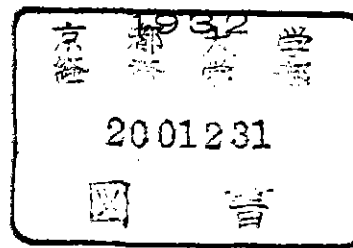


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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STUDY OF ECONOMIC HISTORY IN JAPAN

1. INTRODUCTION

The histories which we have hitherto had are histories of politics, of diplomacy, of wars, or histories in which the lives of great men are predominant. Not much importance was formerly attached to the historical study of economic facts. Not that there was no historical study of economic aspects in days of yore. We come upon narratives of economic activities in many histories compiled in ancient and medieval times. Not a few histories were compiled in the Tokugawa period treating of currencies and economic activities. It was, however, in and after the nineteenth century even in the West that the study of economic facts was made a specialised and independent branch of scientific research. In Japan, such a study is of quite recent growth. For economic matters attracted little public attention in ancient times, and people were prone to hold them in contempt. They were rather ashamed of talking of economy or moneymaking. Social conditions underwent remarkable changes in modern times, however. Business acquired much importance, so much so that economic activity has become an indispensable factor in politics and in armaments. Because economic problems have come to attract the anxious attention of the public and also because, in consequence of the marked progress of political economy as one branch of science, the inquiry into the history of economic facts has become very necessary, the study of economic history has gradually acquired increasing importance of late.

2. THE STUDY OF THE ECONOMIC HISTORY OF JAPAN IN THIS COUNTRY

Many histories compiled in ancient and medieval times

in this country contain many references to economic facts. For instance, the six national histories (日本書記 the *Nihon Shoki*, 續日本記 the *Shoku Nihon Gi*, 日本後記 the *Nihon Koki*, 續日本後記 the *Shoku Nihon Koki*, 文德實錄 the *Montoku Jitsuroku*, and 三代實錄 the *Sandai Jitsuroku*), which were compiled by Imperial command, give some facts relating to economic activities. The *Ruishu Kokushi* (類聚國史), a history compiled by Michizane Sugawara (菅原道真), by gleaning the same affairs dealt with in these six histories, also records facts relating to the prices of commodities, monetary circulation, the land system, etc. The *Ryo-no-shuge* (令集解), commentaries on the *Taihoryo* (大寶令), clearly shows that the history of the systems relating to land, Government granaries and taxes was studied by the jurists of the day. If this does not necessarily mean that the economic history of the country was specifically studied, it testifies to the fact that the history of the economic system engaged some attention of the scholars of those days, as did that of other systems and things. In the Kamakura and the Muromachi periods, literature was on the decline, and it was then largely the concern of Buddhist priests. Nothing worthy of special mention was, therefore, published in those days in the matter of economic history, though in the way of religious history, fairly good books, such as the *Genkyo Shakusho* (元享釋書), were produced. In the Tokugawa period, however, things were considerably different from those obtaining in the previous periods, none-the-less because it was equally an age of military ascendancy, and matters bearing on finance and economy were held in greater regard than before. Some scholars in that period paid considerable attention to these aspects of activity. Prompted by references to economic activities in Chinese books, some attempts were made by scholars of Chinese classics in those days to look into the study of history from the standpoint of economics. Traces of this are discernible in the books written by distinguished scholars of the period, such as Hakuseki Arai (新井白石), Kyuso Muro (室鳩巢), Sorai Ogyu (荻生徂徠), Togai Ito (伊藤東涯)

and Shundai Dazai (大宰春臺). Many books on economy included in the *Nihon Keizai Soshō* (日本經濟叢書 The Japanese Economics Series) and in the *Kinsei Shakai Keizai Soshō* (近世社會經濟叢書 Library of Modern Social Economy) treat of the history of economic facts in this country. As the more notable of such books may be mentioned the *Dainihonshi Shokkashi* (大日本史食貨志), Morishige Kondo's (近藤守重) works, the *Senroku* (錢錄) and the *Kingin Dzuroku* (金銀圖錄), and the *Sanka Dzui* (三貨圖彙) by Naokata Kusama (草間直方). In those days, the term "economy" was used in a wide sense; it was used in the sense of *keikoku saimin* (經國濟民 administration and relief of the people). The word "shokka (食貨), as employed then, apparently had a meaning analogous to economy, as it is now understood. Some scholars of those days, instead of confining their study to things Japanese, made some study of the economic history of China. In this way, the study of economic history made much progress in the Tokugawa period. It was nevertheless still very imperfect, for no scientific methods of research such as are now employed then were used.

