The Agrarian Foundations of Early Twentieth-Century Japanese Anarchism: Ishikawa Sanshirō's Revolutionary Practices of Everyday Life, 1903-1945

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Acknowledgements

This project stems from my curiosity about the renegades and underdogs of society, those figures with no official status or institutional allegiance who have slipped through the net of history and have been relegated to neglect and irrelevance. I am intrigued by the pathos and passion of their lives and the extraordinary determination with which they defied accepted norms and conventions despite poverty and danger. I had the intuition when I began my research that these 'small people' perhaps touched upon the grander themes of existence, including deep questions about the why and how of human presence on earth. I was right, and it made my own journey towards the completion of this dissertation all the more challenging. But I am glad I embarked on it.

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than he ever wished for, and to the other members of my family: my parents, brothers and children, who all in their own ways have inspired this project.

Nadine Willems
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List of abbreviations

Hokui	*Hokui Gojūdo*
NHS	*Nikkan Heimin Shinbun*
OHS	*Osaka Heimin Shinbun*
SHS	*Shūkan Heimin Shinbun*

Notes:

- Following normal usage, Japanese and Chinese names appear with the surname first, except in instances where the Japanese or Chinese author publishes primarily in English.
- Macrons are used to indicate a lengthened vowel, except in the case of well-known place names or other terms familiarly used in the English language.
- Chinese words, including names, have been rendered into the internationally accepted pinyin system of romanization, except when the older Wade-Giles system appears in the original document.

The Agrarian Foundations of Early Twentieth-Century Anarchism: Ishikawa Sanshirō's Revolutionary Practices of Everyday Life, 1903-1945

Nadine Willems, Hertford College
D.Phil in History, Hilary Term, 2015

This dissertation examines the link between anarchism and agrarian thought in modern Japan through the investigation of the life and ideas of radical intellectual Ishikawa Sanshirō (1876-1956). I track its emergence from the time of Ishikawa's involvement in the socialist movement in the early 1900s to its development during his exile years in Europe between 1913 and 1920 and then after his return home through to the end of the Pacific War. I show how concern for the traditions and condition of farming communities informed a certain strand of non-violent anarchism premised on environmental awareness and cooperative principles fostered through the practices of everyday life.

By rescuing from near historiographical oblivion a major dissenting figure of modern Japan, this study gives prominence to a distinctive anarchist intellectual contribution. I examine both the theoretical premises and related socio-political applications, highlighting Ishikawa's role for over five decades as a creative force of social change and a bulwark against authoritarianism. Thus, this work puts forward a more nuanced understanding of the movement of popular agrarianism that marked the interwar period, often pigeon-holed by historians as an adjunct of radical nationalism. I also probe the ecological critique embedded in Ishikawa's vision of the man-nature interaction, which remained vital over the decades and has direct relevance to present-day concerns.

The tracing of Ishikawa's connections, both transnational and within Japan, provides the main methodological axis of this study. It appraises dissenting politics through the lens of actual praxis rather than categorization of ideological differences. Likewise, transnational connections are given agency as a mutually creative process rather than as a unidirectional transmission of ideas and values from West to East.

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This dissertation examines the link between anarchism and agrarian thought in early twentieth-century Japan through the investigation of the life and ideas of radical intellectual Ishikawa Sanshirō (1876-1956). I show how concern for the traditions and condition of farming communities informed a certain strand of non-violent anarchism premised on environmental awareness and cooperative principles. In this project, I rescue from oblivion Ishikawa's vision of nature as a source of ethical knowledge and the emancipatory potential of the countryside and revolutionary change through the practices of everyday life. In the context of the times this was a radical alternative to the country's model of capitalist development.

In terms of methodology, this work moves away from the ideological categorization as a structuring device, focusing instead on the identification and examination of the freely formed associations of individuals which Ishikawa cultivated and which formed the basis of his activism. I emphasize the emotional ties that bound intellectuals and activists together rather than their differing ideological backgrounds. Through a focus on diaries, private correspondence and pamphlets, I trace non-institutional connections between these various protagonists, both within Japan and overseas, in order to recreate the context and understand the motivations of the politics of dissent of the period. This approach highlights hitherto little explored tensions inherent to Japan's rapid transformation into a capitalist society with its own ambitions on the world stage. It also leads to a reconsideration of the notion of a unidirectional flow of knowledge from West to East that has long dominated

historiography. I argue instead for the existence of an intricate web of transnational ties and congruence of ideas.

The bulk of this dissertation comprises four main chapters, ordered in roughly chronological order, each exploring a pivotal moment in the development of Ishikawa's activism. The second chapter, which follows the introduction, re-examines late Meiji socialism from the catalyzing effect of the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-5 to the aftermath of the High Treason incident of 1910-11 and Ishikawa's departure to Europe in 1913. I suggest that scholarship has failed to distinguish between two kinds of socialism. One was geared towards the cities and industrial workers, whereas the other one focused on the countryside and the plight of peasants. As a vocal representative of 'socialism for the countryside', Ishikawa laid the intellectual foundations of what would later become his anarchist vision. Thus, from an early stage, his understanding of rural daily living practices provided a basis for his reflection on the man-nature relationship and the importance of rootedness in one's immediate environment. Japan's bellicose intentions toward Russia rallied dissenters, who saw competition between states as starkly antithetical to agrarian practices of cooperation and solidarity. The people with whom Ishikawa associated at the time became victims of repression by the government. As one of the few activists who survived beyond the early 1910s', Ishikawa became the bearer of ideas he would promote for four decades afterwards.

The third chapter concentrates on Ishikawa's exile years in Europe between 1913 and 1920, underscoring the continuity of his thought and activism. I trace the multiple personal connections he initiated and nurtured during that period as the expression of a rich intellectual experience. I argue that he participated in the creation of a transnational community intent on the formulation of a new moral vocabulary,

which he would be instrumental in extending to the Far East. This vocabulary stressed egalitarian social bonds and the rejection of hierarchical categories in human realms. It was premised on the negation of artificially created dualities such as East and West, Buddhism and Christianity, man and nature, self and other, and higher and lower status amongst individuals and ethnic groups. Ishikawa's direct confrontation with the brutality of World War I reinforced his critique of capitalist modernity, particularly the dangerous human alienation from the natural world. Thus, this third chapter expands on ideas introduced in chapter two. For Ishikawa, the need to break human-made boundaries is paramount and the acknowledgement of an organic link between man and his environment is a pre-condition for the actualization of the potential of liberation through everyday practices.

The fourth chapter explores Ishikawa's activism upon his return to Japan in 1920, when he proceeded to promote his concept of democracy, which he called *domin seikatsu*. This constituted his model of a socio-political alternative to capitalism, one that privileged attachment to the soil and bonds of solidarity in human exchanges free from any state authority. My contention is that Ishikawa's vision offered a distinctive template for revolutionary change through the practices of daily life and that as such it gave Japanese anarchism a new impulse of a non-violent and non-authoritarian nature in the 1920s. I investigate in particular Ishikawa's role in the establishment of the Nōmin Jichikai, a nationwide network of farmers' self-governing councils. In the context of the confrontation between proponents of Bolshevism and anarchism, and, later, the rise of militarism, the Jichikai represented a third path, one that attempted to stay clear of Marxism and refused co-option by the forces of mounting nationalism. Though it advocated a return to the soil, this third path did not have any reactionary or essentialist elements. My examination of Ishikawa's

philosophy therefore complicates our understanding of the interwar period, giving anarchist agrarianism a place in its own right distinct from the nationalistic *nōhonshugi* strand of agrarianism with which it has been commingled by historians.

The fifth chapter demonstrates how everyday revolutionary practices championed by Ishikawa not only constituted a force of social change, but also embodied a crucial ecological critique of modern Japan. It focuses on the concept of interconnectedness or symbiosis as a determining factor in the process of interaction between man and the natural environment. This vision fits into an overall scientific and cultural framework of anarchist inspiration that gave it a unique resonance during the late 1920s and beyond. Through an exploration of Ishikawa's personal connections and theoretical output, I highlight the importance of the various principles that sustained this framework, such as non-linear temporality, nature as a source of ethical knowledge and the value of agricultural work. I pay particular attention to the philosophy of French geographer Elisée Reclus (1830-1905) - with which Ishikawa became familiar during his exile years - as a tool for him to articulate his thought on his conception of symbiosis and to promote related activism. I illustrate this through a case study of a group of poet-farmers settled in Hokkaido and their links to Ishikawa, showing how Japan's northern frontier represented a privileged site for the implementation of daily revolutionary practices that reflected ecological awareness and freedom from state interference. I argue that Ishikawa and his co-activists participated in a collective spirit of resistance aimed at undermining the logic of the state's imperialist project.

Each chapter develops a distinctive argument, while also highlighting how Ishikawa's dissenting practices posited themselves in a particular relationship to the state. Thus, the time of the Russo-Japanese War marked a period of outright

opposition to state authority. The exile years stressed Ishikawa's determined rejection of state borders. Activism amongst farmers and self-sufficient living during the 1920s showed his willingness to bypass the prescriptions of the state. The notion of the revolutionary potential of daily life practices represents a shift in later years towards a more subtle form of resistance.

The deep commitment to cross-border exchanges that defines Ishikawa's intellectual journey supplies a major line of inquiry for the present research and therefore brings it into the field of transnational history, understood in the strict sense of the term. In line with his anarchist convictions, Ishikawa rejected any institutional allegiance, whether to the political parties, universities or other official organizations that participate in the national project. As a result, he falls outside historiography's conventional state-centred narrative. The careful reconstruction of the transnational interactions he nurtured over the years reveals a complex picture of active connectedness that enriches our interpretation of the first decades of the twentieth century.

Likewise, Ishikawa's strand of anarchism requires its incorporation in the field of environmental history. His vision of the natural order sustained by the awareness of man's interdependency with his surroundings and the related ethical implications supplied the core of an ecological discourse crucial for our understanding of the period. The concept of *domin seikatsu* he put forward offered a socio-political model for the implementation of this discourse. Ishikawa embodies a thread of continuity between the environmental concerns of the early 1900s, made salient by the Ashio Copper Mine pollution incident, and post-war resistance to pollution disasters and over-exploitation of the natural world.

My unearthing of Ishikawa from virtual obscurity, despite his near ubiquity in the key intellectual movements of his time, adds an essential figure – and missing link - to the landscape of anarchism, both Japanese and global, during the first decades of the twentieth century. His key role in the development of an ecological critique and commitment to the plight of the peasantry underscore the singularity of his thought. The present study of the rich seam of dissent he represented should contribute to a reconsideration of Japanese intellectual life during that period.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

On 1st March 1913, a slim, studious-looking Japanese man in his mid-thirties boarded a French ship in Yokohama. He had been unable to obtain documents allowing him to leave from the authorities. So in lieu of papers, he had a note signed and stamped by Fernand Gobert, the sympathetic Belgian Vice-Consul in the city, falsely certifying that the man was travelling as his personal translator and language instructor.[1] A Chinese revolutionary living in Tokyo had helped with the expense of the trip. A close friend had given him his watch, another his suit. The whole affair had the air of a tense and desperate gamble.

The traveller's name was Ishikawa Sanshirō (1876-1956). As a journalist and self-proclaimed socialist, he was in a position that aroused constant monitoring by the Japanese police. Censors had just forbidden the publication of the *History of the Western Social Movement* he had penned. After harsh repression a couple of years earlier, in which several of his close friends had been executed, he feared for his life. Fleeing into exile was the only solution and so he waved goodbye to the Japanese coast. After a stopover in Shanghai where he visited other Chinese revolutionaries, Ishikawa made the slow journey to France, finally arriving in Marseille after thirty-

[1] *Ishikawa Sanshirō papers*, Honjō City Library, Foreign correspondence, N. 17: Gobert to Ishikawa (11 Jan. 1913).

eight days at sea. He had little money, did not know French or anyone in the country, and genuinely wondered how he was going to stay alive.[2]

Thus started a seven and a half year spell of self-imposed exile, possibly making of Ishikawa the only Japanese citizen with that status in Europe at the time. On a few occasions, the 'wanderer' – as he called himself – came close to an early demise. But he managed to survive against the odds, which included a close confrontation with the outbreak of World War I in Belgium. He gradually transformed his years of exile into an emotionally and intellectually rich experience. His lucky escape, however, signified more than a change of destiny. It also meant the survival of the ideas he had defended until then and of which he would act as a trusted repository for the remaining forty-five years of his life.

From the outset, at the core of Ishikawa's activism was a commitment to improving the condition of peasant communities and a related vision concerning the place of man in his natural surroundings. These preoccupations, developed in the early 1900s, remained with him throughout the exile years and beyond. They sustained the specific brand of anarchism he championed, while his transnationalist engagement added a further dimension. Most of Ishikawa's accomplishments, however, have escaped historians' notice.

This dissertation examines the link between anarchism and agrarian thought in early twentieth-century Japan through the investigation of the life and ideas of radical intellectual Ishikawa Sanshirō. I show how concern for the traditions and condition of farming communities informed a certain strand of non-violent anarchism premised on environmental awareness and cooperative principles that offered an alternative to the country's model of capitalist development. I resurrect the Japanese intellectual's

[2] Ishikawa Sanshirō, *Chosakushū* (Collected works) (8 vols, Tokyo, 1977), vol. 8, pp. 299-306.

vision of nature as a source of ethical knowledge and the associated concepts of the emancipatory potential of the countryside and revolutionary change through the practices of everyday life. I also offer a reconsideration of the supposedly unidirectional flow of knowledge from West to East during the period, arguing instead for the existence of an intricate web of transnational ties and congruence of ideas.

Ishikawa's engagement with the global process of knowledge exchange during the first decades of the twentieth century spurred my interest and supplies one of the major threads of questioning that runs through this dissertation. Because it lies so obviously at the intersection of multiple intellectual threads – political, scientific, cultural and spiritual - his thought transcends conventional anarchist ideals and has the potential to give fresh significance to the wider spectrum of Japan's modern intellectual history.

The anarchist strand Ishikawa represented for over five decades acted as a creative force of social change, a bulwark against authoritarianism and the channel of an ecological critique. Yet, the over-emphasis in historiography on the Marxist and modernization theories has obscured its significance. The tracing of Ishikawa's life and thought I undertake in this study highlights hitherto little explored tensions inherent to Japan's rapid transformation into a capitalist society with its own ambitions on the world stage. His intellectual project also resounds powerfully with the environmental preoccupations and occupational protest movements that have come to the fore in recent years.

Though he was for fifty years a leading political dissenter, Ishikawa was neither a Marxist, nor a communist, nor a social democrat, not an advocate of violence. He remained for most of his life entirely free from any form of institutional

allegiance, which makes him hard to locate using a fixed grid of analysis. A prominent journalist and activist, he was not only ubiquitous in the intellectual movements of his time, but also played a pivotal role in several of them. As a socialist sympathiser, he opposed the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5 and campaigned on behalf of pollution victims of the Ashio Copper Mine, the cause of Japan's first environmental protest. He was engaged in feminist debates, interested in the Esperanto language and preoccupied with rural issues. Like many political dissenters, he was subjected to censorship and repression. He fled Japan after the execution of his friend Kōtoku Shūsui (1871-1911) and eleven other dissidents for alleged involvement in a plot to assassinate the emperor Meiji.

Once overseas, he mingled with various activists of anarchist disposition in England, Belgium, France and Morocco. He met English social philosopher Edward Carpenter (1844-1929) and lived mostly with the family of Paul Reclus (1858-1941), the nephew of famed French anarchist and geographer Elisée Reclus (1830-1905). The writings of both Carpenter and the latter Reclus provided him with a source of reflection until the end of his life. A direct confrontation with the brutality of World War I in 1914 and agricultural work while at the Reclus' house in South West France were further key experiences during his years of exile.

Upon his return to Japan in 1920, Ishikawa laid out the theoretical foundations of his own democratic project, which he called *domin seikatsu* (土民生活), literally 'life of people of the earth'. To this, he added practical experiments in individual self-sufficiency living and socio-political organization through the establishment of a network of farmers' self-governing councils, the Nōmin Jichikai (農民自治会). From that time onward, Ishikawa worked on the translation and diffusion of Elisée Reclus's geographical writings. He also pursued historical research, increasingly

focusing on the Asian continent. He spent the war years living off his own means and remained until his death in 1956 an ardent advocate of the anarchist mode of socio-political organization.

