

Teruo Ichiraku's Moral Economy Through Face-to-Face Relationship - Ichiraku's Thoughts with Its Genealogy and Evaluation of His Association-Typed Small Ethical Economy from the Perspective of the Commons

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Title: Teruo Ichiraku's Moral Economy through face-to-face relationship

- Ichiraku's thoughts with its genealogy and evaluation of his association-typed small ethical economy from the perspective of the commons

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Abstract :

Teruo Ichiraku (1906–1994) put forward an ethical and economic philosophy based on cooperative thought and small-scale organisations through mutual understanding and reciprocity between farmers and consumers. This perspective was intended to achieve a fair society to improve farmers' economic status. Ichiraku's idea was affected from four schools of thought, R. Owen's social reform and cooperative villages through morals and education, F.W. Raiffeisen's cooperative thought of 'poor farmer relief on local community' in 19th-century Germany, the family-oriented cooperativism of rural Japan in the 1930s and the organic agricultural based on faceto-face relationships, 1970s. This presentation has two main purposes. The first is to trace the stream of thoughts that fed into Ichiraku's thought. The second is to evaluate his ideal of autonomous organisation and system for organic agricultural products as an association-typed small ethical economy from a commons perspective.

要約:

ー樂照雄(1906-1994)は、協同思想に基づく農業者と消費者による小規模組織を推 奨、そこでの相互理解と互助によって、農業者の経済的地位向上を含む「公正な社会」の 実現を目指した。この一樂の思想は4つの系譜、R.オウエンの倫理と教育に基づく社会 改革と協同村、19世紀ドイツの協同組合思想におけるF.W ライファイゼンの「地域コミ ュニティによる貧農救済」、1930年代の日本の農村での家族主義的協同組合主義、さらに は1970年代の日本の「顔の見える関係」による有機農業運動、の融合から生まれてい る。本報告では、一樂思想に影響を与えた思想の系譜をたどるとともに、一樂が理想とし た自律的な有機農産物のための組織とシステムを、アソシエーション型の小規模倫理経済 として、コモンズの観点から評価する。

1. Ichiraku's thought of self-reliance and mutual aid and cooperation for a 'fair society'

Teruo Ichiraku (1906–1994) advocated an ethical and economic philosophy based on cooperative thought and small-scale organisations connected through mutual understanding and reciprocity between farmers and consumers. This organisation was intended to achieve a fair society to improve farmers' economic status. This presentation has two main purposes. First, it traces the stream of thought that influenced Ichiraku's own thinking. Second, it evaluates his ideal of autonomous organisation and a system for organic agricultural products as an association-type small ethical economy, developed from a commons perspective.

Ichiraku who worked in cooperative organisations throughout his life. He was employed by the Industrial Cooperative Central Bank in Japan before World War II and the Norinchukin Bank, meaning Agriculture and Forestry Central Bank, and he subsequently served as director of Central Union of Agricultural Cooperatives and the Cooperative Management Research Institute. During his tenure as president of the Institute, he also founded the (Japan) Organic Agriculture Association, a private organisation, and became involved in organic agriculture and the *teikei* movement in Japan in a leadership position.

Ichiraku's achievements as a practitioner of socio-economic reform centred on agriculture are twofold. First, in 1971, during his term as President of the Institute of Cooperative Management, he and his colleagues founded the Organic Agriculture Research Association, the first research and educational organisation in Japan to be devoted to organic agriculture. The other was the proposal of the Ten Principles of *Teikei*, representing the philosophy of *teikei* movement to producers and consumers at the annual conference of (Japan) Organic Agriculture Association in 1978. In addition to these projects and movements, Ichiraku wrote more than 100 articles and gave comments as a chairperson of symposia and round-table discussions on cooperative magazines over the course of more than 60 years, from 1930 to his death in 1994.

Ichiraku advocated for agriculture that will allow farmers' self-reliance and for small-scale communities consisting of farmers and consumers to support farming. However, the issues he raised were not limited to food production, extending to equity in income distribution, rural and urban relations and environmental issues, as well as a wide range of other areas, including the the consumer society; person-to-person, individual-to-society and people-to-nature relations; and peace. The social ideals set out by Ichiraku can be summarised in the following five points. (1) There should be a fair society accompanied by self-reliance and mutual aid, based on the cooperative principle (moving from the competition principle to the cooperation principle), (2) agriculture and independence from commercial/distributive capitals should be rebuilt, (3) the denial of agricultural products as commercial commodities, (4) *teikei* should be instituted between producers and consumers.