In the reforms effected at the time of the Meiji Restoration, the old ideas were almost completely discarded in favour of imported Western ideas. This provoked some reactionary ideas. In politics, the theory of the rights and liberty of the people found vigorous expression. In the field of historiology, however, these reforms seem to have produced no marked effects. Influenced by the loyalism which witnessed a considerable growth in the closing days of the Tokugawa Shogunate, the *Dainihonshi* (大日本史) and the *Nihon Gwaishi* (日本外史) were still widely read. The time was still unripe for a new historical study to appear. After the establishment of the Bureau of History in the Government in January, 1869, a search was made for any missing volumes in the historical records of the country, and historical materials were collected. In 1877, the Historiographical Bureau was provided in the Dajokan (Government), but this Bureau did nothing beyond compiling the *Meiji Shiyo* (明治史要

Summarised History of Meiji). At that time, the late Dr. Ukichi Taguchi (田口勿吉) produced the *Nihon Kaikwa Shoshi* (日本開化小史 Historical Sketch of Japanese Civilization), which was published in 1877-1882. This book dealt with the progress of Japanese civilisation with a glance at European affairs and from the economic point of view, and as such it put a new meaning on the study of history in this country. Since then, the study of history in various fields has become active, and many historical works have been published, old history books reproduced and historical writings generally have become more frequent.

With regard to economic history also, nothing worthy of note was written during the first ten years of Meiji. In 1876, the *Dai Nihon Kaheishi* (大日本貨幣史 History of Currency in Japan, compiled by the Finance Department and edited by Kensuke Yoshida 吉田實輔 and others); in 1877, the *Kyuten Ruisan Denseihen* (舊典類纂田制篇, History of the Land System in Japan compiled by the Genroin and edited by Yoshikiyo Yokoyama 横山由清 and others) and the *Nosei Suitoki* 農政垂統記, History of Agriculture in Japan compiled by the Industrial Board and edited by Kwanshi Oda 織田完之 and Sempo Takahata 高島千畝); in 1878, the *Kogei Shiryo* 工藝志料, Historical materials of technology, compiled by the Natural History Board and edited by Mayori Kurokawa 黒川真頼); in 1882, the *Dainihon Sozeishi* (大日本租稅志, History of Taxation in Japan, compiled by the Finance Department and edited by Jun Nonaka 野中準 and others) and *Dai Nihon Teikoku Ekiteishiko oyobi Dai Nihon Teikoku Ekiteishiko Kosho* (大日本帝國驛遞志稿 History of Communications in Japan, compiled by the Finance Department); in 1885, the *Kasei Koyo Horeihen* 貨政考要法令篇, Statutes regarding Currency, compiled by the Finance Department), and in 1887, the *Meiji Kasei Koyo* (明治貨政考要, History of Currency in the Meiji Era, compiled by the Finance Department) were published, but there were no private publications of the kind which deserve mention during the interval. Just as the Government pursued a policy of direct interference in

industry in that period so as to awaken the nation from its long slumbers and to promote industrial development, so was literary work in respect of industrial history chiefly undertaken by the Government in the first half of Meiji. It was, so to speak, the age of official publications. This was, no doubt, partly due to the fact that the services of scholars were largely requisitioned for the Government's historiographical work, but it is at the same time conceivable that it was, in no small measure, owing to the fact that, as the time happened to be immediately after the Restoration, business had not yet fully developed and few persons had any mind for the study of economic history, a history which is somewhat different from ordinary history. At any rate, the first half of Meiji was the age of official publications. The methods of study then adopted were mostly antiquated. The chronological and unscientific methods were followed in many instances.