The unearthing of Ishikawa's ideas and actions makes salient the link between agrarian-based thought and early twentieth-century Japanese anarchism. At the same time, the study of this link brings a fresh understanding to the various intellectual movements in which he engaged over the years. It gives for example full meaning to the opposition by dissenters of the regime to the Russo-Japanese War as an ideological stance partly grounded in concerns for the plight and traditions of the peasantry. This first expression of activism provided the building blocks for the development of the anarchist strand Ishikawa would represent further on, one always mindful of lessons drawn from the everyday life of farming communities. Likewise, attention to rural issues shaped his participation in the formulation of an ecological critique and suggests their relevance when tracing the genealogy of this critique.

Scattered mentions of Ishikawa in English language historiography qualify him as a 'socialist' who later on became 'anarchist'. The conventional grasp we have of these terms, however, hardly gives credit to the breadth of his knowledge and intellectual curiosity, as they also do not account for the actual 'doing' in multiple fashions that characterized his activism. Versed in a wide range of Western works, from English progressive political ideas to the French artistic avant-garde and ancient Greek philosophy, he was equally familiar with the Chinese classics as well as Japan's own literary tradition. The peculiarity of his thought stems from his stern opposition to any ideological current that in his view imposed constraints on individual or collective freedom. This motivated his condemnation of a series of

"isms", which included Bolshevism, social Darwinism, imperialism, militarism, fascism and popular agrarianism.

Despite some ambiguities and an occasional utopian bent, Ishikawa's resolute stance in favour of human agency against deterministic or coercive schemes during the pre-war decades and beyond sets him apart from the majority of his contemporaries. He has been called 'the conscience of Japan' (日本の良心) precisely for this steadfastness in the midst of a tumultuous era.[3] His literary production, which totals several thousand pages in essays, pamphlets, articles, correspondence, translations and monographs, reveals a multifaceted inspiration and a wealth of insights. Yet, in my view, Ishikawa was not only a thinker – the creator of an original corpus of ideas departing from accepted knowledge at a certain moment in time – but also a doer, a connector of people, places and knowledge. My dissertation privileges the investigation of his role as an intermediary and mediator. It considers his writings and actions in the context of the global history of entanglements that define the modern period.

A deep commitment to cross-border exchanges defines Ishikawa's intellectual journey, and hence supplies a major line of inquiry for the present research. It is a work of transnational history, understood in the strict sense of the term. In line with his anarchist convictions, my protagonist rejected any institutional allegiance, whether to the political parties, universities or other official organizations that participate in the national project. As a result, he falls outside historiography's conventional state-centred narrative. As a kind of renegade operating at the margins of formalized cultural, social and political circles, he defies attempts at easy categorization. But the careful reconstruction I undertake here of his transnational interactions over the years

[3] Mentioned in a 1956 eulogy by his friend Akita Ujaku (1883-1962).

reveals a complex picture of active connectedness that enriches our interpretation of the period.

Besides this transnational outlook, my work benefits from a variety of other historical perspectives. The analysis of Ishikawa's multiple aspirations and inspirations places this dissertation at the confluent of political thought and intellectual history. I particularly examine the process of articulation of ideas that related to human's interaction with nature in Japan at a certain moment in time. And though intellectual lineage is important – by this I mean the tracing back of the origin of these ideas – I especially focus on how they came to coalesce and be actualized through Ishikawa's agency.

Some aspects of social and economic history also come to the fore. My protagonist's interest in rural issues warrants the consideration of the specific conditions that governed the life of farming communities during the period under scrutiny. It provides for instance a means of contextualization for the perception of misery that was attached to the peasant class by Ishikawa and his cohort. I rely on other perspectives, derived from the history of science – notably when addressing the reception of Darwinism in Japanese intellectual circles - and cultural and environmental history. Each of these sub-fields offers a specific lens of analysis that helps to situate my protagonist and his actions within the complex flux of events and ideological currents that characterized the first half of the twentieth century.

AGRARIAN-BASED THOUGHT IN ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY

The large place I devote to issues relating to the farming communities and the agricultural sector is guided by simple factual considerations. By the turn of the century, the proportion of Japan's active population in primary industries (farming, fishing and forestry) was still seventy-two per cent, whereas it was only nine per cent in the UK. Likewise, in 1898, eighty-two per cent of the Japanese population lived in towns and villages of less than ten thousand people.[4] Given the comparatively high share of the agrarian sector in the economy, one can suspect that rural issues played a key role in the country's historical development. Historiography, however, only partly reflects the discussion of these issues. Few major studies have followed Thomas Smith's classic volume on the agrarian origins of modern Japan.[5] They include an analysis of the rural economy in its active contribution to development,[6] and most noticeably Ann Waswo's illuminating body of work on the changing social aspects of rural life during the era of rapid industrialization.[7]

Theoretical preconceptions account to some extent for this relative neglect of the role of farmers' communities in the making of modern Japan. For 'modernization-theorists', the agricultural sector acted mainly as a passive source of labour, taxes and products at the service of industrial growth and is therefore not given agency in attempts to explain the country's rapid capitalist conversion.

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[4] Bank of Japan, *Hundred Years Statistics of the Japanese Economy* (Tokyo, 1966), pp. 14, 374.
[5] Smith, Thomas, *The Agrarian Origins of Modern Japan* (Stanford, 1959).
[6] Francks, Penelope, *Rural Economic Development in Japan: from the Nineteenth Century to the Pacific War* (London, 2006); see also Hunter and Ogura (eds), *Agricultural Developments in Modern Japan*, 2nd edn (London, 2000).
[7] Waswo, Ann, *Japanese Landlords: the Decline of a Rural Elite* (Berkeley, 1977); Waswo, Ann and Nishida Yoshiaki, *Farmers and Village Life in Twentieth-Century Japan* (London, 2003); Waswo, Ann, 'The Transformation of Rural Society, 1900-1950' in Duus (ed), *The Cambridge History of Japan: the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, 1989); Nagatsuka Takashi, *The Soil: a Portrait of Rural Life in Meiji Japan* (transl Ann Waswo) (London, 1989).

Likewise, the prevalence of the standard Marxist analysis privileging the role of the urban proletariat tends to keep farmers in the shadows of historical analysis. Scholarship has thus devoted most efforts to the study of modernization in terms of how the state and cities shaped the transformation of the country after 1868. Sheldon Garon's seminal book about the molding of everyday life by state policies remains representative of this historiographical trend,[8] as does Carol Gluck's analysis of the role of the Meiji national discourse in the formation of modern Japan.[9] Urban social, economic and cultural change has likewise attracted much interest.[10]

Theoretical considerations aside, the relative lack of attention to rural developments may be understandable– after all, sources are less abundant and transformations a priori less sweeping in the countryside. It is my contention, however, that the richness of rural intellectual life is too often underestimated. It deserves more scrutiny, particularly because its subtle alterations, often locally differentiated, sustain and define socio-political organization. Cultural historian Irokawa Daikichi has shown that beneath the surface of uniformity and obedience, village communities cultivated a range of ideas that in their own way acted to resist the dominant ideological axis imposed on them by the modernization project of the Meiji rulers.[11] But, as I develop further in this dissertation, the exploration of later intellectual trends, especially that of *nōhonshugi* (popular agrarianism) in the 1920s and 30s, relies with a few exceptions on simplified labeling.[12] In other words, the

[8] Garon, Sheldon, *Molding Japanese Minds: the State in Everyday Life* (Princeton, 1997).
[9] Gluck, Carol, *Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period* (Princeton, 1985).
[10] Representative works include Sand, Jordan, *House and Home in Modern Japan: Architecture, Domestic Space and Bourgeois Culture, 1880-1930* (Cambridge and London, 2003); Silverberg, Miriam, *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense: the Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times* (Berkeley, 2006); Tipton and Clark (eds), *Being Modern in Japan: Culture and Society from the 1910s to the 1930s* (Honolulu, 2000).
[11] Irokawa Daikichi, *The Culture of the Meiji Period* (transl Marius Jansen) (Princeton, 1985).
[12] See Chapter 4.

black-and-white depiction of the countryside as either steeped in inertia or as the locus of radical politics of the left and right needs further nuancing.

Historians may otherwise miss out on intellectual undercurrents that could prove crucial for a coherent understanding of the period under study. A case in point refers to the transmission of environmental thought and practices from the Tokugawa era (1603-1868) to the present. The exploration of the life of rural communities in the pre-modern period has generated exciting results in the field of environmental history. Conrad Totman's analysis of forestry management in the pre-industrial era touches upon the essential themes of depletion of resources versus sustainability and the variations over time of the interaction between man and nature.[13] More recently, Philip Brown has looked at the use of common land by villagers and, amongst other things, its significance as a means of adapting to changing natural surroundings.[14] Because village life and agricultural work act as primary sites of intermediation between man and nature, it is often where a philosophical vision of this relationship originates, whether explicitly or implicitly.

The environmental historiography of the Meiji period comprises several works related to the Ashio Copper Mine pollution incident, which stretched from the 1880s to the early 1910s.[15] The event concerned Ishikawa Sanshirō directly through his association with conservationist Tanaka Shōzō (1841-1913) and his awareness of the

[13] Totman, Conrad, *The Green Archipelago: Forestry in Pre-Industrial Japan* (Berkeley, 1989).
[14] Brown, Philip, *Cultivating Commons: Joint Ownership of Arable Land in Early Modern Japan* (Honolulu, 2011); see also Morris-Suzuki, Tessa, 'Environmental Problems and Perceptions in Early Industrial Japan', in Elvin and Liu (eds), *Sediments of Time: Environmnent and Society in Chinese History* (Cambridge, 1998).
[15] Notehelfer, Fred, 'Japan's First Pollution Incident', *Journal of Japanese Studies* (1975) 1-2, pp. 351-83; Pyle, Kenneth, 'Symposium: the Ashio Copper Mine Pollution Case - Introduction: Japan Faces her Future', *Journal of Japanese Studies* (1975) 1-2, pp. 347-50; Stolz, Robert, 'Nature Over Nation: Tanaka Shōzō's Fundamental River Law', *Japan Forum* (2006) 18-3, pp. 417-37; Stone, Alan, 'The Japanese Muckrakers', *Journal of Japanese Studies* (1975) 1-2, pp. 385-407; Strong, Kenneth, *Ox Against the Storm: a Biography of Tanaka Shōzō, Japan's Conservationist Pioneer* (Tenterden, 1977).

plight of Yanaka village, the most prominent casualty of the environmental crisis. It highlighted the re-emergence of a discourse that attempted to gauge the acceptable limits of human impact on nature and assess man's place in the cosmological order. This discourse surfaced once again prominently in the post-war era with the recognition of the widespread consequences of industrial pollution amongst the population, namely the big four diseases caused by chemical poisoning. Historians have emphasized the narrative of ecological imbalances and helplessness of victims in an era dominated by high growth and the unfettered exploitation of the material world.[16]

This reads, however, as if environmental concerns had been entirely eradicated from collective consciousness between the death of Tanaka Shōzō in 1913 and the end of the Pacific War. I argue on the contrary that one can detect in the study of anarchism during the three decades under consideration a specific 'practice of nature' that answered these concerns. I show here that Ishikawa was the articulator and executor of a vision of the natural order sustained by the awareness of man's interdependency with his surroundings and the related ethical implications. I further suggest that his lifelong engagement with the rural world supplied the necessary context for the formulation of this vision.

Although, after the Ashio Copper Mine pollution incident Ishikawa refrained from active campaigning in favour of specific environmental issues, he always placed the man-nature relationship at the centre of his reflections. This is why the political thought he developed over time supplies the tenets of a key ecological discourse. I show in the last chapter how it culminated during the decade that preceded the Pacific

[16] See for example George, Timothy, *Minamata: Pollution and the Struggle for Democracy in Postwar Japan* (Cambridge, 2001); Walker, Brett, *Toxic Archipelago: a History of Industrial Disease in Japan* (Seattle, 2010).

War. In Ishikawa's vision, the emphasis of *domin seikatsu* on lived experience in the 'here and now' – what I call 'rootedness' – and unmediated relationship to the natural world intrinsically demands of man that he act as an ecological guardian. It suggests that in the vast and limitless web of interconnectedness in which he is only one tiny and finite element, he must choose cooperation with, over subjugation of, the natural world. Moreover, the everyday, or *seikatsu*, is the locus of deployment of cooperative practices, most conspicuously so in agrarian communities.

Against the growing and dangerous disconnection between man and nature, Ishikawa thus offered a mode of participation in the world that would indefinitely follow nature's template as much as preserve it. Scholars have stressed that some intellectual currents of the interwar period, such as Tolstoyanism or 'vitalism' (*seimeishugi*), fed into aspects of the concept of 'nature' and helped it develop into a major preoccupation.[17] The present work illustrates that making a linkage with the actual life and condition of farming communities, as did Ishikawa, gives meaning to these and other currents in the framework of environmental history.

The relative historiographical obscurity in which my protagonist has remained for so long thus masks his role in the persistence of a crucial ecological critique. Anarchists Kōtoku Shūsui and Ōsugi Sakae (1885-1923), who famously perished young and of violence at the hand of the state, have attracted a great deal of scholarly interest.[18] Ishikawa, for his part, lived until the age of eighty, without much notice from English-language academia. Typically, he has been dismissed as falling into oblivion by leaving the country,[19] or retreating to the realm of abstract theory.[20] In his

[17] See chapter 4.
[18] Notehelfer, Fred, *Kōtoku Shūsui: Portrait of a Japanese Radical*, (Cambridge, 1971); Stanley, Thomas, *Ōsugi Sakae, Anarchist in Taisho Japan: the Creativity of the Ego,* (Cambridge, 1982).
[19] Stanley, *Ōsugi Sakae*, p.53.

2014 monograph, Robert Stolz provides an exception to this neglect by devoting a chapter to Ishikawa, where the latter appears as a proponent of a 'social ecology of liberation'.[21] As such, the Japanese intellectual plays a part in the continuation of an essential environmental discourse. But by stressing Tanaka Shōzō's legacy at a theoretical level, Stolz somewhat glosses over Ishikawa's conception of anarchist thought and practice in its own right, one that developed not only from the transmission of ideas, but more saliently from actual engagement in the local and transnational movements of his times.

Likewise, although it recognizes Ishikawa's singularity amongst the progressive thinkers of his generation, Japanese language academia tends to focus on investigation of the straightforward lineage and importing of ideas. The handful of authors who have examined his thought remain constrained by a narrow definition of anarchism as a purely political set of ideas or a partial appreciation of his transnational engagement. Nevertheless, the present dissertation is much indebted to the detailed and in-depth knowledge conveyed by Japanese scholarship on the subject.[22]

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[20] Notehelfer, *Kōtoku Shūsui,* p.201; Ishikawa is, however, the focus of two Master's theses: see Schnick, Daniel, 'Walking the Thin Line: Ishikawa Sanshirō and Japanese Anarchism' (Univ. of British Columbia Master's thesis, 1995); Pitteloup, Cyrian, 'La pensée du peuple de la terre'. L'anarchisme agraire d'Ishikawa Sanshirō au début du XXe siècle' ('The thought of the people of the earth'. The agrarian anarchism of Ishikawa Sanshirō at the beginning of the twentieth century) (Univ. of Geneva Master's thesis, 2011).

[21] Stolz, Robert, *Bad Water: Nature, Pollution and Politics in Japan, 1870-1950* (Durham, 2014).

[22] See amongst others Kitazawa Fumitake, *Ishikawa sanshirō no shōgai to shisō* (The life and thought of Ishikawa Sanshirō) (3 vols, Tokyo, 1974); Inada Kyōko, *Kyōsei shisō no senkuteki keifu: ishikawa sanshirō to eduādo kāpentā* (Vision and lineage of ideas of symbiosis: Ishikawa Sanshirō and Edward Carpenter) (Tokyo, 2000); Nishiyama Taku, *Ishikawa sanshirō no yūtopia: shakai shisō to jissen* (The utopia of Ishikawa Sanshirō: social thought and activism) (Tokyo, 2007); Nozawa Hideki, 'Ishikawa sanshirō ni okeru erize.rukuryu no shisō: sono juyō to sai' (The thought of Elisée Reclus according to Ishikawa Sanshirō: importance and difference)*, Chirigaku Hyōron* (2006) 1, Tokyo, pp. 837-856; Ōhara Ryokuhō [Ōsawa Masamichi], *Ishikawa sanshirō: tamashii no dōshi* (Ishikawa Sanshirō: priest of the soul) (Tokyo, 1987); Oka Saburō, *Jinrui kara yomu "kojiki" no shinwa: ishikawa sanshirō "kojiki shinwa no shinkenkyū" (1921-1950) no keishō hatten no tame ni* (The myths of the

EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY JAPANESE ANARCHISM

The broad-brush image of anarchism as a violence-prone anti-authoritarian ideology has remained powerful, partly obscuring the scientific and moral dimensions of the movement.[23] It is true that several historical anarchist movements have been founded on acts of violence – as illustrated by the assassination of Tsar Alexander II by members of the radical group Narodnaya Volya in March 1881 - but by no means all. Western scholarship has added its own bias to the study of pre-war Japanese anarchism, characterizing it mostly as a reaction to a modernization process measured by Western concepts and experience. Contrary to this view, my work is premised on the notion that there exists multiple facets to anarchism and that its ambition as a competing model of socio-political organization easily reaches beyond the clichés of destructiveness and reactionary nostalgia often used to qualify it.