Of these, the concept of *teikei* between producers and consumers from (4) sought to realise a socio-economic model as an alternative to the capitalist market economy and as a direct and mutually supportive link between farmers and consumers through organic agricultural products. *Teikei* is characterised by its goal of an autonomous association of both rural producers and urban consumers, rather than through regional communities. In line with this, Ichiraku encouraged small-scale organisations based on the cooperative principle and face-to-face relationships and proposed the Ten Principles of *Teikei* as a guideline for the movement.

The Ten Principles of *Teikei* (Ichiraku 1979) are the following (summarised by the author). (1) The relationship between producers and consumers is based on humanity, (2) producers plan production, (3) all products are accepted by consumers

(consumers' eating habits depending on these products as much as possible), (4) pricing is based on mutual consideration, (5) efforts are made to increase opportunities to make contact and achieve mutual understanding, (6) self-distribution is operated by producer or consumer groups, (7) democratic operation and mutual consideration of members' circumstances, (8) there is a focus on learning activities, (9) a proper scale is maintained (related to the size of the area and the number of members) by increasing the number of groups and cooperating with each other and (10) progress is made towards the ideal. These points are considered to define the ethical aspects of so-called 'face-to-face relationships', and the methods of organisational management that make this possible.

2. Ichiraku's thought and its genealogy from the perspective of the commons

2-1 Genealogy of Ichiroku's thought

Among the aforementioned ideas, the following characteristics of Ichiraku can be identified in relation to the commons. These are: a family-oriented ethic of mutual aid and the principle of cooperation; independence from the state and economic capital; people's autonomy in small communities; and an emphasis on agriculture and soil from the perspective of permanence.

For Ichiraku, these ideas emerged from a fusion of four genealogies: 1) F.W. Raiffeisen's 'Relief of poor farmers by local communities', an example of 19th-century German cooperative thought and the family-oriented 'cooperativism' of the 1930s in Japan; 2) R. Owen's social reform based on education and communities; and the 3) Japanese organic farming movement of the 1970s and Yoneo Okada's concept of a selfsufficient farm joining consumers and farmers, inspired by Marx's nature-labour alienation; and 4) environmental thought, including from overseas (R. Carson, E.F. Schumacher etc.). In addition, although he himself was not directly influenced by M. Bookchin, Ichiraku's encouragement of people's autonomy in small communities has much in common with 5) Bookchin's communitarian anarchism.

In addition, in his book, Ichiraku characterises his sense of justice (a fair society where the weak do not lose out) was influenced by the Buddhist teachings that he received from his grandmother in his childhood (punishment for doing wrong), and his dislike of business was due to his hatred of the business practices of his adopted father, a merchant.

2-2 Influences on Ichiraku thought from the respective genealogies

2-2-1 German Raiffeisen's 'relief of poor farmers by local communities' and Japanese normative 'cooperativism' the in in1930s.

Among these, 1) the concept of relief of poor farmers by local communities, drawn from by Raiffeisen's cooperative thought in Germany in the 19th century and the normative cooperativism of the 1930s in Japan form the basis of Ichiraku's lifelong ideal of a fair society through cooperatives. In particular, Article 1 of the Ten Principles of *Teikei*, describing a relationship between producers and consumers based on humanity, inherited Raiffeisen-type cooperative philosophy of relief for poor farmers, based on the love of the neighbour and an emphasis on bonding with the local community.