In 1866, the *Kaiun Shiryo* (海運史料, History of Shipping) by Kiyone Kozasa (小笹清根), and in 1868, the *Nihon Kodai Tsukwako* (日本古代通貨考, History of Ancient Japanese Currency) by Kenjiro Hamada (濱田健二郎), the *Dai Nihon Fudosanho Enkakushi* (大日本不動産沿革史, History of Japanese Real Estate Law) by Tokifuyu Yokoi (横井時冬), the *Shoenko* (莊園考 Study of Manors in Japan) by Kwan Kurita (栗田寛), and the *Tokugawashi Kaheishi* (徳川氏貨幣志, History of the Currency in the Tokugawa Period) by Tanzo Saito (齋藤坦藏) were published. The *Dainihonshi Shokkashi* (大日本史食貨志) by the Mito clan was also published in the same year. In 1889, the *Nihon Seidotsu* (日本制度通, Japanese Political and Social Systems) by Y. Hagino (萩野由之) and Y. Konakamura (小中村義象) and the *Nihonbashi Uoichiba Enkaku Kiyō* (日本橋魚市場沿革紀要, Historical Survey of the Nihonbashi Fish Market) were issued. In the following year, the *Suijinroku* (吹塵録) and the *Suijin Yoroku* (吹塵餘録) by Count Katsu (勝海舟), (Collections of Materials of Political and Economical Activities in the Period Tokugawa), and the *Nihon Zaiseishi* (日本財政史 History of Japanese

Finance) by Yoshiyuki Hagino (萩野由之) were published. Again, in 1891, Yoshiki Endo (遠藤芳樹) published the *Nihon Shogyoshi* (日本商業史, History of Japanese Commerce), and Yuya Obayashi (大林雄也) wrote the *Dai Nihon Sangyo Jiseki* (大日本産業事蹟 Japanese Industrial Events), while 1892 witnessed the publication by Teifu Suganuma (菅沼貞風) of his book entitled the *Dai Nihon Shogyoshi* (大日本商業史 History of Japanese Commerce). In this way, private publications on economic history became more numerous every year, and some of them were of great value too. Regarding the books officially compiled, there were published in 1890 and 1891 the *Dai Nihon Noshi* (大日本農史 History of Japanese Agriculture) by the Department of Agriculture and Commerce, and the *Kokusai Enkaku Ryaku* (國債沿革略 Brief History of National Loans) by the Finance Department in 1892, the *Teikoku Denshin Enkakushi* (帝國電信沿革史 History of the Telegraphic Service in the Empire) by the Department of Communications, and in 1897, the *Dai Nihon Nosei Ruihen* (大日本農政類編, Materials for a History of Japanese Agriculture) by the Department of Agriculture and Commerce. As compared with the first half of Meiji, however, the number of official publications was very small. In short, the age of official publication was being superseded by that of private publications. In many quarters, either by individuals or by compilation societies, researches of various kinds were undertaken. With the importation of Western science, methods of study gradually improved. In the methods of description also, the old chronological and unscientific modes of description were discarded by degrees in favour of a scientific method of making clear the cause and effect of events. Thus, a marked change was noticeable between the former and the latter half of Meiji in the study of the economic history of Japan.

The study of the economic history of Japan made unprecedented progress in the Taisho and Showa eras. Scholars made extraordinary efforts in quest of basic historical

materials, by means of which they endeavoured to achieve an elaborate and accurate scientific study so as to put the economic development of this country in its true perspective. Many reports made and many books written as the results of these researches were consequently of great value. I will here desist from a detailed reference to these admirable books and articles. Suffice it to say that the great progress made in this line of study since the closing years of Meiji is really astounding. At present, in all aspects of economic history, results of study, either general or specific, are made public almost daily in book form or in magazine articles.