Until recently, the figures of Kōtoku and Ōsugi tended to define Japanese anarchism in historiography, with the former's alleged involvement in the plot to kill the emperor reinforcing its violent image. Sho Konishi's introduction of the concept of 'cooperatist anarchist modernity', however, offers an entirely new way of comprehending the contribution of anarchism to the country's intellectual life from the Meiji Restoration onwards. By releasing our understanding of anarchism from the theoretical and conceptual logic of Western modernity, he highlights the creative, non-reactionary input and multiple possibilities it represented in the cultural, social and scientific spheres as much as the political realm.[24] I inscribe my work within this

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kojiki from the viewpoint of the history of races: successive developments in Ishikawa Sanshirō's "New studies of the myths of the *kojiki*") (Tokyo, 2013).

[23] Fleming, Marie, *The Anarchist Way to Socialism: Elisée Reclus and Nineteenth-Century European Anarchism* (London, 1979), p.22.

[24] Konishi, Sho, *Anarchist Modernity: Cooperatism and Japanese-Russian Intellectual Relations in Modern Japan* (Boston, 2013).

new historiographical framework, of which the investigation of Ishikawa's life and thought is a potent illustration. My protagonist was also a proponent of non-violent solutions in his outlook and actions and affirmed as much on many occasions.[25]

Contemporary scholarship recognizes the necessary link between anarchism and ecological thought, stressing that 'nature is a network, not a hierarchy'.[26] The imposition of a static order on it from outside is a denial of the dynamic equilibrium that governs it, and hence of the principles of non-hierarchy and interrelatedness that are at the heart of anarchist philosophy. With his theory of mutual aid and observation of cooperative practices in the natural world, Russian geographer and anarchist Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921) inferred the existence of this link early on. Japan's early twentieth-century progressive thinkers were in turn well aware of the Russian's writings, since they were amongst his first translators into Japanese. What I examine here is Ishikawa's development of a distinctive vision of nature and the related praxis, one that was not only ecologically minded but also shaped by the country's socio-political tensions of the time.

To this, I add the transnational dimension necessary to the proper study of a thinker and traveller such as Ishikawa. Historians have paid much attention to the universalist understanding and ambitions of anarchism. Indeed, the anarchist tradition expresses a core preoccupation with all forms of injustice and exploitation, underlining common class interests worldwide, regardless of borders, culture, race and sex.[27] These global aspirations have reflected themselves in multiple international contacts, as well as supplied the basis for a pervasive ideological

[25] For example, Ishikawa Sanshirō, *Chosakushū,* vol. 5, p. 416.
[26] Martin, Thomas, 'New Remedies or New Evils?', in Jun and Wahl (eds), *New Perspectives on Anarchism* (Plymouth, 2010), p. 364.
[27] Schmidt, Michael, and van der Walt, Lucien, *Black Flame: the Revolutionary Class Politics of Anarchism and Syndicalism* (Oakland, 2009), p. 7.

opposition to militarism and imperialism. For a long time, however, scholarship centered on the various institutions and organizations established to articulate labour and socialist internationalism. As David Berry and Constance Bantman point out, only recently has it recognized the necessity of addressing the significance of individual and network-based activism.[28] This is what Benedict Anderson accomplishes in *Under Three Flags*. His engagement with the life and writings of late nineteenth-century Filipino intellectuals helps reveal the gravitational force of anarchism on a global scale while stressing the importance of key personal connections in the circulation of ideas of resistance to the colonial order.[29]

The present dissertation is inspired by such an approach. It too traces global intellectual flows through the exploration of individual experiences, but at a time when the international ripples of the European anarchist movement had become less intense, therefore less obvious. Its focus on Japan, whose own growing imperialist ambitions marked the era, extends the scope of research both geographically and conceptually. The importance of the country as a hub of transnational connections has started to gather interest amongst historians.[30] I follow in their footsteps, thus illustrating an aspect of the cross-border integration process typical of the modern period as it unfolded outside the conventional framework of state-to-state relations.

This perspective helps to challenge some ingrained assumptions governing the historiography of modern Japan. The greatest focus has been on intellectual

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[28] Bantman and Berry (eds), *New Perspectives on Anarchism, Labour and Syndicalism: the Individual, the National and the Transnational* (Newcastle, 2010), p. 7.
[29] Anderson, Benedict, *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-Colonial Imagination* (London, 2005).
[30] Konishi, Sho, *Anarchist Modernity* (2013); Rapley, Ian, 'Green Star Japan: Language and Internationalism in the Japanese Esperanto Movement, 1906-1944' (Oxford Univ. Ph. D. thesis, 2013); though not about anarchism per se, the following work also traces non-state connections: Ambaras, David with Magill, Michèle, 'Dans le piège du fourmilion: Japonaises et Fujianais aux marges de l'Empire et de la nation' (In the trap of the antlion: Japanese women and Fujian men at the margins of Empire and nation), *Vingtième siècle. Revue d'histoire* (2013) 120, pp. 125-37.

exchanges as the transfer of knowledge, often embodied in key texts, from a fully modern space to one aspiring to civilization and enlightenment. A text is thus treated as an import whereby a receiving country unilaterally incorporates ideas and concepts from the country of origin. Typically, travels to Europe of scholars and thinkers are described as part of a process of absorption and integration of Western ideas in order to define Japanese identity.[31] This understanding tends to disregard the impact of elements extraneous to the text and thought itself, such as the actual manner of its transmission or the mutuality of exchange. In the Japanese context it establishes the East-West duality as the core frame of reference for the study of intellectual history.

A real commitment to transnationalism, however, exists apart from any state apparatus and functions through unconventional or hidden channels of interchange. As my protagonist's trajectory exemplifies, it finds a place in the enduring anarchist tradition that encourages bonds of solidarity amongst like-minded activists across borders and racial boundaries.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PRACTICES OF EVERYDAY LIFE

The exploration of Ishikawa's life and thought brings up another conceptual issue related to the meaning of anarchism. In conventional thinking, anarchists are rightly thought of as revolutionaries. This latter term, however, represents in itself a new kernel of misunderstanding since it raises the question about accepted means of social transformation. If the aim is the free organization of life in society according to

[31] See for example Pincus, Leslie, *Authenticating Culture in Imperial Japan: Kuki Shūzō and the Rise of National Aesthetics* (Berkeley and London, 1996).

principles of association and cooperation, can the process of change and the preservation of the new order rely on force? In other words, how can we envisage radical social change without the immediate and deliberate obliteration of existing structures of power? For Ishikawa, who rejected parliamentary politics as another expression of a hierarchical apparatus, the answer is in the adoption of a vocabulary of 'social mutation', a gradual alteration of ways of thinking, being and interacting, as opposed to the sudden replacement of organizational assumptions.[32] His insistence that social transformation can be 'quietly' imparted through the practices of everyday life characterizes his political thought.

In contemporary parlance, it means that anarchism is not conceptualized as an achievable *project,* an end-result that as such would reflect Marxist thought. Rather, scholarship sees it as a protean *process* that continuously unfolds through the dynamics of direct action, mutual aid and voluntary association. It refers to a 'philosophy of everyday life, ingrained in its practitioners as a tool for survival, well-being and social change'.[33] In other words, the type of anarchism considered here does not so much find justification in a specific ideological line than in the actualization of daily life practices and their constant renewal. It is less concerned with reified structures than with individuals acting in the 'here and now'.

The evocation of everyday practices as a lever of radical political change may smack of utopianism. It is my contention, however, that the notion takes increased relevance when given proper theoretical backing. In order to understand the significance of the everyday and its transformative potential, and thus lend weight to Ishikawa's conception of 'revolution', I briefly consider here Henri Lefebvre's ideas

[32] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 3, pp. 67-70.
[33] Springer, Simon; Ince, Anthony; Pickerill, Jenny; Brown, Gavin, and Barker, Adam, 'Reanimating Anarchist Geographies: a New Burst of Colour', *Antipode* (2012) 44-5, p. 1594.

of space production and the related issue of lived experience in the making of the social sphere.

A leading French Marxist philosopher and sociologist, Lefebvre was a careful observer of the hidden mechanisms of capitalist society. He made a lasting impact in his native country on post-war avant-garde art, social theory and urban planning amongst other fields. Anglo-Saxon academia increasingly celebrates his philosophical acumen, which has given him a particularly strong following amongst cultural theorists, such as Kristin Ross, and progressive geographers like David Harvey and Edward Soja. Though his work relates in many instances to urban environment, his general critique of capitalist alienation, modernity and everyday life helps contextualize Ishikawa's anti-capitalist thought.

Lefebvre's point of departure is an appraisal of the philosophy of space from a historical perspective. He criticizes the idea that space is a given framework for the unfolding of human action - a kind of geographical landscape against which histories develop – and, instead, offers the understanding of space as a social construction. Central to this thesis is the notion that the present mode of production within society generates space, of which existence is inextricably linked to the experience we have of it. Formulated differently, it means that capitalist space is permeated with social relations, which produce it and are produced by it at the same time.[34]

Against the tendency to analyse space in terms of a simplifying fragmentation and 'decoupage', Lefebvre thus postulates a unifying concept of space tied to producing actors, hence in perpetual renewal. In his words, '(social) space is a (social) product… and the space thus produced also serves as a tool of thought and of

[34] Lefebvre, Henri, *State, Space, World: Selected Essays* (transl Neil Brenner and Stuart Elden) (Minneapolis, 2009), p. 186.

action.'[35] He adds that '(social) space is not a thing among other things, a product among other products: rather, it subsumes things produced, and encompasses their interrelationships in their coexistence and simultaneity…'[36]

Lefebvre also distinguishes between three separate but interdependent categories of space, what he calls the *conçu* (conceived), *perçu* (perceived) and *vécu* (lived). The first one refers to 'representations of space', which are tied to relations of production and are defined by the holders of knowledge – the code-makers - pertaining to the organization of these relations. The second notion concerns 'spatial practice', which encompasses production and reproduction and is specific to each social formation. It results from the dialectical interaction between the actualization of space and its domination by members of society. Thus, it is the empirical process of deciphering space that gradually uncovers this spatial practice. By the *vécu*, Lefebvre means 'representational spaces', which embody complex symbolisms and are linked to the underground side of social life.[37]

A crucial implication of the above is that space is always a site of appropriation and contestation – and in the philosopher's view this essentially means that a key function of social space is the reproduction of dominant relations of production. But an evocation of Lefebvre's thought is incomplete without discussing the idea of 'everyday life', which is evident throughout his oeuvre. While a strict reading of Marx sees alienation as something that belongs to the economic sphere, for Lefebvre, capitalism has increased its scope to govern the social and cultural world as well.[38] Everyday life has been colonized by capitalism, and so has its location: social

[35] Lefebvre, Henri, *The Production of Space* (transl Donald Nicholson-Smith) (Oxford, 1991 [1974]), p. 26.
[36] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 73.
[37] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space,* p. 33.
[38] Elden, Stuart, *Understanding Henri Lefebvre* (London, 2004), p. 9.

space.[39] The French philosopher expresses the negative aspect of this invasion into the quotidian by the term 'everydayness', which stresses the homogenous, the repetitive and the fragmentary in everyday life.[40] As he explains, the everyday is situated at the intersection of two modes of repetition, the cyclical, also found in nature, and the linear, which dominates in so called 'rational' processes. But 'in modern life, the repetitive tend to mask and crush the cycles.'[41]

The soul-destroying quality of everyday life in late capitalism and its encroachment into social space represent the core of Lefebvre's social theory. Despite its negative overtone, inherent in it is also the positive suggestion that everyday life has a transformative capacity. There is an implicit recognition that it can generate ruptures and subversion in the very process of reproduction of order and authority. Put differently, it means that daily life has revolutionary potential. Lefebvre's thought can be seen as the precursor of the ideas of occupational politics that have inspired anti-capitalist movements in recent years. Reference to the everyday – a concept that evokes banality - also proposes that change may not be the exclusive affair of elitist politics.

Much of Ishikawa's revolutionary aspirations can be related to the above theoretical framework. His disregard for institutional modes of knowledge production and dissemination suggests for example a conscious bypassing of the *conçu* and its imposition of a specific societal order. But it is his conception of *domin seikatsu* that best exemplifies the explanatory power of Lefebvre's framework. One of its manifestations is the encouragement of self-sufficient living at an individual level, operating in a loose network of interconnected units. There, Ishikawa associates the

[39] Elden, *Understanding Henri Lefebvre*, p. 117.
[40] Elden, *Understanding Henri Lefebvre,* p. 112.
[41] Lefebvre, Henri, 'The Everyday and Everydayness' (transl Christine Levich), *Yale French Studies* (1987) 73, p. 10.

accomplishment of true democracy with the everyday contestation of capitalist space. He urges a constant, daily refashioning of social relations on the basis of cooperative ethics, with the natural world also being a necessary element in this process. For him, *domin seikatsu* has the ability to appropriate and create a space that is outside of capitalist control, yet constitutive of democracy.

It is within a critique of modernity in all the aspects suggested by Lefebvre – everydayness, frictions in the conceived-perceived-lived space triad, the necessary spatiality of social transformation, the crushing of the cyclical – that I situate Ishikawa's intellectual quest.

BEYOND CATEGORIES OF BELONGING

The study of anarchism poses a conundrum. The subject of attention is premised on the rejection of institutional allegiances and leaves therefore fewer traces for the historian to gather and investigate. Unlike other ideological creeds that variously operate on the basis of adherence to political parties, organs of the state and other official associations, it primarily relies on personal contacts, informal meetings and makeshift or clandestine publishing to spread and actualize its message. My research presents the additional difficulty that the expressions of Ishikawa's brand of anarchism are not restricted to the political sphere. Rather, they are diffused into a multiplicity of realms – from the cultural and religious to the scientific and political - and draw from a wide range of inspirations. It is also a type of anarchism that manifests itself through unconventional activist practices.

In order to reflect this diversity and fluidity, I make for my protagonist an 'assumption of not belonging', meaning that I systematically question the ideological labels attached to him by contemporaries or subsequent historiography, such as 'Christian', 'socialist', 'proponent of direct action', 'agrarianism' and so forth. Instead, I focus on the human ties he initiated and fostered throughout four decades of activism. I explore the meaning of these ties in terms of motivation, common denominator, core values and emotional intensity. My methodological basis is thus the identification and examination of the free associations of people to which Ishikawa belonged and in which he often acted as a crucial node.

In recent years, scholars of global history have emphasized the need to look at the existence of networks in order to narrate the process of integration experienced by the world from the early modern era onward. Thus, maritime, trade, religious, diasporic, academic and other networks reflect the increasing connectivity that characterized this period and constitute one methodological means for historians to see what has so far been unseen.[42] In the field of global intellectual history, it stresses the role of knowledge brokers and intermediaries in the circulation of ideas.[43] From this perspective, the tracing of links across borders free from the paradigm of the nation-state can be revealing of the agency of less visible channels of exchange.

I apply in this dissertation a similar conception of interconnectedness amongst a variety of historical actors, seen as supplying the momentum behind the development of a specific strand of anarchism. My understanding of the term 'network', however, is not restricted to that adopted by global historians. As utilized in their field of endeavour, it carries at times the connotation of rigidity and

[42] See for example Osterhammel, Jürgen, *The Transformation of the World: a Global History of the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton and Oxford, 2014), p. 710-1.
[43] Moyn, Samuel, and Sartori, Andrew, 'Approaches to Global Intellectual History' in Moyn and Sartori (eds), *Global Intellectual History* (New York, 2013), p. 13.

organized, possibly hierarchical, status. It also implies that networks are made only of links across borders. Rather, I emphasize here the meaning of an entirely free and fluid association of people. Ishikawa's building of human connections operated unconstrained, reflecting at each juncture of his intellectual journey a concomitant engagement in ideas and activities, whether transnational or not, and regardless of the qualifying label ascribed to it. In order to designate the groups of people thus formed, I favour the use of words such as 'cohort', 'fellowship' or 'community'.