The Industrial Cooperative Central Bank, where Ichiraku later worked, was established in 1923, but its parent association, Industrial Cooperatives, was founded in 1900 with passing of the Industrial Cooperative Law.¹ The Japanese industrial cooperatives were modelled on Schulze = Delitzsch type credit cooperatives and Raiffeisen-type rural cooperatives that the Home Ministry bureaucrats Yajiro Shinagawa and Tousuke Hirata, who were involved in the passage of that law, had studied in Germany.² While the Schulze = Delitzsch type of cooperative was characterised by mutual aid based on liberal rationality based on self-help and the social solidarity, the Raiffeisen type was characterised by poor farmer relief based on Christian neighbourly love, with an emphasis on local bonds (Takeuchi and Ikuta 1976). The Credit Cooperative Bill, the predecessor of the Industrial Cooperative Law of 1891, recommended the system of Schulze = Delitzsch type credit cooperatives put forward by Shinagawa and Hirata. Their interest at this time was in adapting rural areas to capitalist development (Hirata and Sugiyama 1891, 87–98, Industrial Cooperatives History Compilation 1965, Vol 1, 150-155, 200-202). However, Saku Watanabe, a Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce bureaucrat who also studied in Germany in 1889, investigating the relationship between industrial cooperatives and agricultural issues and returning to Japan at the same time, argued that 'if credit cooperatives are to be set up for rural development, they should rather learn from the Raiffeisen model, which is adapted to the customs specific to Japan, than Schulze = Delitzsch type' (Industrial Cooperatives History Compilation Society, 1965, Vol 1, 159). Subsequently, the first Industrial Cooperatives Bill, drafted by Watanabe and others in 1897, was passed in 1900 as the Industrial Cooperative Law (Takeuchi and Ikuta 1976, 61, Industrial Cooperatives History Compilation 1965, Vol. 1, 159, 283-300).

Ichiraku, who had idealised cooperativism in the industrial cooperatives throughout his life, later reflecting on those days, saying: 'agricultural cooperatives in Japan first had a legal basis with the passing of the Industrial Cooperative Law in 1900. Industrial cooperatives belonged to the Raiffeisen stream of thought. It is thought that the emergence of industrial cooperatives thereafter was not forced by external forces but was largely voluntary' (Ichiraku 1954, 151). In addition, Raiffeisen-type rural credit cooperatives in Germany were mutually guaranteed (unlimited joint liability system) by members comprising residents of the same village (parish) and were maintained only on the basis of trust and strong ties among members (Muraoka 1997, 136–138). One model of Ichiraku's mutually supportive community is the charitable nature of these Raiffeisen-type rural cooperatives.

2-2-2 Ichiraku's attempts to build local communities based on cooperative principle and R. Owen's cooperative communities

A turning point for Ichiraku in his work with cooperative organisations came in 1966, when he spoke at a debate on the new international cooperative principles promoted by the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA). Ichiraku argued in favour of the ideals of local communities, based the cooperative principle. Ichiraku's argument here is twofold. One reflects the need for morality to save the weak, i.e. to have respect for humanity, and counter-economic morality, which cannot be achieved by economic rationalism alone. The second is for cooperative organisations to play the role of a place where people govern themselves, unlike governance by capital and state power

¹ It consisted of credit cooperatives, sales cooperatives, purchasing cooperatives (including consumer cooperatives) and production cooperatives (industrial cooperatives history compilation 1965, Vol 1, 298–299).

² Industrial cooperatives history compilation society, 1965, vol. 1, 146–155. Shinagawa and Hirata, in drafting the Credit Cooperative Bill, referring to these German systems as well as to the Japanese Ko and Houtokusha, but they initiated credit cooperatives as a different system (ibid, 156–157).

(National Central Association of Agricultural Cooperatives et al. 1967).

Therefore, between 1967 and 1970, Ichiraku developed his cooperative thought into a reality through two cooperative-based local communities incorporating farmers and consumers: the Agricultural and Residential City Plan of 1968–69 and the Hometown Cooperative movement of 1971. However, attempts ended in failure. The former was due to the fact that the agricultural cooperatives that implemented the scheme interpreted it to be an asset management measure for farmers, far from Ichiraku's ideal (Nousanson Gyoson Bunka Kyoukai eds. [1996a/b] 2009, 230–231). The latter was met with a lack of funding and investors (Tsuyuki 1982, 413–414; Anzen'na Tabemono wo Tsukutte Taberukai 2005, 32).

Ichiraku's practices and failure in building local communities parallel R. Owen's ideal of the cooperative principle and his own failure in building New Harmony Village. In 1959, Ichiraku gave a lecture on cooperative thought to members of cooperatives, choosing Owen as one of three cooperative thinkers whose thought he explored ³. Ichiraku repeatedly told colleagues and his own family about Owen⁴. Ichiraku's might have been trying to emulate the ideals espoused by Owen (1820) in the Report to the Country of Lanark. This approach constitutes the principle of unity and mutual cooperation to improve the condition of the poor working classes, through an organisation formed on the basis of perfect reciprocity by the middle and working classes and governed by them themselves, also constituted on the ideal that the development of people in their cooperative communities should be a means of renewing the moral character of the people and improving their condition. The ideal is that their development is the means of renewing the moral character of the people and improving their condition.