The study of the economic history of Japan has thus made great strides of late in this country, and it is admitted on all hands that the late Dr. Tokifuyu Yokoi (横井時冬), formerly professor of the Waseda University, and the late Dr. Ginzo Uchida (内田銀藏), formerly professor of Kyoto Imperial University, both scholars of profound learning, were the leading pioneers in this field of study. The former scholar wrote the *Nihon Kogyoshi* (日本工業史 History of Japanese Industry), which was published in 1897, and the *Nihon Shogyoshi* (日本商業史 History of Japanese Commerce), published in 1898, while the latter scholar's complete works were issued in 1921, Volumes 1 and 2 of which are devoted to the study of economic history. The late Dr. Tokuzo Fukuda (福田徳三), formerly professor of the Tokyo University of Commerce wrote a book entitled the *Nihon Keizaishi Ron* (日本經濟史論), which was originally published in German with the title, "Die gesellschaftliche und wirtschaftliche Entwicklung in Japan" (Stuttgart, 1900). He was one of the Japanese scholars who took special interest in the study of the economic history of Japan. Dr. Seiichi Takimoto (瀧本誠一), professor of the Keio University, who died this year, wrote the *Nihon Keizaishi* (日本經濟史 The Economic History of Japan) and also published a collection of books on economics in the Tokugawa period. It is widely known that under his editorship, the *Nihon Keizai Soshu* (日本經濟叢書,

The Japanese Economics Series) and the *Nihon Keizai Taiten* (日本經濟大典 Great collection of books on Japanese Economics) were published. These scholars combined to lay the foundations of the present growth of the study of the economic history of Japan. They were all men of first-class learning in their special line. Mr. Yosaburo Takekoshi (竹越興三郎) also produced a voluminous book entitled the *Nihon Keizai-shi*, (日本經濟史, The Economic history of Japan) the English translation of which entitled "Economic Aspects of the History of the Civilization of Japan" (3 vols. London) was recently issued. The English title of the book faithfully describes its contents.

3. THE STUDY OF FOREIGN ECONOMIC HISTORY IN JAPAN.

In the Tokugawa period already, there was some study in this country of the economic history of the Orient—the economic history of China in particular. As the late Dr. Uchida pointed out some time ago, it is on record that Jinsai Ito (伊藤仁齋), Togai Ito, (伊藤東涯), Fuken Komiyama (小宮山楓軒), Konsai Asaka (安積良齋), Hosai Kameda (龜田鵬齋) and Shosai Yamada (山田松齋) studied the history of the land system and agriculture of ancient China. Many books dealing with economics were published in China and imported into this country. The study of scholars in the Tokugawa period was based on materials supplied by these books. In the Meiji and Taisho eras, such study made further progress and the results of these researches into the economic history of the Orient were made public in book form and in magazine articles. But in compared with the study of the economic history of Japan, such studies were quite infrequent.

So far as the study of the economic history of the West in this country is concerned, it is on record that Western political economy was imported into Japan in the closing days of the Tokugawa Shogunate, through, for

instance, books written by Adam Smith.¹⁾ After the Restoration, books treating of the economic history of the West were translated into Japanese. For example, Ukichi Taguchi (田口卯吉) translated the History of British Commerce by Leone Levi in 1879, and in 1885 the Technical History of Commerce by John Yeats was translated by Sadamasu Oshima (大島貞益) and published by the Department of Education. Subsequently many books on the economic history of the West were translated into Japanese. The practice of translating Western economic books, whether of old editions or of new, is still briskly going on. Since the latter days of Meiji, however, works have been published in this country in which the authors, instead of contenting themselves with mere translation of Western books on economics have made a deep study of them with reference to certain facts and put these facts in a new light according to their own points of view, or re-stated them according to a system of their own. It seems that this kind of study has made very marked progress of late. For instance, books have been published in which European economic history is systematically summarised in a general way, or the development of capitalism, industrial revolution and other individual subjects are re-examined and studied in the light of western literary records. As it is, of course, very difficult to obtain in Japan basic historical materials relating to Western economic history, it is quite natural that the study of Western economic history in this country should take such a course.

4. THE LATEST STATE OF THE STUDY OF ECONOMIC HISTORY IN JAPAN

"The Economic History Review," Vol. III No. 3 (April, 1932) contains an article entitled "The Teaching of Economic History in Universities," in which a brief reference

1) For this fact I am indebted to Professor C. Muto, of the Nagasaki Higher Commercial School.

is made to the state of study in Japan. The description is, however, both very inadequate and inaccurate.