In her work on the history of emotions, Barbara Rosenwein has highlighted the notion of 'emotional communities', that is, groups of individuals tied together by a common system of feelings. Groups are defined by adherence to a similar valuation of emotions and their expression, and common recognition of affective bonds between people.[44] I borrow this notion as an additional conceptual tool in the belief that the identification of emotion-bound communities cuts across predetermined categories of belonging. It has the potential to alert to specific preoccupations, values and norms that would otherwise appear less evident. This tool is particularly fitting for the investigation of anarchist thought and practices, which are less inclined towards theoretical utterances than an awareness of the place of man in the concrete social realm of 'here and now'.

Due to the above considerations, a primary focus of my research is on private correspondence, diaries, and to a certain extent, memoirs. These sources often express in a direct manner feelings towards others and emotional responses to political or social issues. They help delineate the communities of people around Ishikawa that were committed to shared concerns and goals. Many articles published in periodicals were also written in epistolary form, reflecting the existence of bonds of

[44] Rosenwein, Barbara, 'Problems and Methods in the History of Emotions', *Passions in Context* (2010) 1, p. 11.

friendship and mutual appreciation. Letters I consulted in archives in Amsterdam, the US and Japan - written in French, English, Japanese and Chinese – convey the breadth of contacts nurtured by Ishikawa, often in distant locations. Many of these letters become here for the first time objects of historical inquiry.

I have also taken great care to look at initial printings (or their faithful reprints) of texts. Often, these convey features of a particular historical context, which are not found in posthumous collected writings. The layout of self-published pamphlets and periodicals, readers' letters, a few lines jotted on a postcard, illustrations and commentaries, notes in the margins of a manuscript, back-page advertisements - these are details that give an extra dimension to research and contain valuable information, not least the names and status of the various people involved in a project. Although I use Ishikawa's theoretical writings to illuminate his thoughts from a contextual standpoint, the focus is here on actions and interactions – in other words, how, why and with whom he tried to put his ideas into practice. My choice of sources derives from these methodological assumptions.

ISHIKAWA SANSHIRŌ'S INDIVIDUAL JOURNEY

This work is not a biography. I have chosen to make Ishikawa Sanshirō the main focus of my research because of his status as an outsider, someone who navigated the turbulence of his times through unconventional and unchartered channels. His individual trajectory appears as a means to illuminate larger historical events, specifically the link between agrarian-based thought and Japanese anarchism in the

early decades of the twentieth century. Ishikawa is the guide to my investigation, the provider of a lens through which I view occurrences of the past. The merit of this approach is to offer insights on events that would be concealed from almost any other angle.

One of the disadvantages is to present only a fragmentary narrative of his life and thought. Several aspects of his journey have been left out for the sake of consistency with my research objectives. This is so in the case of his involvement in post-war anarchist politics, including his controversial pro-Emperor declaration of 1945, because it has little direct relevance to rural concerns. Likewise, his affinity and interaction with China is here given only limited treatment despite the importance it holds in his overall intellectual development. An examination of sources related to his travels to China could shed further light on our understanding of his transnational engagement.

Additionally, because of its methodological orientation, this dissertation offers only an incomplete overview of Ishikawa's own theoretical contribution to anarchist thought. As an indefatigable independent scholar, he had the ambition of creating an original philosophical system, and his vast literary production attests to it. His forays into historical research and writings also demonstrate his willingness to reconsider conventional views of historical development. One of his major projects included for example revisiting the foundational myths of the *Kojiki* from a worldwide comparative perspective, a task he laboured upon almost until the end of his life.[45] These theoretical concerns provide contextual help to my work, but as an object of study per se, would warrant further attention.

[45] See Ishikawa Sanshirō, *Kojiki shinwa no shinkenkyū* (New research on the records of ancient matters) (Tokyo, 1950).

Even so, I believe that unearthing Ishikawa from virtual obscurity as I do here adds an essential figure – and missing link - to the landscape of anarchism, both Japanese and global, during the first decades of the twentieth century. His key role in the development of an ecological critique and commitment to the plight of the peasantry underscore the singularity of his thought. The present study of the rich seam of dissent he represented contributes to a recalibration of Japanese intellectual life during that period.

It is also clear that Ishikawa constantly operated on the borderline of contentious ideologies, such as communism, popular agrarianism and pan-Asianism. Yet, he maintained throughout his life a specificity of purpose that makes it impossible to conflate his views with these ideologies. Some ambiguities, however, were unavoidable, and I show here how the intellectual history of modern Japan benefits further from an awareness of the shifting ground on which my protagonist threaded.

The bulk of this dissertation comprises four main chapters. They are ordered in roughly chronological order, though there are some overlapping parts and explanatory flashbacks. Each chapter highlights a pivotal moment in the development of Ishikawa's activism. Each also reflects how dissenting practices such as his posited themselves in a particular relationship to the state. Thus, the time of the Russo-Japanese War marks a period of outright opposition to state authority. The exile years stress Ishikawa's determined rejection of state borders. Activism amongst farmers and self-sufficiency living during the 1920s show his willingness to bypass the prescriptions of the state, while the notion of revolutionary practices of daily life indicates a tilting of that stance towards a more subtle form of resistance.

In the following chapter, I re-examine late Meiji socialism from the time of the catalysing effect of the Russo-Japanese war to the aftermath of the High Treason incident and Ishikawa's departure to Europe. I suggest that scholarship has failed to distinguish between two kinds of socialism. One was geared towards the cities and industrial workers, whereas the other one focused on the countryside and the plight of peasants. This is a crucial distinction. As a vocal representative of 'socialism for the countryside', Ishikawa laid the intellectual foundations of what would later become his anarchist vision. Thus, from an early stage, his understanding of rural daily living practices provided a basis for his reflection on the man-nature relationship and the importance of rootedness in one's immediate environment. Japan's bellicose intentions toward Russia rallied dissenters, who saw competition between states as starkly antithetical to agrarian practices of cooperation and solidarity. The people with whom Ishikawa associated at the time became victims of repression by the government. As one of the few activists who survived beyond the early 1910s, Ishikawa became the bearer of ideas he would promote for four decades afterwards.

The third chapter concentrates on Ishikawa's exile years in Europe between 1913 and 1920, highlighting the continuity of his thought and activism. I trace the multiple personal connections he initiated and nurtured during that period as the expression of a rich intellectual experience. I argue that he participated in the creation of a transnational community intent on the formulation of a new moral vocabulary, which he would be instrumental in extending to the Far East. This vocabulary stressed egalitarian social bonds and the rejection of hierarchical categories in human realms. It was premised on the negation of artificially created dualities such as East and West, Buddhism and Christianity, man and nature, self and other, and higher and lower status amongst individuals and ethnic groups. I show how Ishikawa's direct

confrontation with the brutality of World War I reinforced his critique of capitalist modernity, particularly the dangerous human alienation from the natural world. Thus, this third chapter expands on ideas introduced in the second chapter. For Ishikawa, the need to break human-made boundaries is paramount and the acknowledgement of an organic link between man and his environment is a pre-condition for the actualization of the potential of liberation through everyday practices as they exist in the countryside.

In the fourth chapter, I explore Ishikawa's activism upon his return to Japan in 1920, when he proceeded to promote his concept of democracy or *domin seikatsu*. This constituted his model of a socio-political alternative to capitalism, one that emphasized attachment to the soil and bonds of solidarity in human exchanges free from any state authority. I argue that Ishikawa's vision offered a distinctive template for revolutionary change through the practices of daily life and that as such it gave Japanese anarchism a new impulse of a non-violent and non-authoritarian nature in the 1920s. I investigate in particular his role in the establishment of the Nōmin Jichikai, a nationwide network of farmers' self-governing councils. In the context of the confrontation between proponents of Bolshevism and anarchism, and, later, the rise of militarism, the Jichikai represented a third path, one that attempted to stay clear of Marxism and refused co-option by the forces of mounting nationalism. I show that advocating a return to the soil does not necessarily translate into reactionary thought. Through an examination of what sustained Ishikawa's philosophy, I offer a fresh interpretation of the interwar period, giving anarchist agrarianism, despite its ambiguities, a place in its own right distinct from the nationalistic *nōhonshugi* strand of agrarianism with which it has been commingled by historians.

The fifth chapter illustrates how everyday revolutionary practices championed by Ishikawa not only constituted a force of social change, but also embodied a crucial ecological critique of modern Japan. It focuses on the concept of interconnectedness or symbiosis as a determining factor in the process of interaction between man and the natural environment. I show that this vision fits into an overall scientific and cultural framework of anarchist inspiration that gave it a unique resonance during the late 1920s and beyond. Through an exploration of Ishikawa's personal connections and theoretical output, I highlight the various principles that sustained this framework, such as non-linear temporality, nature as a source of ethical knowledge and the value of agricultural work. I pay particular attention to the role of Elisée Reclus's geographical writings in providing Ishikawa with a tool to articulate his thought and activism. I also suggest that Hokkaido became the locus of daily revolutionary practices for which he offered a template of action. The group of like-minded thinkers with whom he associated chose a way of life that reflected ecological awareness and freedom from state interference. I contend that it represented a collective spirit of resistance, a deliberate act of disobedience aimed at undermining the logic of the state's imperialist project.

CHAPTER 2: SOCIALISM FOR THE COUNTRYSIDE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines Ishikawa Sanshirō's participation in the late Meiji socialist movement through his association with five other intellectuals. It focuses on his initial period of radical activism, that is, from 1903 when he first openly voiced political opposition to the Meiji administration, to his enforced departure to Europe in March 1913. I argue that the early 1900s marked an important divide between two kinds of socialism. One is directed at the cities and industrial workers, and has dominated historiography up to now. The other, championed by Ishikawa, addresses impoverishment in the countryside and the plight of peasants. Failure by academia to fully investigate Ishikawa's ideas and related practice, and the network of ties that prevailed at the time, has obscured the significance of this split. Far from representing a subsidiary aspect of Japanese socialist thought, a profound empathy for the living conditions of peasants informed one of its main strands, and sustained a network of intellectuals and activists for several decades afterwards.[1]

In 1903, as armed conflict with Russia appeared inevitable, Ishikawa and his cohort could not conceive of their mission for change without relating to the agrarian context with which they were familiar. Articulated in political terms, their

[1] I am grateful to Prof. Umemori Naoyuki and Prof. Imahashi Eiko for discussing these ideas with me.

preoccupations with rural issues supplied the basis for the anarchist thought they would formulate with increasing conviction over the following years. At its core was the perception of the countryside as the site of an unmediated – and thus uncompromised - relationship between humans and their natural environment. It also referred to a reality of daily living practices of cooperation and self-sufficiency essential to the existence of the socio-political model they advocated.

In his study of early twentieth-century Japanese anarchism, Sho Konishi assigns a new historical meaning to the Russo-Japanese War, as an event that played a pivotal role in clarifying competing visions of the future. He highlights the emergence at the time of anarchist conceptions of progress that valued the everyday life of ordinary people without identifying with the coercive legal entity of the nation-state.[2] The present investigation of Ishikawa's activism takes this argument further by showing how the development of a socialist commitment to rural issues identified the countryside as the potential locus of liberation from state oppression and capitalist domination. Such a focus reflected the economic reality of the times, when farming, fisheries and forestry occupied a much higher proportion of the population than the manufacturing sector. In that sense, Ishikawa and his cohort acted out of pragmatism. But my contention is that the image of the war helped to concretize anarchist aspirations in the agrarian realm.

The word 'socialism' is used here with reference to how Ishikawa and his friends themselves characterized their political inclination, though this was not necessarily in strict accordance with what have come to be the accepted principles of socialist doctrine. What they meant was an anti-authoritarian political outlook emphasizing equality and social ownership of the means of production. In reality,

[2] Konishi, Sho, *Anarchist Modernity: Cooperatism and Japanese-Russian Intellectual Relations in Modern Japan* (Boston, 2013), pp. 142-208.

socialism, communism, and anarchism were subject to a process of amalgamation, with little distinction made between the different types of ideological provenance, as Ishikawa readily admitted in later life.[3] The members of the cohort often differed with regard to the particulars and the means to achieve their professed goals. From the outset, however, their thought reflected an anarchist viewpoint that steered them away from a purely Marxist understanding of proletarian liberation.

From a historiographical perspective, the consequence of ignoring the split between rural and urban socialism is twofold. First, it has led most historians to conflate subsequent manifestations of agrarian thought, most notably the rural activism of the 1920s and early 30s, into one overall category of 'agrarian nationalism' that fuelled the rise of pre-war militarism.[4] As I demonstrate in chapter four, however, the anarchist principles that supported radicalism in the countryside at the time drew inspiration from the late Meiji socialist movement and were completely at odds with those of the reactionary agrarian fundamentalism. Second, the neglect by scholars of Ishikawa's representative role in this socialist movement has led to an incomplete assessment of the anarchist vision he promoted later in life, and subsequently, to a misguided appreciation of early twentieth-century Japanese anarchism. The attention to rural problems that coloured his socialism informed the rest of his intellectual journey, providing a line of continuity throughout the different stages of his activism.

As one of the very few members of his cohort who remained alive after the first decade of the twentieth century, Ishikawa became the leading advocate, refiner

[3] Ishikawa Sanshirō, 'Nihon museifushugi no yūrai' (The origins of Japanese anarchism), in *Nihon shakaishugi undōshi* (History of the Japanese socialist movement) (Tokyo, 1928), p. 81; see also Yamazaki Kesaya in conversation with Ishikawa Sanshirō, in Sōichi Ōya, 'Ikiteiru nihon shisōshi zadankai: taigyaku jigen zengo' (Round table on Japanese living history of ideas: around the High Treason incident), *Bungei Shunjū* (1950) 50, p. 64.
[4] See for example Hotta, Eri, *Pan-Asianism and Japan's War, 1931-1945* (Basingstoke, 2007), p. 65.

and perpetuator of an intellectual strand that had crystallized during late Meiji socialist campaigning. His encounter later on with the geographical writings of Elisée Reclus, with its emphasis on a balanced relationship between man and his natural environment and values of cooperation and non-hierarchy, helped to articulate and universalize his vision of a competing model to capitalist development. An understanding of the agrarian concerns inherent in his early political stance thus illuminates the development of a whole corpus of ideas that spanned five decades and a complex web of transnational exchanges.

Awareness of the split between 'urban' and 'rural' socialism also brings to the fore the difference of attitude on the part of activists towards the workers they vowed to support and organize. Historians' conventional assessment that Japanese socialism at the beginning of the century was 'hardly more than a philosophical movement of intellectuals, by intellectuals, and for intellectuals' is reductive.[5] While emphasizing the plight of peasants, Ishikawa's cohort expressed a commitment that went beyond a purely intellectual and, ultimately, patronizing standpoint. They related to the living conditions of small farmers at a concrete level, sharing with them an experience of the countryside and appreciation of man's relationship to the soil. In that sense, their activism was embedded in the very practices that motivated their political inclination. Ishikawa's concrete involvement in agrarian practices and protest in later years reflected this attitude.

This willingness to 'become one of them' contrasts for instance with the position of Ōsugi Sakae (1885-1923), who, as a leader of the anarcho-syndicalist movement until his violent death in 1923, focused his attention on urban workers and tended to adopt the posture of an ideologue distant from, or superior to, the masses he

[5] Gordon, Andrew, and Nimura, Kazuo, *The Ashio Riot of 1907: a Social History of Mining in Japan* (Durham and London, 1997), p. 200.

pledged to rescue from exploitation.[6] This distinction is crucial. It reveals that 'rural socialism' is naturally more inclined toward the enactment of practices than theoretical utterances. The *habitus* of the countryside, even when idealized, supplied the basis for political experiments in self-sufficiency and for the creation of a space that neither capitalism, nor the state, could co-opt.

In methodological terms, I explore in this chapter five individual narratives that intersected with Ishikawa's life at a personal as much as an intellectual level. I pay particular attention to the nature of the ties and motivations that bound these protagonists to each other and their emotional force. They formed what I identify as an 'emotional community' whose members were united by feelings of empathy towards the peasantry and the passionate desire to rescue it from oppression. By examining emotions both amongst activists themselves and toward society, I investigate their influence on human agency and the shaping of political behaviour.[7] Thus, I focus on people as vectors and practitioners of ideas, rather than sorting them into ideological categories. My analysis breaks free of the theoretical allegiances assigned to late Meiji socialists – such as Christian socialism or direct action - that have tended to obscure some of the cohort's most pressing concerns.

