain the integrity of the organic farmland. Fixed prices were meant to be a reward for the farmer. Yet, if prices were fixed to compensate for the difficulties posed by organic farming, why should customers receive quantities well beyond their ability to consume them? Consequently, adjustments for quantity were made at the consumer's table - namely, in their stomachs. If prices were adjusted upward to offset for losses caused by organic farming, then it seems unreasonable and even immoral that organic harvests are often more bountiful than non-organic harvests. Was the maximum supply option selected by discontented farmers as a means to secure more income, when previously they had not received sufficient compensation with a pricing mechanism that failed to take into account the extra costs of

organic farming? Such basic contractual difficulties remain in the areas of: fixed prices, the acceptance of all farm produce by consumers, the farmer's decision of what and how much to grow, and what to pack for delivery. As a result, contracts have often failed to meet a producer consumer balance in Teikei's thirty-year history.

All Teikei groups have certain vegetables that symbolize the overproduction problem from the early days, and these difficulties typify Teikei's co-partnership. The following types of complaints abound; "I don't want to see any more green peppers" and "I have already complained that delivery of eggplants beyond 2 kilograms a week shouldn't continue for more than three straight weeks". The cause of the ongoing dissatisfaction between farmers and consumers lies in such purchase agreements, and in concerns over the quantity of products.

However, when a cultivation plan is agreed by both sides, the customers should purchase whatever the farmers produce, but that cultivation should be done in accordance with a quantity with which the consumers can consume. Sometimes harvests fluctuate due to climate or other unavoidable reasons, still, should there not be a limit to the quantity of produce that customers are expected to accept. Plentiful harvests are a satisfying reward for farmers, but this reward should not be at the expense of consumers. When consumers are in search of organics for health, it may seem rational to advise them to eat more vegetables, but it is unreasonable to force consumers to accept abundance in the name of Teikei co-partnership.

In order to find a solution to these problems it is necessary to focus on and secure the farmer's income, rather than dealing with issues of price. As such, it is not reasonable for farmers to deliver their produce because fixed prices secure their own income. Furthermore, an additional solution to this dilemma may be found in Mie, Japan, where Teikei is based on a relationship between farmers and individual consumers where a great deal of produce is discarded at the stage of packing. In this case, the farmer's income is assured by fixed monthly payments from consumers. By de-coupling the relationship between production and income, the producers can dispose of overproduction via compost. This example of moderating supply to meet the receptive capacity of consumers is a viable option. On the other hand, it is problematic if only farmers or customers are expected to carry the burden of over-production. This example may appear too selective to make a broad judgment of the Teikei movement, yet many customers of Teikei have pointed out this over-supply problem and one rarely hears the experiences of those who have fortunately overcome this problem. In summary, it can be said that the Teikei movement has failed in the adjustment of quantity, even while it has succeeded in organizing groups.

In general, contract cultivation means a monopolized transaction between producers and mass procurement enterprises, whose primary aim is not to buy cheaply through bulk purchases, but rather to ensure stable supply and procurement. Teikei has not enabled stable supply without a big fluctuation (especially increase) in quantity, while it realized the stability in price.

(3) Management Problems of Teikei Groups

The issue of falling into stagnancy due to the difficulties of managing maintenance costs is a serious concern for Teikei groups. Originally, Teikei embraced the concept of voluntary service, and there surely exist members now, who likewise wish not to receive financial compensation for their services, and oppose the idea of providing

compensation for services rendered. However, even when all services are given without payment, some office operating expenses are still unavoidable. As organizations grow, the costs increase with the hiring of full-time staff, office rental space and other services. With these kinds of expenses, it is difficult to manage Teikei's finances when revenues are based solely on a small markup on the fresh produce. In organic for-profit delivery companies, fresh produce like vegetables, fruits and eggs accounts for only 30 percent of total sales. Likewise, natural food shops do not rely on fresh produce for the majority of their income. Instead, they rely on non-food products, as well as other perishable foods and processed foods for the bulk of their sales.

One well-managed enterprise is a natural food shop named Gaia in Tokyo, which uses soap sales as its fundamental business. Another is a shop for non-additive foods called Rin-nesha in the suburbs of Nagoya City, which bases its business on the production and sales of mosquito coils. Notwithstanding these examples, many Teikei groups maintain their management and pay expenses with a business model focused mostly on fresh produce. This is a very encouraging sign. Yet, one can presume that on the management side of things, there are many difficulties and constraints for these groups.