Ichiraku's conception of the local community failed. However, Ichiraku would later find his ideals again in practice as an association in the *teikei* movement. Owen's (1820) denial of what he called artificial value (exchange value) and the necessity for exchange based on labour value was taken over by Ichiraku's mutual understanding and evaluation of agricultural products in terms of use value in his Ten Principles of *Teikei* (Ichiraku 1979).

2-2-3 Organic farming movement of the 1970s and teikei movement in Japan

Later, Ichiraku temporarily abandoned his concept of community and established the (Japan) Organic Agriculture Association in 1971, together with researchers and doctors, to address problems of pesticides and food pollution, which had developed into social problems. At this point, organic producers were themselves beginning to form links with consumers across many parts of Japan. Among these was a group of urban consumers who were buying agricultural products, which Okada had been trying to organise following the failure of the aforementioned Furusato Cooperative Society movement aforementioned.

Okada proposed the concept of self-sufficient farms with consumers and farmers, which directly linked rural producers and urban consumers, sharing the means of production and management of food and performing its distribution. Furthermore, Okada organised consumer joint-purchasing groups for milk to realise his vision. Okada took inspiration for this association concept from Marx's 'Nature and Labour Alienation' in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* (1932) and from Kautsky's 'Production Cooperatives' in *The Agrarian Question* (1899).

³ In addition to R. Owen, two other Japanese thinkers, Ohara Yugaku and Ninomiya Sontoku, were selected for lectures organised by Ichiraku (Saga 2022).

⁴ From interviews conducted by the author with Ichiraku's family (November 2017) and his subordinate, Ikuro Saga (March 2023).

However, Okada's original idea was that of farmers with consumers, not in a local community but at a distance from each other and through their own distribution business (Okada 1970a, 1970b). Okada's association between producers and consumers became a model for Japan's *teikei* movement of the 1970s.

However, milk was, to begin with, a processed food product made by dairy manufacturers, and a distribution system intervened between the producers (dairy farmers) and the consumers. In addition, outside of Okada's movement, there was overproduction at the national level, due to government-guaranteed reproducible prices for producers and difficulties in adjusting supply to demand in the market. Okada's concept of a self-sufficient farm featured the same lack of a supply-demand coordination system as a government policy. Okada's joint-purchasing movement for milk was therefore frustrated by a lack of a dual supply-demand coordination within organisations and on the market. In addition, Okada himself was kicked out of the associations he was involved in due to his self-righteous leadership and unclear accounting. Several consumer groups reduced the scope of their activities after Okada's departure and moved towards direct trade by smaller organisations, focusing on long-term relationships between specific producers and consumers.

Ichiraku found the ideal of his cooperative philosophy in the voluntary activities and associations of the people of *teikei* movement during his involvement in the organic farming movement. The 1973 prospectus for the Safe Food Making and Eating Association drafted by Okada and its practical methods exhibited Ichiraku's Ten Principles of *Teikei*. Throughout his life, Ichiraku continued to support the organic farming and *teikei* movements as ideals.

2-2-4 Schumacher's economics for permanence and emphasis on soil farming and the beginning of Ichiraku's search for a reciprocal economics

E.F. Schumacher's Small is Beautiful, published in 1973, was translated into Japanese in 1976. Ichiraku cited Schumacher as among the thinkers he identified most with (Ichiraku, 1980a). In 1980, Ichiraku translated Schumacher's (1974) An *Economist's Look at Farming*, the transcript of a lecture given in 1973 at a workshop organised by his Soil Association and published it in the monthly bulletin of the Institute of Cooperative Management, where Ichiraku was the director (Ichiraku 1980b). Ichiraku was highly sympathetic to Schumacher's stances, including a respect for humanity, that infinite growth is impossible in a closed world, that consumption is inherently dependent on production, and therefore that the central issue is agriculture and farming methods. However, Schumacher noted that the solution cannot be expected from a cost-benefit analysis of the economics. This is because the many relevant factors that are required for a decision cannot be quantified. Thus, in the distribution system, prices do not include the true overall cost of production (computed as the nutritional and medical value, soil value and the importance of soil conservation) nor appropriate payment for the land and for farmers. However, the soil, land and the countryside are the conditions of mental and physical health and are the only source of our food; therefore, they must be considered in terms of a permanent system.