Woven together, the individual narratives I examine expose common preoccupations that the advent of the Russo-Japanese War made all too manifest, such as the perceived neglect and destabilization of the countryside caused by the nation-building efforts of the Meiji administration. The activists with whom Ishikawa chose to associate all denounced the plight of the beleaguered peasantry in fervent terms. Kōtoku Shūsui (1871-1911), known as a prominent leader of Japan's early twentieth-

[6] See for example Ōsugi Sakae, *Hyōronshū* (Collected essays) (Tokyo, 1996).
[7] Biess, Frank, 'Forum on the History of Emotions', in *German History* (2010) 28-1, pp. 67-80.

century anarchist movement, shared with him the intellectual platforms to express this outrage. Tanaka Shōzō (1841-1913), with whom Ishikawa campaigned in 1905 for victims of the Ashio Copper Mine pollution, inspired his vision of the man-nature relationship and the need for rural activism. Together with Uchiyama Gudō (1874-1911), a Buddhist monk living in the mountains, Ishikawa considered the links between religion and social action, while Morichika Unpei (1881-1911) supplied the cohort with the theoretical foundations of the idea of rural socialism. The untimely death of fellow dissenter Akaba Ganketsu (1875-1912) motivated Ishikawa to work for the survival into the future of their common ideals. These interconnected individual narratives made up the intellectual and emotional community which allowed radical thought to endure, modulate and re-emerge over the coming decades in spite of relentless authoritarian suppression.

'LIBERTY, EQUALITY, BROTHERHOOD'

Ishikawa Sanshirō's first significant ideological commitment took place in November 1903. In the context of mounting Japanese enthusiasm for armed hostilities against Russia, the young journalist quit the progressive daily *Yorozu Chōhō* (All Morning News), which had officially shifted to a pro-government stance, and joined the newly established Heiminsha (Society for the People), publisher of the *Shūkan Heimin Shinbun* (People's Weekly – referred to below as *SHS*), the country's first socialist paper and a vocal opponent of the war. Together with Heiminsha founders Kōtoku Shūsui and Sakai Toshihiko (1871-1933), he opposed the government's imperialist

ambitions head-on. This pivotal engagement supplied the intellectual basis for the formulation of a non-Marxist alternative to Japan's capitalist model of development, which he would refine over the following five decades.

The emblematic slogan of the French revolution provided apt first words for the opening issue of the new weekly. *SHS* was the brainchild of a group of committed dissenters interested in radical socio-political change rather than scrupulous followers of socialist dogma. They veiled their lack of consensus on ideological allegiances with a broad call for an international alliance between the oppressed classes. In that sense, they rode the wave of the global *fin de siècle* counter-imperialist discourse, which invoked Leo Tolstoy, Emile Zola and August Bebel amongst other proponents of a modern humanist vision.[8] But the conflict between Russia and Japan also provided a specific context that rallied their collective energy.

Nevertheless, such overt political opposition created 'a severe shock amongst Japan's progressive intellectuals'.[9] Historians have tended to see the first socialist press as a mouthpiece for Kōtoku, sowing the seeds of Marxism and violent anarchism that would later on dominate radical political opposition. His role in the 'non-war' movement, his early criticism of modern imperialism, his celebrated literary talent and fiery character all contributed to Kōtoku's prominence.[10] His conversion to anarchist tactics in 1907 and subsequent execution in 1911 with eleven other government opponents for conspiracy to kill Emperor Meiji guided historical writing about the era, thereby forging a strong but unwarranted link between all forms

[8] Middleton, Ben, 'Kōtoku shūsui to teikokushugi e no kongenteki hihan' (Kōtoku Shūsui and the radical critique of imperialism) (transl Umemori Naoyuki), *Shoki shakaishugi kenkyū* (Studies on early socialism) (1999) 12, pp. 134-93.
[9] Ishikawa Sanshirō, *Chosakushū* (Collected works) (8 vols, Tokyo, 1977), vol. 8, p. 89.
[10] The term 'non-war' is a literal translation of *hisen* (非戦), as the negation of the war and different from 'anti-war' (*hansen*/反戦), and was used only during the Russo-Japanese War.

of Japanese anarchism and political violence. The High Treason incident, which led to Kōtoku's death, silenced political radicalism for more than ten years and left him, recalls Ishikawa, as a 'name that one could not say in public for several decades afterwards'.[11]

In comparison, Ishikawa joined the *SHS* as an inexperienced, somewhat unassuming figure, even if his natural reserve concealed a passionate and determined personality.[12] He would soon second Kōtoku in many tasks, conspicuously joining in the non-war chorus, taking over editorship of what became the *Daily Heimin Shinbun* in 1907 and co-authoring articles with him, thus carrying much more responsibility amongst late Meiji socialists than that for which he has been credited. Kōtoku was a mentor and friend to him, one he trusted and respected for his loyalty to ideas and people, but Ishikawa's memory of his friend was forever coloured by the grim experience of retrieving his body from prison after the execution.[13]

Besides their different personalities, there were as many ideological reasons for contention as agreement between the two men. Unlike Ishikawa who dabbled in Christianity for a few years, Kōtoku rejected Western religious teachings. Also, his strong support for direct action as anarchist tactics diverged from Ishikawa's more ambivalent position on the matter, one that reflected his desire to be 'an educator,

[11] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 8, p. 248; for a recent analysis of the context and legacy of the High Treason incident, see Gavin and Middleton (eds), *Japan and the High Treason Incident* (Abingdon, 2013).
[12] Hiratsuka Raichō, *In the Beginning, Woman Was the Sun: the Autobiography of a Japanese Feminist,* Craig (ed) (New York, 2006), p. 209; Ishikawa Sanshirō, 'Rō' (wander), in *Shakaishugi bungakushū* (Collected socialist texts) (Tokyo, 1963), p. 209.
[13] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 8, p. 227. Ishikawa himself escaped this fate, partly because he was in prison at the time of police investigation into the alleged plot. On his release from prison in July 1910, he was interrogated but not charged.

rather than an agitator'.[14] About his mentor, he noted that the latter was 'more interested in revolution than in an ideal society'.[15] Likewise, Kōtoku's enthusiasm for Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921) contrasted with his young protégé's more cautious view of the Russian radical to whom he ascribed an overly mechanical view of anarchism and a propensity to agitation – at least in his early years.[16]

Yet, what the members of the *Heimin* cohort all had in common was compassion for those they perceived as powerless victims of modernization. They made a point of appealing to the emotional core of their readers, referring for instance to the 'desolate voice (of job seekers) resonating all over Japan's mountains, rivers, meadows and woods'.[17] The passion of their opposition to misery and exploitation compensated for the ideological blur of their political writings. But the vocabulary of indignation, which reached its zenith during these few years of unconstrained opposition, was no mere rhetoric. There was a sense of genuine empathy in their writings and activism. As Ishikawa recalled in his memoirs:

> When I think about it now, there is no doubt that the philosophical stance of the Heiminsha coterie was very naïve, even romantic. But the fact that a high spirit of humanism (高いヒューマニズムの精神) was permeating the chaos of the time is a beautiful thing I can't forget, even now. I think that Japan's socialism, communism, anarchism and the like were rooted in sound, fertile soil then.[18]

Real emotional force is a constant undercurrent in anarchist thought, which concerns itself more with man's place in a specific living environment than in an abstract (economic) structure. It is thus necessary to address the emotional nature of

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[14] Ishikawa Sanshirō, 'Kaiko gonen' (The past five years), *Dinamikku* (1 Oct. 1934), in Ishikawa Sanshirō's *Kojinshi* (self-published leaflet), reprint edition (Tokyo, 1974), p. 245.
[15] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 8, p. 243.
[16] Ishikawa, 'Erize shōden' (Short tale about Elisée), *Dinamikku* (Mar. 1930), in *Kojinshi*, p. 25; Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 8, p. 439; vol. 3, p. 231.
[17] *Shūkan Heimin Shinbun* (*SHS*) (22 Nov. 1903), vol. 11, in Shiryō kindai nihonshi – Meiji shakaishugi shiryōshū (Records from the history of modern Japan – Meiji socialism) (12 vols, Osaka, 1953-8).
[18] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 8, p. 101.

anarchist protest, of which Ishikawa was a leading representative, in order to understand its main preoccupations.

Attention to the darker by-products of industrialization had emerged in earnest in Japan a couple of decades after the Meiji Restoration of 1868. The publication in the mid-1890s' of *Nihon no kasō* (Japan's underclass), by Yokoyama Gennosuke (1871-1915), who lived for a while amongst the country's downtrodden populace, generated a comprehensive portrait of Japan's lower stratum, one that was suffused with deep sympathy (*kyōkan*). Proponents of socialist ideas quickly co-opted these 'humane feelings toward society'.[19] Mainly directed at factory work and the urban population, such texts amounted at first to the realization that capitalism brought not just liberation from feudal servitude but also a new kind of subordination in the form of dismal working conditions and precariousness.

The expression '*shakai mondai'* (social problems) became a familiar occurrence in the press, particularly in *Kokumin no Tomo* (The Nation's Friend), an influential periodical that Ishikawa credits for generating interest in socialist ideas before the turn of the century.[20] Frequent comparisons with England's urban poverty underscored the mission to introduce socialism to Japan. Katayama Sen (1859-1933), the pioneering labour leader, made much of the *shakai mondai* to substantiate his activism. With Abe Isō (1865-1949), a Unitarian preacher and professor of economics, he belonged to the first generation of Meiji socialists, for whom socialism was permeated with Christian notions of charity and had to prioritize urban issues

[19] Yokoyama Gennosuke, 'Nihon no kasō shakai' (The Japanese lower classes), in Sumiya et al (eds), *Yokoyama gennosuke zenshū* (complete works) (9 vols, Tokyo, 1972), vol. 1, p. 648.
[20] Kōtoku Shūsui and Ishikawa Sanshirō, 'Nihon shakaishugi' (Japanese socialism), in Yoshino (ed), *Meiji bunka zenshū: shakairon* (Complete works on Meiji culture: social discourse) (Tokyo, 1927), p. 353.

stemming from rapid economic development.[21] At this stage, their critique deplored unfettered capitalism's social consequences but did not resist the idea of economic progress. In other words, socialism did not clash with the nationalist and materialist assumptions of its supporters.[22]

With the non-war movement and the publication of the *SHS*, however, the tone changed. Opposition to the state itself, rather than to its poor managerial abilities and corruption, crept into the discourse. One of Ishikawa's own articles forcefully stresses that point in the January 1904 issue of the weekly, leading to a sales ban and prison terms for two of the Heiminsha members.[23] He goes further than condemning the war for the sacrifice it imposes on the people. He suggests that the only way to avoid conflict must proceed from negating altogether the idea of the state - 'this collectivity founded on self-interest and ambition' - and teaching children to become global citizens.[24] Only by cutting the bond between individuals and state governance, he claims, would people stop identifying with its war-inducing egocentric aspirations. The belief in borderless humaneness, bypassing institutional authority and revolution by education would sustain Ishikawa's philosophy for the rest of his life.[25] This experience of political dissent within the *SHS* signaled a break from the traditional urban socialism advocated until then by social campaigners such as Abe and Katayama.

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[21] Katayama was also particularly interested in English 'municipal socialism' (*toshishakaishugi*).
[22] Duus, Peter, and Scheiner, Irwin, 'Socialism, Liberalism, and Marxism, 1901-1931', in Duus (ed), *The Cambridge History of Japan: the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 663.
[23] Seven and five months respectively for Nishikawa Kōji (1876-1940) as publisher and Kōtoku as printer.
[24] *SHS* (6 Nov. 1904).
[25] I use the term 'humaneness' here as different from 'humanism' or 'humanitarianism'. It refers a broad concept I define as an ethical mode of participation in the world that values individual responsibility in society and non-sectarian empathy toward fellow human beings. See more on this notion in chapter 3.

ON THE SIDE OF PEASANTS

I suggest here that Ishikawa was at the core of an ideological shift that went together with his opposition to the state. The establishment of the Heiminsha marked the start of a period of increasing preoccupation with rural issues and how socialism – at least what it meant to the non-war cohort – could remedy rural ills. This shift can be seen as a reflection of the emergence at the time of a competing vision of progress, where cooperative practices of everyday life, rather than the framework of Darwinist competition, supplied the foundations for the advancement of human life.[26] I detail here how the countryside became the prime locus for the realization of these ideas.

Along with the urban problems (*toshi mondai*) that concerned late Meiji socialism, rural problems (*nōson mondai*) appeared as equally deserving of political attention. This new emphasis drew its impetus from the activities of the Heiminsha under Kōtoku's charismatic campaigning. A careful analysis of its publications confirms a shared interest in some of the issues facing the countryside: intensifying poverty, conflicts between landlords and tenant farmers, degradation of the natural environment, and overall neglect for the sake of urban modernization.

From the outset, activism developed as a personal engagement with local people in many far-flung rural areas. The first socialist weekly initiated a dialogue, appealing to its readers to give accounts of village life, such as farmers' difficulties, prices of fertilizers or land amalgamation.[27] 'How', reports a small tenant farmer from Yamanashi, 'can we afford to pay for expensive fertilizers? We end up borrowing at high interest rates from landlords, fall into debt, and when the harvest is insufficient to reimburse our loan, we lose house, cattle and horses, and then land in

[26] Konishi, *Anarchist Modernity*.
[27] *SHS* (24 Jan. 1904).

quick succession.'[28] Often, small tenant farmers are in conflict with landlords or just struggling to make ends meet. 'Ah! Until when will we be made to weep under the pressure of the landowners' system?' complains a farmer from Okayama prefecture, amongst the many who are given a voice.[29] In the same vein, columns feature the problem of farmers forced to change profession, the benefit they would draw from the establishment of consumer cooperatives, the hoarding of rice by landowners, an indictment of landholding monopolies as the cause of village decline, or simply various illustrations of rural desperation.[30]

The campaign for universal suffrage voiced by the late Meiji socialists supported these underlying preoccupations about rural inequalities. Kōtoku explains this in the *History of Japanese Socialism* that he penned together with Ishikawa in 1907. He deplores that the fact that the need to reduce the land tax and revise land values in the early 1890s was never seriously raised, not even by the progressive party at the time. He vilifies the system of representation introduced with the new Diet, pointing out that 'among the three hundred Diet members, not one was working for the benefit of small tenant farmers. In other words, the democratic parties (mintō/民党) then were simply parties for landowners…'[31] He adds that 'we called for the introduction of the universal suffrage in order to represent the interests of tenant farmers, not just factory workers.'[32] In February 1905, Kōtoku also criticized the Russian Social Democrats for focussing on the workers and neglecting the peasants.[33] In the declaration fronting the first issue of the *Daily Heimin Shinbun*, the 1907 short-

[28] *SHS* (24 Jan. 1904).
[29] *SHS* (24 Jan. 1904).
[30] *SHS* (6 Mar. 1904); (15 May 1904); (13 Dec. 1903); (18 Sept. 1904); (30 Oct. 1904).
[31] Refers to the Jiyūtō and Kaishintō, the political parties formed in the wake of the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement (see note 43).
[32] Kōtoku and Ishikawa, 'Nihon shakaishugi', p. 350. Kōtoku penned this section.
[33] Crump, John, *The Origins of Socialist Thought in Japan* (London, 1983), p. 50.

lived successor of the weekly, he calls for 'tenants angry at the cruelty of landowners to unite in brotherhood'.[34]

Though Kōtoku famously changed his views on the virtues of a parliamentary system and switched to direct action as preferred tactics in 1907, the plight of peasants was never an issue to be dismissed as unsuitable for socialist action. The paradox of siding with the peasants and invoking Marxist theory at the same time is fraught with ambiguity. On the 13th of November 1904, the *SHS* published a translation of Marx's *Communist Manifesto*, stressing in the introduction how central the text's influence was in the history of socialism and that it was no coincidence it should appear on the first anniversary of the Japanese weekly's publication.[35] The government banned the sale of the issue.