There are some cases where farmers have taken initiative to help consumers, but generally, Teikei is a consumer movement, and farmers are rather minor players. As mentioned previously, the usage of natural soaps by farmers remains rather low. This potentially reflects on their lack of awareness or concern for environmental issues. In order for them to give more support to consumers, it would be helpful for them to reconsider the shared environmental values of Teikei. If they do this, they would consider purchasing products from Teikei distribution groups, and this would not only show understanding of shared environmental values but would assist the Teikei consumer groups with their financial obligations.

5. Stagnation Factors in the Teikei Movement

(1) Change in the social environment

1) Few participants in Teikei

When a movement stagnates, participants lament and often say, "Things have changed" (society, the times, people) and "The present is not the past". Stagnation occurs not only in the Teikei movement but also in organizations and collective groups in general, and this trend is most evident in the disappearance of student movements. Previously, student movements had evolved into other local activities, such as the organic movement, but with the disappearance of student movements, fewer people have gotten involved in Teikei and in other social movements as well. This low ebb represents the present state of affairs in social movements.

2) Consumer paralysis (seikatsusha)

Regular habitual consumption of similar foods reflects a lack of ability to use knowledge in practice and exhibits a low level of skills for living. In other words, many people find it difficult to utilize seasonal produce in their eating habits, and thus demand the same foodstuffs all year around. It is understood that such habits do not suit Teikei, which naturally provides seasonal foods. Furthermore, people are less likely to carefully examine the ingredients in their food or understand its nutritional contents and quality.

3) Emergence of the organic market

The Teikei movement provided a means for discriminating consumers to obtain organics that had not been readily available in market. Emergence of companies specialized in distributing organic products realized consumption behaviors to wait for being supplied some just by expressing their will. They focused on the needs of consumers, freeing them from having to join or work in a volunteer consumer group. In addition to these Teikei groups and distribution businesses, there began to appear producers who could work independently from the Teikei organization, by such as means of direct selling through the internet or by selling to distribution businesses. This trend was particularly noteworthy among certified organic farmers after the establishment of JAS organic legislation. Such trend was particularly observed among certified organic farmers after the establishment of JAS organic legislation. One can understand this as initiative from producers to consumers, not the other way around as traditionally in Teikei.

(2) Rigidity in the Teikei movement

As the times change, individuals, as well as organizations, must adapt to new circumstances in order to sustain themselves, and naturally, these bodies are destined to disappear when their desired goals have been achieved. Yet in agriculture, society has not reached the stage where it is practiced soundly, and hence, the significance of the organic movement has not diminished. If the movement is recognized as significant, it becomes imperative to adapt and evolve to the changing environment. Furthermore, if conventional organization activities of the past are not suited for today, new models are required, which can offer new modes of participation for individuals.

One problem for Teikei is its inability to implement internal reform and adapt to new surroundings. Notwithstanding the various factors that have made Teikei what it is today, it is clear that Teikei has failed to assimilate in the younger generation and train them to continue the work. Notwithstanding the lack of integration of the younger generation in each group, creation of new groups and co-partnerships should naturally lead to the revitalization and alternation of generations in the movement as a whole. Then it was expected that increase in the number of groups by split and independence as well as the emergence of new objectives such as workers' collective. In the 1980s, there was much debate as to the future direction of the Teikei movement and some groups split up because of these differing opinions. It seems that this spirit of discussion and vision is lacking today.

In contrast with the stagnating Teikei movement or student movements today, some social movements, like environmental and welfare NPOs, seem to be growing and quite active these days. When Teikei serves the organic market, there are many obstacles to overcome in production and distribution. Accordingly, Teikei's management has struggled with these difficulties, while focusing mostly on the health benefits of the movement. If Teikei had stronger relationships with NPOs, as the word "Teikei" implies (co-partnership), perhaps it could have developed other possibilities.

From the beginning, Teikei participants were required to involve themselves in the tasks of running the organization, such as: clerical work, sorting, day-to-day distribution, and physical assistance on farms (though

fortunately this original work requirement has been re-oriented towards a useful educational experience on farms). Physical assistance is not easy for some, especially for the aged, who find it difficult even to come to the gathering point to deliver their food. Furthermore, double-income families and child rearing couples find it difficult to join Teikei. These problems have gradually been acknowledged in Teikei, as the number of consumers with these difficulties increase. Is it possible to hire full-time staff and outsource a part of work as a solution to these obstacles?