There is no comparison between the latter years of Meiji and the present day as to the state of study and the teaching of economic history in Japanese universities, especially in universities with departments of politics and economics. In the closing years of Meiji, economic history rather meant Western economic history, and there were practically no scholars who made a special study of this branch of science. Lectures on Western economic history were then given by those, whose speciality was something else, merely to fill in the regular curricula.¹⁾ There was no independent Chair of Economic History, as a rule. Since the Taisho era, however, Japan has had scholars who have made a special study of either Japanese or Western economic history. An independent Chair of Economic History was created in Kyoto Imperial University in 1922, and one in Tokyo Imperial University in 1930. In other Imperial, Government, and private Universities also, lectures were established on Western and Japanese economic histories. Moreover, economic history or commercial history is being taught at the various Higher Commercial Schools. Teaching hours allotted may vary according to institutions, but in Kyoto Imperial University, two hours a week each are allotted to the teaching of Western economic history and of Japanese economic history. Besides, a seminar on Japanese economic history is carried on for two hours a week in each school term, and the same number of hours is also given to special lectures on Japanese economic history in the University. Thus, it will be seen that many hours a week are devoted to the teaching of Japanese economic history. This means that Japanese universities are doing what they ought to do in fulfilment of their mission.

1) In some Colleges of Literature, on the other hand, there were professors who lectured on and made a speciality of the history of Japanese legislation and of the economic history of Japan.

As already stated, the study of economic history in this country has made remarkable progress, but no technical encyclopedia of economic history has yet been produced, though the *Nihon Shakai Jii* (日本社會事彙 Japanese Social Encyclopedia), the third edition of which was published in 1907, and the *Keizai Daijisho* (經濟大辭書, Dictionary of Economics), published by the Dobunkan in 1910-1916, give many items bearing on economic history. The *Keizaigaku Jiten* (經濟學辭典, Dictionary of Economics), recently compiled by the Institute for Economic Research in the Osaka Commercial University, contains particularly numerous items of this kind.

With regard to scientific societies and magazines pertaining to economic history, professors, researchers and students of economic history at Kyoto Imperial University organised in 1929 an association called "The Economic History Society" (經濟史研究會), which has been issuing a monthly magazine called "*The Study of Economic History*" (經濟史研究) since November of the same year. Besides, it has already published in book form two memoirs containing the results of research conducted by its members in collaboration. These are "*The Study of the History of Communications in the Tokugawa Period*," (日本交通史の研究) and "*The Study of the Economic History of the Meiji Restoration Period*" (明治維新經濟史研究). Another volume treating of literary records relative to Japanese economic history is expected to be published shortly. In 1931, the "Social and Economic History Society" (社會經濟史學會) was established in Tokyo. Whereas the above-mentioned Society for the Study of Economic History is mainly the work of Kyoto Imperial University professors, this Tokyo society is rather national in character, and its scope of study covers social history, economic history, legislative history, political history, and the history of thought. From May of the year of its establishment, the Society issued its quarterly magazine, "*Social and Economic History*." (社會經濟史學) This was converted into a monthly magazine in April, 1932. A general meeting of the

Society is held once a year and lecture meetings are organised under its auspices.

Such is the development which the Japanese scientific world concerned with the study of economic history has witnessed in recent years. Historians in general have come to evince more interest in economic history, so that the results of the study of economic history are constantly made public in ordinary historical magazines. Owing to the fact that most articles on economic history are published in Japanese in this country, few are made known to the Western world of science. The present magazine, *Kyoto University Economic Review*, is, however, printed in European languages, and consequently the articles appearing in it are read by Western scholars and our articles are often quoted and reviewed by them,¹⁾ a fact which marks one phase of progress in the study of political economy in Japan—the study of economic history in particular.

1) See Mr. Andre Andréadès's *La Population du Japon*, 1931, and *Les Finances de l'Empire Japonais et leur Evolution*, 1932.

EIJIRO HONJO