It is unclear whether the Japanese editorialists saw in 1904 the full implications of Marx's assertion in the *Manifesto* that 'the bourgeoisie … has created enormous cities, … and has thus rescued a considerable part of the population from the idiocy of rural life'.[36] Rather than the obliteration of the peasant class by the advent of the socialist era, my reading is that Ishikawa's cohort hoped for an era when tenant farmers would be free-standing, liberated from their economic servitude to land-owners. Instead of its *idiocy*, what they had in mind was a rescue from the *misery* of rural life. If they invoked Marxist ideals to oppose the Meiji regime, they did this by disregarding the German philosopher's latent antagonism toward the

[34] Kōtoku Shūsui, 'Sengen' (Declaration), *Nikkan Heimin Shinbun* (*NHS*) (15 Jan. 1907), in *Meiji shakaishugi shiryōshū* (Records from Meiji Japanese socialism) (12 vols, Tokyo, 1961), vol. 4, p. 1. The paper folded on 14 Apr. 1907.
[35] *SHS* (13 Nov. 1904).
[36] Engels, Friedrich, and Marx, Karl, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (transl Samuel Moore) (Moscow, 1969 [1848]), at https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/

peasant in the *Manifesto*.[37] Marxist theorists have usually given little credit to peasants' revolutionary ability to organize in order to improve their condition.[38] The rapid diffusion of Marxist thought amongst Japanese intellectuals in the 1920s reinforced this trend of rejecting the countryside, except as a subject for theoretical discussion.[39]

For Ishikawa, the countryside was on the contrary a lived reality. It had also become the locus of man's rapidly changing relationship with his environment, as rural communities were paying a heavy price because of unrestrained modernization and a capitalist accumulation of which they received little benefit. In an editorial of 24 July 1904, he comments emphatically on two expressions of rural protests.[40] The first one relates to an uprising by the inhabitants of the village of Higashiozawa in Ibaraki prefecture, who, armed with hoes and forks, proceed to demolish an embankment formed by an artificially induced detour of the Kuji River. Though benefitting a fishing port in the area, the reverse flow (逆流/*gyakuryū*) of the water, threatens to flood rice paddies. The second instance of protest takes place in Saitama prefecture. Police forces are called to contain farmers from the district of Kodama who are intent on destroying a dam that aids upstream farmers but starves their own fields of essential water.

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[37] Traditional scholarship has characterized Marx's own lack of sympathy for the countryside as deep-seated and fuelled by ignorance of the actual condition of the agrarian poor. See for example Mitrany, David, *Marx Against the Peasant: a Study in Social Dogmatism* (Chappel Hill, 1951). Recent scholarship, however, has found in Marx's later writings evidence of an interest for the primitive village community. See Stedman-Jones, Gareth, 'Radicalism and the Extra-European World: the Case of Karl Marx', in Bell (ed), *Victorian Visions of World Order: Empire and International Relations in Nineteenth-Century Political Thought* (Cambridge, 2007).

[38] Hobsbawn, Eric, 'Peasants and Politics', *The Journal of Peasant Studies* (1973) 1-1, pp. 3-22.

[39] Hoston, Germaine, *Marxism and the Crisis of Development in Pre-War Japan* (Princeton, 1986).

[40] *SHS* (24 July 1904).

'In one case the fear of flooding, in the other the fear of not enough water' muses the young *Heimin* writer, noting that 'it is normal for people to fight each other, as states now fight each other in the name of human justice.' For him, these violent actions only demonstrate a pitiful and blind quest for personal interest. Competition without reason and morality spoils human relations, and this spirit of competition that pits states against each other has now contaminated the countryside like a poison in a pristine river. Ishikawa here glosses over the fact that disputes between villages happened on numerous occasions in pre-modern times. If anything, this article hints at what would become his life-long preoccupations: the critique of progress for its own sake, the loss of a balanced interaction with nature, and the lack of legitimacy of state violence, which he indirectly links with harmful disruption of water flow and the spreading of poison. Implicit in Ishikawa's argument is the belief that values of fairness and solidarity attain their clearest expression in agrarian settings. The conceptual duality of egalitarian ideals and rejection of state authority crystallized at the time of the Russo-Japanese War.

As Ishikawa and Kōtoku recognized afterwards, however, late nineteenth-century farmers' discontent had already supplied a fertile ground for the incorporation of these aspirations into a political project. The establishment in 1882 of the short-lived, but symbolic, Tōyō Shakaitō (Oriental Socialist Party), illustrates that egalitarian minded politics had already materialized in a purely agrarian context. The two writers express in 1907 considerable enthusiasm for the brief existence of the Tōyō Shakaitō, which they see as the forerunner of anarchism. It deserves recognition, they note, for the strong egalitarian, ethically powerful non-state aspirations that were evident in its programme and fuelled, albeit briefly, the socialist movement in its infancy. 'To set our words and actions by the standard of morality;

to promote the principle of equality; to do without a oppressive ruler: … isn't this programme', observe the authors, 'a true expression of anarchist principles?'[41]

It took another quarter of a century for Japanese historians to 'discover' the Tōyō Shakaitō, when, in the 1930s they combed through copies of the *Tokyo Nichinichi Shinbun* and came across the advertisements and declarations of one of its founders, Tarui Tōkichi (1850-1922).[42] Rather than a formal political 'party', it was a hastily convened association of farmers from Hizen in Nagasaki Prefecture, which after its birth in April 1882 lasted just a few weeks, having been ordered by the government to disband. Publicity nonetheless had gathered a few hundred adherents from several locations. In the words of Tarui, his party could not be conflated with Western examples of a Socialist party, as the Tōyō Shakaitō owed above all its inspiration to the Charter Oath of 1868 and the subsequent inability of the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement to campaign for equal rights for all.[43] As conveyed to the press at the time, 'our beliefs, based on the right path of heaven and earth and reverently accepted from the supreme edict commanding the abolition of the evil customs of the past, stands for morality and the delivery of equal rights.'[44]

There is an apparent contradiction in invoking the Emperor to justify a socio-political vision that denies the concept of authority. There was a sense, however, of the person of the Emperor as the benevolent figure, a mystical symbol of solidarity rather than political actor, who was expected to grant his subjects the 'natural rights' of equality that the Rights Movement had failed to deliver. And nowhere was the

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[41] Kōtoku and Ishikawa, 'Japanese socialism', p. 337.
[42] Umehara Hokumei, 'Tōyō shakaitō hisshi' (The secret history of the Oriental Socialist Party), in Kano (ed), *Kinsei bōdō hangyaku henranshi* (History of modern radical rebellions) (Tokyo, 1973), p. 128.
[43] The Jiyū minken undō, hereafter Rights Movement, was a political and social movement in the 1880s that campaigned for democratic values and institutions. In his youth, Ishikawa interacted with Itagaki Taisuke (1837-1919), one of its leading representatives.
[44] Umehara, 'Tōyō shakaitō hisshi', p. 131. The 'evil customs of the past' refer to article 4 of the Charter Oath of 1868.

necessity of this imperial gift felt more acutely than in rural areas. As noted by John Crump, the Tōyō Shakaitō was probably the product of many influences, the Russian Narodniks being one of them.[45] This is certainly true insofar as Tarui's group advocated common ownership of land. Its slogan, *tenbutsu kyōyū* (天物共有), was an indictment of the uneven relationship between tenants and landowners.

By the late 1880s, the writings of American politician and economist Henry George (1839-1897) had made their way to Japan, to a large extent thanks to their diffusion by the magazine *Kokumin no Tomo*. George's claim that 'the recognition of individual proprietorship of land is the denial of the natural rights of other individuals' confirmed amongst Japan's progressive thinkers that existing patterns of land ownership represented an essential issue at the source of social problems.[46] Ishikawa reckons that the Tōyō Shakaitō had been the expression of a social movement in its unconscious phase, only for a periodical like *Kokumin no Tomo* to bring it to consciousness.[47] It is thus also with farmers' living conditions in mind that late Meiji reformers defended the socialist precepts of collective ownership of land and capital. In other words, there appeared to be a natural complementarity between specific foreign texts and the local reality of the struggling countryside.

That Tarui Tōkichi later called for, and is remembered for, a pan-Asian union between Japan, Korea and China, has obscured his earlier achievements. For Ishikawa, Tarui may have sanctioned for the first time in Japan the term 'Socialist Party', but his inspiration was undoubtedly of a 'pure anarchist' quality.[48] Moreover, farmers, rather than industrial workers, gave it an unusual force in the modern period. An obvious lineage is traceable to the peasant revolts against authority and unfair

[45] Crump, *The origins of Socialist Thought*, p. 39.
[46] George, Henry, *Progress and Poverty,* reprint edition (London, 1976 [1879]), p. 242.
[47] Kōtoku and Ishikawa, 'Nihon shakaishugishi', p. 345.
[48] Ishikawa, 'Nihon museifushugi', p. 81.

allocation of resources, the *hyakushō ikki*, which occurred on numerous occasions in the Tokugawa era (1603-1868). These, however, remained spontaneous and sporadic uprisings, as were the notorious Chichibu revolts of 1884. The politically organized stance adopted in 1882 with the founding of the Tōyō Shakaitō marked a change in awareness of the possible forms of protest and transformation.

COUNTRYSIDE VERSUS CITIES

Like Tarui, Ishikawa and his friends sympathized with the plight of peasants, but were not themselves from modest rural backgrounds. Even if they could easily relate to farmers' living conditions, all of them had gone through some form of higher education that in theory separated them from those they claimed to help. The looming conflict with Russia, however, added impetus to the sympathy they already felt towards the victims of modernization. They paid particular attention to farming communities, because these were to experience first hand the destructive effects of war on everyday life. The demands put on them to supply men and resources to the central government's geo-political strategy were the latest and the greatest in a long series.[49]

The illustration of a New Year's card in the January 1905's first issue of the *SHS* fittingly gives contrasting images of well-dressed city dwellers going on with their business at the top of the frame, and peasants bending under the weight of their

[49] *SHS* (6 Mar. 1904).

work at the bottom. The text tells readers to forget the absurdities of the year past.[50] The cohort's crusade to lift peasantry from exploitation and poverty was based on the belief that the promise of prosperity existed only for cities, leaving the countryside in distress. The issue of uneven development was covered by the general press, which pointed in editorials to the widening wealth gap resulting from the advance of material civilization.[51]

The agrarian sector had long provided the bulk of tax revenues that financed industrialization.[52] This, and the slow erosion of the bonds of duty and benevolence between landlords and tenant farmers, helped create a peasantry increasingly vulnerable to economic conjuncture and administrative policy.[53] Afflicted by economic hardship, a growing proportion of rural inhabitants fled to the cities, where they hoped to find work, consequently draining agrarian communities of dynamism. And periods of famine in the villages, most notably in the mid 1880s, compounded the sense of helplessness.

The growing urban-rural divide became painfully evident due to the direct impact of war preparation. The mobilization of a large number of soldiers for the war of 1904-05, some 1.088 million, put particular pressure on farming families, who were losing vital manpower. [54] The tightening of exemption rules and army commanders' preference for sturdier rural recruits rendered the call-up almost

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[50] *SHS* (1 Jan. 1905); Illustration by Ogawa Usen (1868-1938).
[51] *Yomiuri Shinbun*, 'Jinushi to kosakunin' (Landowners and tenant farmers) (25 Sept. 1901).
[52] 80.5% from 1875 to 1879 and 85.6% between 1882 and 1892. Hane, Mikiso, *Peasants, Rebels and Outcastes: the Underside of Modern Japan* (New York, 1982), p. 17.
[53] For landlord-tenant relationships in the early twentieth century, see Waswo, Ann, *Japanese Landlords: the Decline of a Rural Elite* (Berkeley, 1977); Nishida Yoshiaki and Waswo, Ann, *Farmers and Village Life in Twentieth-Century Japan* (London, 2003).
[54] Shimazu, Naoko, *Japanese Society at War: Death, Memory and the Russo-Japanese War* (Cambridge, 2009), p. 56.

unavoidable.[55] To soldiers with no ability to refuse the draft, Kōtoku warns of 'devastated fields' on their return.[56] Sending their sons to the army, declares a *SHS* writer, causes farmers to shed tears of blood while they watch their fields go to waste and feel hunger tighten their stomach.[57] For communities already beset by misery and misfortune, conscription becomes the tipping point. As Tanaka Shōzō deplores in a letter to Ishikawa, in the village of Yanaka, the populace must fight water pollution that poisons their land, and while young men are away in Manchuria with the army, the government steals their assets.[58] Akaba Ganketsu echoes the same feelings as he remembers the dead soldiers' graves he saw there and condemns the evil sacrifice they made for the sake of the state, leaving behind devastated families and wrecked houses.[59]

Most powerful is Uchiyama Gudō's indictment of conscription in his harangue to tenant farmers, a pamphlet he printed on a clandestine press a few years later. He writes that, squeezed by landlords' demands and relentless taxation, peasants are barely surviving. But however low their living standards have fallen, that is before the army calls:

> If it stopped there, it would be fine. But if you have a son, after you raise him for years in poverty, you look forward to extending your cultivating area, even by just an extra field, and making a small surplus so you can avoid borrowing money. But at that point, when your son is twenty-one, he is taken by the army. Then, for three years, you have to send him money while he is trained

[55] Shimazu, *Japanese Society at War,* p. 55. A third son, Ishikawa escaped conscription by being adopted by the Ishikawa family as a child. This made him the first son of the Ishikawa family, which exempted him from conscription. His birth name is Igarashi.
[56] *SHS* (14 Feb. 1904).
[57] *SHS* (7 Feb. 1904).
[58] Tanaka Shozō, *Tanaka shōzō zenshū* (Complete works) (19 vols, Tokyo, 1977-80), vol. 16, p. 486.
[59] Akaba Ganketsu, *'Yanaka no haison o tou ki'* (Diary of a visit to the eradicated village of Yanaka), *Shinkigen* (10 June, 1906), p. 9, in *Meiji shakaishugi shiryōshū* (Records from Meiji Japanese socialism) (12 vols, Tokyo, 1961), vol. 3, p. 114.

> to kill people. If war comes, he is dragged into a blood soaked place and either kills or gets killed.[60]

At the close of the war, Ishikawa noted with prescience that it was time to engage in quiet and mature reflection, as two conflicts in ten years had filled up the earth with fresh blood. The return of victorious soldiers must not, he felt, obscure the vast human misery that had been experienced at home. What was the ultimate gain in all of this, he asks. Wars fought in the name of the state threatened to steer the military away from common sense and society needed an urgent wake-up call.[61]

In the cohort's view, poor peasants embody the epitome of vulnerability and helplessness. They are most dutiful citizens (忠良なる臣民/*chūryō naru shinmin*), producing their own means of subsistence, paying taxes, and answering the army draft. Yet, they can only bemoan the lack of compensation while their spirit of sincerity and innocence attracts abuse.[62]

When Tanaka describes the villagers of Yanaka, he talks of rural dwellers whose natural isolation has modelled them into people 'lacking in desire, knowledge and capability (*muyoku, muchi, munō no jinmin*), who are unable to challenge the callousness of the modern bureaucracy. [63] They are innocent people (*mujaki no jinmin*), therefore vulnerable to administrative pressure.[64] For Akaba, society is made of lies. Only peasants, who relate primarily to the soil and to nature rather than to

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[60] Uchiyama Gudō, *Nyūgoku kinen museifu kyōsan kakumei* (Anarcho-communist revolution in commemoration of imprisonment), in Kashiwagi Ryūhō, *Taigyaku jiken to uchiyama gudō* (The High Treason Incident and Uchiyama Gudō) (Tokyo, 1979), p. 198.
[61] Ishikawa Sanshirō, *Waga hisenronshi* (History of our non-war stance) (Tokyo, 1956), p. 328.
[62] *SHS* (7 Feb. 1904).
[63] Tanaka, *Zenshū*, vol. 16, p. 486.
[64] Tanaka, *Zenshū*, vol. 16, p. 478.

other humans, keep some honesty: 'like lotus flowers that come from roots stained by the muddy earth, they are clean and pure'.[65]

The consequent civilizational critique ran through much of the progressive literature of the turn of the century. The unquestioned drive for *bunmei kaika* (civilization and enlightenment) that provided intellectual momentum after the Meiji Restoration gave rise to scepticism by the turn of the century. Ishikawa's ideas, however, reflect more than a simple backlash against modernization. The metaphysical and, sometimes, mystical inspiration of his writings is deep-seated, while the concept of nature is a core element in the articulation of these ideas. His mystical inclination is most pronounced in his first essay, *Kyomu no reiko* (虚無の霊光/chaotic spirituality), analyzed in the next chapter. But activism together with Kōtoku during these crucial few years around the time of the Russo-Japanese War supplied him with an essential understanding of the political stakes in the countryside.