(3) Gender specific activities

Nowadays it is increasingly difficult for individuals to volunteer for work that requires shared tasks. For example, housewives had been the driving force for the Teikei movement, but now as an increasing number of them join the labor market they have less time to volunteer in such organizations. To maintain the essence of Teikei it is necessary for consumers and farmers to connect personally through various shared activities. These shared activities are also evident in other groups, such as agricultural and consumer co-operatives, and labor unions. In Teikei, these shared activities are mostly done by housewives, and the present difficulty is that housewives are less available to participate in Teikei. Has Teikei failed to find ways to keep housewives involved in the organization in light of this reduced availability? Is Teikei indeed capable of adjusting to these changing circumstances and taking the necessary steps to get more people involved?

Women's participation in the work force is often cited as the reason for the decline in these women-driven activities. Yet what is actually taking place is that women are entering the workforce without the social systems necessary to support their participation. With this lack of support, women's participation is stretched even further. As the number of women involved in Teikei decline, it cannot be denied that Teikei is stuck in old patterns and not able to rethink its management system.

Externalization of housewives' labor has brought women into the male workplace and this has obstructed the essential activities for the continuance and survival of Teikei. Unpaid work, delivery of organic produce at fixed times, and physical assistance with farm work, have all become problematic as housewives have entered the workforce and are unavailable to do these activities. As mentioned previously, time availability is not a problem unique to Teikei, but since Teikei is still primarily female driven, this may indicate that Teikei has not adapted to current realities.

Despite the leading role of women in Teikei, Teikei groups have failed to support the wider participation of women in society - much like many organizations in Japan. How can Teikei evolve without its present dependence on housewives? In this regard, experiences from several Teikei groups that have paid to staff should be investigated as possible models to be adopted by other groups - with the option of even becoming NPOs. To strengthen the future of Teikei, paid staff may well be necessary.

6. Conclusion

It is generally said that Japan has experienced three dividable organic food booms, but through these

occasionally booms additional organic farmers have not been brought into production. Some might have thought that these organic booms were the outcome of an ongoing organic farming movement, but in reality, it seems likely that such booms have merely been business opportunities for organic production and supply, rather than for promoting a society where organic farming is an integral part of society. As a result, after each boom the organic farming movement has been weakened.

In the 1980s, when the campaign against nuclear power had captured the public's attention, the participants of the anti-nuclear movement found common ground with the organic agriculture movement, and from here, the organic farming movement grew to take on a leading role in social movements. However, as shown by table 1, the decline of the organic movement started in the late 1990s when a series of international organic standards were enacted, and this made it difficult to sustain and create the unique relationships within Teikei, which previously used human trust in place of global standards. Furthermore, the supply of organic products today relies much on a new breed of producers, and this began the transformation from "a organic farmer" to "a organic supplier".

When stock companies for organic distribution first emerged, it was thought that such profit-oriented enterprises could never be distributors for Teikei. Yet if consumers own the stock and the companies search for good quality and stable supply, rather than focusing on dividends, the structure of the company is not necessary an impediment for organic farming. This is proven by the fact that the majority of distribution is presently taking this form. It is often said that, "it is only in actual practice that Teikei can be maintained". However, if the necessary conditions for carrying Teikei forward have been lost, and the present conditions become obstacles, a new form of Teikei must emerge, which offers diverse opportunities for individuals to join the movement.

Notes

- 1 [1]Toshio Oyama (2003): p.3. Through investigation, the author notes a cooperative system in Switzerland, built with consumer support that aims to support farms through a vegetable reservation system.
- 2) The statistics of the MAFF indicate the number of domestic farmers through accumulated annually registered numbers, and past numerical values are changed when applications of discontinuance are accepted at the time of renewal.
- 3) It is reported that in Okayama Prefecture, which is a pioneer in the field of self-regulation of organic produce, the former movement has rapidly decreased after the enforcement of JAS legislation. Akio Yamamoto (2003) "Programmes on organic and non-pesticide farming in Okayama Prefecture" in the Japanese Journal of Farm Management (Nougyokeiei Kenkyu), Vol. 30(4): pp.64-67.
- 4) [3] Motono. I. (1993):p.33.
- 5) This is a system not based on consumers' orders but rather on farm produce available at the time of harvest. The contents of the deliveries are decided upon by the producer(s), and the consumers accept them. A similar form can be seen in the CSA box scheme in England and the vegetable pre-order system (Vegetable Abo) in Germany and Switzerland.

Reference

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