Ichiraku also highly valued Schumacher, not only as a thinker but also as a practitioner. Among other things, he particularly appreciated the Soil Association that Schumacher had founded, which, like Ichiraku's Japan Organic Farming Research Association, was a purely private organisation for organic farming. He also described Schumacher as an exceptional man who was 'aware of the problems of the whole range of human life and activity, and who tried to be committed to theory from practice and practice by theory' (Ichiraku 1980a). In fact, after the Japanese translation of *Small is Beautiful* was published in Japan in 1976, Ichiraku planned for Schumacher to give a lecture in Japan. However, Schumacher's sudden death in

1977 prevented this.⁵

Ichiraku's concept of local communities and Okada's concept of 'self-sufficient farms', together with the launch of Japanese *teikei* movement, preceded the publication of the translation of *Small is Beautiful*. Their movements emerged from practice and exploration as original ideas. In addition, Ichiraku's thinking of mutual understanding and ethical reciprocity were based on the community ethic of Japan, which differs from the emergence of individual creativity and humanity, as advocated by Schumacher. However, Ichiraku deeply identified with the ideas of economics for permanence and the emphasis on soil and agriculture seen in Schumacher. He also learned of the limitations of cost-benefit analysis in the economics of the time, especially that its production costs did not include any concept of health and safety, adequate payments to producers, ecological value or sustainability. Thus, Ichiraku began to search for an economy based on reciprocity and altruism to rebuild agriculture and form a fair society for the weak.

2-2-5 Ichiraku's communitarian anarchism

Ichiraku likewise rejected subordination to the state or economic power. Ichiraku's cooperative thinking and the ethical economy of small communities/associations formed a means of countering them. His communitarian anarchist tendencies were clearly evident in his statement at the 1966 debate on ICA principles. He made the assertion that cooperative organisations should take on the role of a place of people's autonomy that would be different from capital and state power (Central Union of Agricultural Cooperatives et al. 1967). Ichiraku argued as follows. Individual spontaneity has not yet been realised in Japan, and Western democratic thought cannot be directly applied to the democratic management of cooperative activities. Therefore, reinforcement is necessary. In addition, municipalities take role of communities in foreign countries, but in Japan local autonomy has been destroyed by state power. Therefore, the need for agricultural cooperatives to play a communal role and govern to support peoples autonomy seems strong. If there are well-developed communities beyond than agricultural cooperatives, they only have to take care of the economic side, and the community will fill in for the rest. However, there are no other communities in Japan, so agricultural cooperatives must themselves become a community (ibid. 124). These places of people's autonomy also require the idea of a community as a local society or living society (ibid. 131). The scope (area) of such a community is to be determined naturally through the functions of human gatherings and the extent to which they interact (ibid. 132). Therefore, cooperatives have an appropriate size, which needs to be considered not only from an economic standpoint but also in relation to the perspective of ensuring democratic management and community building (ibid. 139). This claim later became the prototype for Ichiraku's Ten Principles of *Teikei*, Articles 1, 7, 8 and 9.

Ichiraku probably had not read the works of environmental anarchist M. Bookchin, as they had not yet been translated into Japanese. However, Ichiraku's thought and practice have much in common with those of Bookchin. Bookchin, under the pseudonym of Lewis Herber, published 'The Problems of Chemicals in Food' in the journal *Contemporary Issues* in 1952, followed by *Our Synthetic Environment* in 1962. In the latter, Bookchin considered the impact of chemicals that humans used on themselves and on ecosystems in relation to the perspective of the relationship between people and between people and nature. He argued for a reduction of the size of agricultural units to a more manageable, human scale, regenerating agriculture in

⁵ From the author's interview with a family member of Ichiraku (September 2019).

terms of soil function and its relationship with livestock, and building decentralised, small-scale communities to link agriculture and urban life to protect natural resources (Bookchin 1962, 94, 96–97). The Japanese *teikei* movement of the 1970s and the economic system and self-governance in small-scale organisations based on to-face relationships, as advocated by Ichiraku, were similar to the small-scale communities linking agriculture and urban life for the protection of natural resources, as advocated by Bookchin. Both advocated a small ethical economy for the conservation of natural resources and equality, by contrast with the existing market economy system.