EXPERIENCING THE VILLAGE OF YANAKA

The investigation of the natural world as an antidote to the pitfalls of modernity – going with, rather than against nature – also sustained the vision of Tanaka Shōzō, Ishikawa's most trusted mentor and Japan's 'first environmentalist'. The two men met in the context of the Ashio Copper Mine pollution case that spanned more than two decades at the turn of the century, an encounter that gave the young thinker an enduring sense of mission. Indeed, he dedicated his first philosophical book,

[65] Akaba Ganketsu, *Nōmin no fukuin,* in Ishikawa (ed), Kyōgaku pamphlet (Tokyo, 1929).

Hishinkaron to jinsei (非進化論と人生/Non-evolutionary theory and human life), written in 1925, to Tanaka. In his later years, he regretted his failure to diffuse the latter's message in Europe as he had promised. [66] Campaigning at Tanaka's side on behalf of the victims of pollution in the village of Yanaka was a seminal event for Ishikawa. It inspired his reflection on the value of the unmediated relationship between peasants and the natural environment. He also experienced social action embodied in the practices of everyday life, rather than reliance on agitation and ideological imperatives.

The figure of Tanaka Shōzō occupies a symbolic place in the history of modern Japan, as an opponent of the ecological disruption generated by unbridled industrialization and advocate of a civilizational critique that addresses the limits of human agency. A former village headman and Diet member, he became a tireless activist at the time of the Ashio incident, and remains to this day the emblem of fortitude and principle in many environmental protests. Likewise, historiography celebrates his spirit of resistance to bureaucratic pressure and devotion to rural dwellers sacrificed to the cause of capitalist development.[67]

Robert Stolz has shown more recently that Tanaka was at first a keen adherent of the official civilization and enlightenment project and that his heroic temperament did not appear until the later stages of the environmental conflict.[68] He became increasingly detached from a stance supportive of the government's vision, ultimately relying on Kōtoku and his friends in his fight for the victims of pollution. Indeed,

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[66] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū,* vol. 7, p. 277.
[67] Notehelfer, Fred, 'Japan's First Pollution Incident', *Journal of Japanese Studies* (1975) 1-2, pp. 351-83; Stone, Alan, 'The Japanese Muckrakers', *Journal of Japanese Studies* (1975) 1-2, pp. 385-407; Strong, Kenneth, *Ox Against the Storm: a Biography of Tanaka Shōzō, Japan's Conservationist Pioneer* (Tenterden, 1977).
[68] Stolz, Robert, '"Yanakagaku": Pollution and Environmental Protest in Modern Japan' (Univ. of Chicago Ph.D. thesis, 2006), pp. 33-5.

Tanaka's actions demonstrated that he fully embraced the non-war cohort's rhetoric of empathy for the peasantry and opposition to the state. The present study suggests that mingling with Ishikawa and his friends led to a change of heart, brought about by recognition of the cohort's crucial role in the Ashio protest. Likewise, Ishikawa was inspired by the dignity and perseverance of the mature Tanaka. After their first encounter, he wrote to the older man that full of shame for his own weaknesses, he had, by meeting him, 'touched the greatness of a superior spirit'.[69]

Environmental problems had plagued the area around the mine north of Tokyo since the mid-1880s. Mining pollutants, such as sulphuric acid, caused forest blighting and spoilage of the agricultural ecosystems in the surrounding valleys. Compounded by floods, the damage impacted directly on local villagers' health and food production. Some thirty thousand people from five prefectures (present-day Tochigi, Gunma, Saitama, Ibaraki, and Chiba) would be affected because of the unconstrained exploitation of the mine.[70] The government initially answered complaints by demanding that the mine take countermeasures to alleviate pollution. But in a 1903 policy turn, it embarked on a flood control and reengineering plan of the Watarase and Tone watersheds. Rather than addressing human agency as the immediate cause of the damage, the authorities were suggesting that nature, i.e. flooding, was the culprit, a 'foe to be subdued, made as an object of rational administration'.[71]

The flood control plan also involved the complete eradication of the village of Yanaka, located at the confluence of the rivers, in order to make place for a reservoir. It was designed to serve as a catchment basin for poisoned waters, resulting in the

[69] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 7, p. 14.
[70] Arahata Kanson, *Yanakamura zetsubōshi* (The desperate history of the village of Yanaka) (Tokyo, 1970), p. 11.
[71] Stolz, '"Yanakagaku"', p. 85.

forced displacement of a community of twelve hundred households, whose livelihood had centred for generations on interaction with the river. In a show of solidarity and resistance, Tanaka Shōzō took up residence in Yanaka in 1904, engineering a public awareness campaign in order to keep the village alive.

As Ishikawa puts it, Tanaka 'moved amongst the peasants' (農民の中に入っていった), thus bringing social engagement to the concrete level of daily life in the midst of those he wanted to rescue from administrative oppression.[72] Though Yanaka would be entirely destroyed by 1907, a handful of its inhabitants erected rudimentary shacks as dwellings in order to maintain their struggle. Tanaka's siding with them was akin to civil disobedience. It represented a form of spatial occupation not much different from today's anarchist sit-ins of the anti-globalization movement. The rebuilding by villagers of water levees demolished by government representatives confirmed that revolutionary activism was to be found in the very practices of everyday life.

Ishikawa's own commitment to Tanaka took place in 1906, when he became particularly active in the movement against compulsory land purchase by the government. Through the monthly *Shinkigen* (New Era), and later the feminist magazine *Sekai Fujin* (Women of the World), of which he was a founding member, he became instrumental in raising awareness about the plight of the village. Believing that Tanaka's tactics were more valuable, he declined his friend Sakai Toshihiko's offer to join a newly formed Socialist Party.[73] Ishikawa's disregard for institutional politics in favour of direct involvement with the farmers' plight is crucial for the understanding of his conception of social change, one he would continue to promote throughout five decades of activism.

[72] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 8, p. 142.
[73] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 8, p. 142.

A successor to the *SHS* and nominally a Christian socialist publication, *Shinkigen* was markedly concerned with pollution issues, publishing altogether thirty-three articles about Ashio or Yanaka during its one-year existence.[74] Despite his reputation as an eccentric, Tanaka Shōzō was in the view of *Shinkigen* the personification of a 'new *heimin'* (平民の新生命), one with the moral strength to challenge corruption and state oppression.[75] As such, he belonged to the emotional community embodied by Ishikawa's cohort, distinctive for its expressions of empathy towards peasants and resistance to authority and belief in an alternative path towards social order.

Given the support for the Russo-Japanese War expressed by Japan's prominent Christians, the members of *Shinkigen* were critical of the church. Instead, the periodical's Christian inclination stressed participation in active socialism, putting the concept of brotherhood at the forefront and eschewing the goal of a class war per se. The 'rival' socialist publication *Hikari* (Light) concentrated on theoretical problems. Scholarship conventionally distinguishes the two periodicals as supporting Christian Socialism and dialectical materialism respectively. I see in these two titles an equally important divergence between rural and urban interests.

Thus, *Shinkigen* could lay claim to a socialist affiliation because of its generic opposition to capitalism and concern for the damaging effects of industrialization on the population. It envisaged the liberation of the working class – particularly the peasantry – from exploitation and common ownership of the means of production. But in its dismissal of revolutionary insurrection and preferred reliance on grass-roots

[74] Komatsu Hiroshi, '"Shinkigen" to tanaka shōzō ("Shinkigen" and Tanaka Shōzō), *Shoki shakaishugi kenkyū* (Early socialist studies) (2006) 19, pp. 57-73.
[75] Ishikawa Sanshirō, 'Shinshi taihei o utai heimin ken o migaku' (Gentlemen sing for peace, commoners polish their swords), *Shinkigen* (10 Sept. 1906), p. 38.

activism, it pointed already to a specific, non-violent strand of anarchism, for which the village of Yanaka had become an emblem.

In the spring and summer of 1906, Ishikawa visited Yanaka several times. Being kept awake by fleabites at the side of Tanaka made him aware of the prosaic challenges of daily life activism.[76] Essentially, however, he acted as the main channel of communication between Tokyo and the isolated village of the Kanto plain.[77] Tanaka recognized Ishikawa's crucial role, relating to him in a letter that *Shinkigen* had at last 'pierced a hole in the iron wall' that separated the villagers from the heartless bureaucrats of the capital.[78] While not a socialist himself, Japan's 'first environmentalist' had by then turned his back on the state, dismissing anyone with an official affiliation as corrupt or useless and relying instead on an informal network of supporters. For Ishikawa, the whole experience was life changing. It inspired a spiritual transformation and opened new possibilities concerning the methods of activism.[79]

As contemporary accounts and memoirs have shown, over the years the Ashio affair became more and more emotionally charged for everyone concerned. Tanaka's heroic gestures reflected an authentic feeling of betrayal and outrage, which united Ishikawa's cohort at the time and still reverberated amongst the members of the group many years later.[80] One example of the emotional intensity is Ishikawa's account of Tanaka's visit to a sick peasant's shack. Apparently tears ran down the old man's face as he concluded that the reason for the peasant's illness was unbearable

[76] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 8, p. 146.
[77] Yanaka was about two hours away from Tokyo by train at the time.
[78] Tanaka, *Zenshū*, vol. 16, pp. 486-7.
[79] Ishikawa, 'Rō', *Shakaishugi bungakushū*, p. 211.
[80] Tanaka had also attempted to submit a direct petition to the Emperor in 1901. He relied on Kōtoku for its redaction.

separation from his hometown.[81] Such a direct expression of compassion could only reinforce the ties within the emotional community of which both Tanaka and Ishikawa were prominent members.

Ishikawa's own revolutionary epiphany came when he climbed on top of the water levees in the spring of 1906 to address the crowd assembled in protest. The incident is described in similar terms of heightened emotion.[82] Chronicling Yanaka, he talks about the joy of social activism as engagement, not just on behalf of, but also by identification with the villagers. He refers to tears of blood and laments at the pitiable sight of the dying nature, both of which he lays at the door of the state.[83]

A profound sense of horror energizes the reaction of the late Meiji socialists to the Ashio pollution scandal. Kinoshita Naoe (1869-1937), co-founder of *Shinkigen* with Ishikawa, and later Tanaka's biographer, claims that the government's main objective is the *burial* of the pollution problem, not the management of water flows.[84] In *Yanakamura zetsubōshi* (The desperate history of the village of Yanaka), Arahata Kanson (1887-1981) expresses incredulity towards the Meiji administration's real *obsession* with obliterating Yanaka physically and hiding all traces of the poison. [85] Buying up the land means eradicating the villagers. In his words, 'the mine has eaten the people'.[86]

What these comments imply, in my view, is the fear of obliteration, not only of the village, but also of the symbiotic relationship between man and his natural environment. By eliminating the traces of pollution, the government tries to deny the actuality and harmful effects of the disruption of this man-nature interdependency. In

[81] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 8, p. 149.
[82] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 1, p. 431.
[83] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 1, p. 396.
[84] Komatsu, '"Shinkigen" to tanaka shōzō', p. 62.
[85] The book was banned from publication at the time and reprinted in 1970, in the wake of post-war environmental problems.
[86] Arahata, *Yanakamura zetsubōshi*, p. 9.

his recent thorough study, Robert Stolz demonstrates the role played by the Ashio problem in the emergence of the concept of vulnerable, material nature as a new category that tests the limits of human agency and represents a fundamental element in the critique of Japanese modernity.[87] Stolz's analysis focuses on the concepts of *nagare* (flow) and *doku* (poison), which Tanaka developed during the Ashio protest.

The assumption is that nature is in constant movement. The unifying principle and inherent process of motion in nature must be allowed to operate freely. It can be assisted – as in the case of agriculture – but should not be distorted or reversed. Thwarting this natural flow stimulates the production of poison, which has consequences for nature itself and human organization. *Doku* emerges when the Way of nature and the Way of humans are not aligned.[88] Tanaka's philosophy underscores the interconnection between the natural and the social. It suggests that an investigation of nature must be at the basis of principles of socio-political organization. The motion of a river becomes a microcosm of the intrinsic balance of nature, which should provide a template for the human world.

Towards the end of his life, Tanaka produced the *Kasenjunshi nikki* (河川巡視日記/River pilgrimage diary), a journal with observations about his many pilgrimages along the Watarase River and his tributaries. This detailed compendium of topographical and anthropological facts looked at the effects of artificial interceptions of river flows. It proceeded from the premise that human interference must be secondary to an order already inscribed in nature, and therefore that knowledge of its inherent motion was a precondition to social practice. While this is

[87] Stolz, Robert, *Bad Water: Nature, Pollution and Politics in Japan, 1870-1950* (Durham, 2014).
[88] Stolz, Robert, 'Nature Over Nation: Tanaka Shōzō's Fundamental River Law', *Japan Forum* (2006) 18-3, p. 425.

reminiscent of pre-modern philosophical traditions, [89] it also brings to mind the epistemological and moral practice proposed by the principles of anarchist-geography of Elisée Reclus, which would later become fundamental to Ishikawa's activism.

Tanaka's preoccupation with *doku* and associated destructiveness of state control is evident in his correspondence with Ishikawa.[90] In 1904, Ishikawa was already aware of the detrimental effects of reverse flows *(gyakuryū).* His experience at Yanaka cemented his views and initiated a lifelong engagement with Tanaka's legacy. In his memoirs, his mentor remains an extraordinary being, for whom 'government, social phenomena, natural phenomena, all of these are lessons endowed from heaven (tenju no kyōkun/天授の教訓).'[91] His own repeated assertion than man is a 'child of the earth' (tochi no ko/土地の子) conveys the same understanding of a human condition irremediably rooted to the natural environment.

Ishikawa respected Tanaka not only for his altruism. Tanaka's 'non-modern' vision - as a creative force rather than an exercise in nostalgia – struck a chord with his own latent anarchism. As he recalls:

> (Tanaka's) mind would never give up on a life-long struggle for humaneness (人道) and there was no space to look back to considerations of life and death. … From the point of view of common people, he was an exceptional individual. From his own perspective, however, everything was just natural (自然). He may have deserved the label of eccentric, or of a righteous man, or anything else, but in his eyes these qualifications didn't feel right. In reality, it may be that he was unique only in the sense that he was a purely natural man (shizenjin/自然人). He was a natural-born anarchist.[92]

Interestingly, Kenneth Strong has translated the same passage in his biography of Tanaka.[93] He draws on it to characterize the latter's personality but translates

[89] Andō Shōeki (1703-1762) and Taoist teachings come to mind.
[90] Tanaka, *Zenshū*, vol. 19, p. 42.
[91] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 8, p. 142.
[92] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū,* vol. 8, p. 153.
[93] Strong, *Ox Against the Storm*, p.166.

'natural' as 'sincere', therefore missing the element of rootedness in the natural environment and the dichotomy of *nagare* and *doku*. He also uses 'human justice' for *jindō*, which suggests a code of man-made rules, not the natural human feeling that is pivotal to Ishikawa's anarchist philosophy. Finally, he omits the last sentence about anarchism. The resulting reading of Tanaka assimilates him into a framework of Western value-loaded political terms, which reduces his true stature, and certainly Ishikawa's perception of his significance.

Against the common perception of Tanaka as an outlandish character, Ishikawa sees ingrained naturalness – in other words, a deep connectedness with the natural order, including the human communities that are part of it. Tanaka had the ability to communicate with people with immediacy and the faith to impart change through the patterns of daily life. For Ishikawa, it is precisely this 'naturalness', which made Tanaka stand out and affirmed his status as a trusted member of their shared emotional community.

RELIGION AND THE PEASANTS

In his memoirs, Ishikawa pays a fervent tribute to another friend, Uchiyama Gudō, who was not thirty-seven years old when he was executed together with Kōtoku for High Treason in January 1911.[94] Yet, notes Ishikawa, as a trained Sōtō Zen Buddhist priest, he faced death with uncommon self-possession and dignity.[95] He recalls

[94] Although he is also known under his religious name of 'Gudō', for consistency, I use his surname 'Uchiyama' to refer to him.
[95] Ishikawa, 'Rō', *Shakaishugi bungakushū*, p. 212-3.

vividly that the two men met for the last time on a chance encounter at a public bath in early 1910.[96] Ishikawa was on his way to Tokyo Prison in Ichigaya. His poem, 'Hakaba' (Graveyard), had contravened press regulations for its open denunciation of the capitalist and imperialist system that, amongst other things, 'destroyed the time-honoured independence of the rural village'.[97] Luckily, this period of imprisonment saved him from indictment in the High Treason incident. Later that year, Uchiyama also started a jail sentence, in his case for clandestine publication of offensive materials and possession of explosives. Prison did not save him, however. In light of his close ties to Kōtoku, he was accused of involvement in the plot to kill Emperor Meiji.