3. Ichiraku's association-type small ethical economy-an evaluation from a commons perspective

Finally, I compare Ichiraku's cooperative thought with its genealogy to establish his association-type small ethical economy from the perspective of the commons.

3-1 Comparisons of Ichiraku's cooperative thoughts with its genealogy

Ichiraku's ideal was the realisation of a fair society (where the weak do not lose out) based on the idea of cooperation. It is characterised by relationships between people based on humanity in small-scale communities or associations, i.e. autonomy and mutual understanding and mutual aid through face-to-face relationships. Ichiraku inherited his ideas through the following genealogies of thought: 1) Raiffeisen's Relief of poor farmers by local communities and the family-oriented cooperativism' of 1930s Japan, 2) Owen's social reform and cooperatives, based on ethics and education, 3) Okada's concept of a self-sufficient farm with consumers and farmers and 4) Schumacher's economics for permanence and emphasis on soil and agriculture. In addition, Ichiraku's communitarian anarchist tendencies were similar to 5) Bookchin's 'decentralised small-scale communities linking agriculture and urban life for natural resource conservation.

However, Ichiraku's cooperative thinking was based strictly on the familyoriented cooperativism of the Japanese Industrial Cooperatives of the 1930s. As noted above, although Ichiraku emphasised individual spontaneity and people's autonomy, he also believed that the level of individual spontaneity in Japan was insufficient for the application of Western democracy. While acknowledging that greed is a human instinct and that people act to pursue their own happiness, Ichiraku argued that it is not necessary to pursue greed without limit; it must be restrained within a framework of mutual support and that it is necessary to set a standard of behaviour based on the habit of considering the impact of one's actions on others. This was the cooperative principle that should replace the principle of free competition in Ichiraku's view (Ichiraku 1984, 40–42). There was also an influence of familism and local community-based moral codes in rural communities in pre-World War II Japan. That is, even if Owen, Schumacher and Bookchin each criticised individual selfishness, Ichiraku's cooperative thought is significantly different from those involving Western concepts of individualistic human rights and a freedom-based humanity such as Owen's (1820) concept 'forming individual's human nature under no control', Schumacher's (1970) 'man's need for creativity' and Bookchin's (1991) 'ethics based on freedom'.

3-2 Evaluation of his association-typed small ethical economy from the perspective of the commons

The Japanese *teikei* movement sought to realise an alternative to a market economy by developing a direct and mutually supportive distribution system joining

rural farmers and urban consumers the distribution and sale of organic products. This was characterised by autonomous associations and a shared sense of ethics through mutual understanding across regions (between remoted areas), in place of local communities of shared residence and customs. In many of the groups in the *teikei* movement, management sharing is also achieved, in terms of the amount of produce, production methods and the way the distribution system should work. However, the means of production, the land, is owned by farmers. If we consider that this farmland is a commons or a common-pool resources that conserves the ecosystem, then the consumer associations of the *teikei* movement can be thought of as a resource system that provides the labour and funding that is necessary for the sustainable use of that common resources and its operation (Ostrom 1990). However, the members of the *teikei* movement are separated by distance, making it difficult to conduct mutual surveillance and impose penalties within local communities, as assumed in the ordinary theory of the commons. Thus, Okada's consumer education can be interpreted as a means of raising consumer awareness of the crisis and scarcity of available products, creating a situation in which the utility of consumer participation in the movement exceeds the cost of operating the association by consumers themselves. Contrarily, Ichiraku's face-to-face relationship between producers and consumers and what he calls 'empathy like an extension of the family' can be interpreted as an attempt to increase mutual trust between the participants and increase incentives for associational activities.

Ichiraku's ideal of small, autonomous associations was developed to pursue the two common good or public goods of, on the one hand, sustainable food production and ecological conservation, and on the other, sustaining of consumer associations, in a way that was compatible with individual spontaneity, through cooperation and mutual understanding and aid. The *teikei* movement, which began in 1973, gradually declined beginning in the 1990s, due to the expansion of the distribution of organic produce to general markets. The system of mutual understanding and mutual aid through face-to-face relationships idealised by Ichiraku, was not sustainable, as it faced price competition in the market and free-riding problems in the maintenance of the organisations. However, some consumers remained in the system, and the relationship between producers and consumers lasted for 50 years. The analysis and evaluation of this relationship will be presented in the a following paper.

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