With Uchiyama's death, Ishikawa lost a friend and someone who shared with him concerns for the rural poor. He also mourned a spiritual man, who shunned rigid religious boundaries. For both dissenters, whether Buddhism or Christianity, religion had to nurture social action and could never support political quests for domination and hierarchy. With Seno'o Girō (1889-1961), Uchiyama is usually mentioned in historiography as one of the few exceptions to war tolerant Buddhists in Japan's modern period.[98] Only very recently has Fabio Rambelli looked in some depth at the Buddhist-anarchist link in Uchiyama's life, exploring the complementarity between religious philosophy and political ideals.[99] This link constitutes an important topic of investigation for historians of both the religious and political thought of modern

[96] Ishikawa, 'Rō', *Shakaishugi bungakushū*, p. 223.
[97] For a translation of *'*Hakaba*'*, see Schnick, Daniel, 'Walking the Thin Line: Ishikawa Sanshirō and Japanese Anarchism' (Univ. of British Columbia Master's dissertation, 1995), pp. 54-8.
[98] Ives, Christopher, *Imperial-Way Zen: Ichikawa Hakugen's Critique and Lingering Questions for Buddhist Ethics* (Honolulu, 2009); Large, Stephen, 'Buddhism, Socialism, and Protest in Pre-war Japan: the Career of Sen'o Girō', *Modern Asian Studies* (1987) 21-1, pp. 153-171; Victoria, Daizen, *Zen at War* (New York, 1997).
[99] Rambelli, Fabio, *Zen Anarchism: the Egalitarian Dharma of Uchiyama Gudō* (Berkeley 2013).

Japan, on which the interaction between Ishikawa and Uchiyama that I examine here sheds further light.

Before his arrest, Uchiyama ran the small temple of Rinsenji in Ōhiradai in the mountains of Kanagawa Prefecture. This is where Ishikawa retired for a few days to undertake meditation and sort out his feelings as a revolutionary and social activist on his way back from the village of Yanaka in April 1906. It is also where his friend set up a clandestine printing press, behind the *shumidan* altar of the temple, to propagate his ideas. From Ōhiradai, Uchiyama was able to inspect the countryside and observe the misery of tenant farmers, setting out at times on weeklong pilgrimages across fields and villages.[100] His early interest in Sakura Sōgorō (1605-1653), the seventeenth-century peasant martyr who was executed for pleading to his lord for relief on behalf of struggling farmers, underscores an ongoing concern with the plight of the countryside.

Uchiyama was appalled by the beleaguered conditions of his immediate surroundings, and at times supplemented the poor diet of his parishioners with his own garden produce. He resolved to inculcate the youth with socialist ethics, telling Ishikawa that 'the only way to save the people of this place is to be ready to die on their land.'[101] Ishikawa introduced the inhabitants of Ōhiradai to socialist principles in a lecture on 10 September 1904, which attracted thirty attendees.[102]

For Uchiyama, propaganda - or *dendō* - was initially the preferred method to bring about social revolution. But he became hesitant. In a 1907 letter, he expresses his intention to consult Ishikawa on his views on the subject.[103] It seems that, due to

[100] Morinaga Eizaburō, *Uchiyama Gudō* (Tokyo, 1984), p. 160.
[101] Morinaga, *Uchiyama Gudō*, pp. 68-9.
[102] Tateyama Toshitada, *Kanagawaken rōdō undōshi: senzenhen* (Kanagawa Prefecture's pre-war history of the labour movement) (Yokohama, 1966), p. 164.
[103] Uchiyama Gudō to Fukuda Hideko, in Waseda University Institute of Social Science Studies (ed), *Shakaishugisha no shokan: ishikawa sanshirō.fukuda hideko ate shokanshū to*

his close association with Kōtoku, especially after the heavily repressed Red Flag Incident of June 1908, he started leaning toward direct action tactics, not ruling out violent revolutionary means.[104] The pamphlet he produced that year on his clandestine press, 'Anarcho-Communist Revolution (In Commemoration of Imprisonment)', despite its incendiary language, is nevertheless primarily an encouragement to poor tenant farmers to liberate themselves from the shackles of the state and landowners through passive resistance.[105]

Subtitled 'Why do small tenant farmers suffer?' (小作人ハナゼ苦シイカ), the text is a straightforward harangue addressed to poor peasants, urging them to form unions and stop sending their sons to the army, paying rents to landowners and taxes to the state. But in order to achieve this, people must first get rid of the superstitions (*meishin* /迷信) they hold as a result of state indoctrination. They are brainwashed into thinking that peasants' obligations are a just return for land cultivation, security and state independence, but these superstitions exist only to guarantee obedience. Reference in the last paragraph to 'not being afraid of throwing dynamite' indicates that the situation is desperate enough, but the rest of the text does not support this incitement to violence. In tune with a radical song of the day, Uchiyama also asserts that 'the Emperor, the rich and the big landowners are ticks that suck your blood'.[106] By criticizing the emperor and denying him his divine descent, Uchiyama committed an unforgivable act of lèse-majesté in the eyes of the Meiji government. He had effectively signed his own death warrant.

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kaisetsu (Collected letters to Ishikawa Sanshirō and Fukuda Hideko, with commentary) (Tokyo, 1974), p. 19.

[104] Rambelli, *Zen Anarchism*, pp. 23-4.

[105] A thousand copies were printed and distributed to readers of the *Heimin Shinbun*.

[106] Kashiwagi, *Taigyaku jiken to uchiyama gudō,* p. 198.

This direct attack on the Imperial House is striking. That tenant-farmers should be first targets and initiators of the politics of liberation is, I would suggest, at least as relevant. Uchiyama chose to envisage an awakening to socialism (or anarcho-communism) amongst the peasants because he saw in the countryside not only the need, but also the possibilities for radical change and a natural locus for egalitarian practices. In spite of his scolding tone that treats peasants as politically inert and submissive, they are in this text the potential harbingers of emancipation. From a young age, Uchiyama strongly advocated land reform and giving women the rights to participate in political activities.[107] We can see how these demands complement the vision of a community of egalitarian and liberated farmers.

Papers recovered after his execution in January 1911 contained an unfinished text, handwritten and probably composed while in confinement.[108] Entitled *Ordinary Consciousness* (heibon no jikaku/平凡の自覚), this manuscript reads partly like a veiled homage to Peter Kropotkin as it advocates the common ownership of land and means of production while cooperation must form the basis of interaction within human collectivities. For Uchiyama, the notion of 'ordinary consciousness' signifies a form of enlightenment and political awareness, starting at the individual level, extending to family, municipality, factory, nation, all the way to world consciousness, and which supposes a denial of oppression in order to achieve liberation. Ordinary consciousness thus carries in itself the possibility of freedom.[109] Importantly, this signifies also that social change can happen gradually through the revolutionary practices of daily life on the basis of self-awakening. This is a vision far removed

[107] Yoshida Kyūichi, *Nihon kindai bukkyōshi kenkyū* (Studies on modern Japan's history of Buddhism) (Tokyo, 1959), p. 438.
[108] Inagaki Masami, *Kindai bukkyō no henkakusha* (Modern Buddhist reformers) (Tokyo, 1993), p. 155.
[109] Rambelli, *Zen Anarchism*, p. 22.

from the violent anarchist revolution that some of Uchiyama's occasional assertions suggest. It also indicates a link between introspection and the politics of social change, one of Ishikawa's life-long preoccupations.

The concerns Ishikawa and Uchiyama shared towards poor farmers and deteriorating village life was matched by a common religious intensity in propagating their agenda for reform. The exchange of letters illuminates amongst other things that the distinction between both men's professed religious allegiance was of lesser importance once they participated in social activism. As the Buddhist priest writes from prison to his friend, ultimately it is the strength of our faith that matters.[110] Their vocabulary was Christian or Buddhist, but their mission was universal. Uchiyama calls himself a *bukkyō no dendōsha (*仏教の伝道者), a 'Buddhist evangelist/preacher', who sees a perfect unity of goals between his religious faith and political allegiance:

> All sentient beings have Buddha-nature," "all dharmas are equal and none are higher or lower," and "all sentient beings are like my children." These are the golden rules that are the basis of our faith. I discovered that these ideals match exactly with the maxims of socialism, and so I became a believer in socialism.[111]

Buddhist precepts are not prescriptive in the social world. They are abstract concepts about the nature of the universe and it was Uchiyama's deliberate choice to see in them a path for action, to actualize Buddhist ideals through socialism.[112] His professed religion operated as one channel to express his outrage towards economic disparities and exploitation. With Ishikawa who, he says, 'is like a brother', he also

[110] *Shakaishugisha no shokan,* p. 24.
[111] *SHS* (17 Jan. 1904); Ishikawa Rikizan, 'The Social Response of Buddhists to the Modernization of Japan: the Contrasting Lives of Two Sōtō Zen Monks', *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* (1998) 25-1/2, pp. 87-115.
[112] Ishikawa, 'The Social Response of Buddhists', p. 101; Rambelli, *Zen Anarchism*, p.12.

discusses the bible and what he feels is the decline of Japanese spirituality.[113] Rambelli's fine analysis of Uchiyama's religious references highlights the conflation of Buddhist and Christian loyalties. But the admiration that the Buddhist monk voices for Jesus and his disciples, who could give their life for salvation's sake, indicates perhaps that Christianity answered the deep emotional nature of his engagement better than Buddhist practices of meditation and self-effacement.[114]

Likewise, the meaning of Christianity itself was not straightforward for Ishikawa. Though he was for a short time a member of the Hongō church, he quit in 1905 after an argument with Ebina Danjō (1856-1937), a leading Christian figure of late Meiji.[115] He never again joined any religious organization. As he explains, he first became interested in socialism and anarchism at the age of fifteen or sixteen, and Christianity fuelled in him a passionate desire to devote himself to the improvement of human society.[116] Clearly, Western religion appeared to him then as the most suitable conduit for channelling feelings of sympathy towards the victims of modernization and resentment towards the ruling regime. Japanese Christian socialism bore the mark of Western Protestantism's self-imposed charitable mission toward society.

Ishikawa admitted in later life that Christian beliefs did inspire him at the time of his work with the monthly *Shinkigen,* but that he would rather think of himself as a proponent of 'humaneness' (人道主義的) than a believer. While he respected the person of Jesus, Christianity did not match any element of his own thought.[117] His

[113] *Shakaishugisha no shokan*, pp. 14, 22.
[114] *Shakaishugisha no shokan*, p. 23.
[115] Ōhara Ryokuhō [Ōsawa Masamichi], *Ishikawa sanshirō: tamashii no dōshi* (Ishikawa Sanshirō: priest of the soul) (Tokyo 1987), p. 15.
[116] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 8, p. 92.
[117] Ishikawa Sanshirō, *Ishikawa sanshirō shokanshū* (Ishikawa Sanshirō's collected letters), Karasawa (ed), (Tokyo, 1957), p. 67.

fellow socialist campaigner Arahata Kanson (1887-1981) strips Christian socialism of much sacredness or religious devotion when he notes that 'in those days, instead of propaganda (宣伝), we talked of preaching (伝道), a word somewhat stinking of Christianity (ヤソ教くさい).'[118]

Ishikawa's ideas draw equally from a Buddhist vocabulary with which he was familiar since youth. As I detail in the following chapters, he was well versed in Buddhist scriptures, as well as a regular practitioner of meditation. The cosmological vision that sustains his anarchism easily fits into the Buddhist worldview, which does not recognize any central and omnipotent being as core of the universe. He characterizes his political stance as based on the understanding of a limitless universe and the relativity of all phenomena, where there is no absolute centre and no absolute power.[119] This suggests at the least the need to qualify 'Christian socialism' when investigating late Meiji dissenting voices.

Radicals of the kind of Ishikawa and Uchiyama were thus men bound by a common spirit of brotherhood and self-sacrifice to social causes, not by an exclusive adherence to the principles of specific religious denominations. If they used at times the language of Christianity for socialist practice, Buddhists and Christians pursued their goals imbued with more religious syncretism than differences. By the next decade, many of these men had either died or answered different callings, leaving Christianity as a relic of their socialist activity. Ishikawa's close friend, Kinoshita Naoe, for instance retired from political activism while increasingly devoting himself to meditation and introspection according to the *seiza* principles of Okada Torajirō (1872-1920). Ishikawa, like many others, absorbed what appealed to him from Christianity and left the rest behind.

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[118] Arahata Kanson, *Chosakushū* (Collected works) (10 vols, Tokyo, 1976), vol. 5, p. 275.
[119] See for example Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 3, p. 201.

FROM CIVIL SERVANT TO SOCIALIST SYMPATHIZER

Like Uchiyama, Morichika Unpei showed acute concern for the plight of small tenant farmers. His participation in the popular New Buddhist movement, which fused some of its precepts with those of Unitarian Christianity, reveals he was similarly attracted to religious syncretism. And like the Buddhist monk, he fell into the net of the High Treason affair. Described as 'its most tragic victim', he was executed just a few days after his thirtieth birthday, ending his work of economic rehabilitation in the countryside.[120] He had sporadic contacts with Ishikawa, mainly through the Heiminsha, then later through Morichika's editorship of the *Osaka Heimin Shinbun*. They met at informal socialist meetings, and were both involved in the protest against the hike in railway fares in 1906. When Ishikawa was in prison, Morichika sent him postcards of encouragement, evidence of the bonds between them.[121]

The two men had diverging views on some theoretical issues, particularly on the need and significance of class struggle. Against an article published by Ishikawa in *Shinkigen* that warns of the dangers of fuelling class antagonism as a process that leads to 'blind alleys', Morichika stresses that a clash of interests between the capitalist and labour classes is inevitable and at the core of socialist thinking.[122] This doctrinal disagreement, however, did not dilute the commitment they shared toward the peasantry and their affiliation to the same emotional community. The complete neglect in English-speaking scholarship of Morichika's contribution to Japan's socialist thought in the early twentieth century has contributed to conceal the strength of this commitment. By rehabilitating him as a member of Ishikawa's cohort, I give

[120] *Shakaishugisha no shokan,* p. 302.
[121] *Shakaishugisha no shokan*, pp. 162-3.
[122] Morichika Unpei, 'Bekken' (at a glance), in Yoshioka et al (eds), *Morichika unpei kenkyū kihon bunken* (Morichika Unpei research related essential documents) (Tokyo, 1983), p. 105.

the conception of 'socialism for the countryside' the importance it deserves in the historiography of modern Japan.

Born in a farming family in Okayama Prefecture, Morichika went to the local agricultural college, then became employed for a while by the Ministry of Finance in Hiroshima Prefecture. In 1902, he moved to the Okayama Prefectural Government to take responsibilities for agricultural affairs. In this capacity, he carried out systematic surveys about economic conditions in farming communities, a task which shaped his view of agricultural society.[123] The rapid spread of commercial farming in his native province, an area of cotton production and weaving, confronted him with the disruptions to traditional customs introduced by capitalist development. His early attempts, through the establishment of a union, to reconcile landowners and tenants' disputes about compulsory rice inspections – of which tenants ended up bearing the costs – met with failure.[124] He gave much thought later on to possible forms of unionization amongst farmers, seeking to eliminate class barriers among them. But his true aim was to rescue small-scale tenants from the negative impact of modernization.

Disputes between tenants and landowners had erupted in Okayama Prefecture on several occasions, including in the districts of Asakuchi and Aida in December 1903. Given his role in the local government, Morichika knew in detail the kind of financial pressure that affected small-scale farmers.[125] He suggested the creation of 'producers' cooperatives', based on the concept of mutual aid, which would provide low cost loans for the purchase of machinery and fertilizers, and assist in other tasks, such as sales of produce and collective use of equipment. Trust, cooperation and

[123] *Shakaishugisha no shokan*, p. 294.
[124] Morichika, *Morichika unpei kenkyū kihon bunken,* p. 768.
[125] *SHS* (24 Jan. 1904).

thrift represented the cooperatives' moral foundations. These unions would be established within the recently created legal framework on cooperatives - the Producers' Cooperatives Law (*Sangyō kumiaihō*) of 1900 – and specifically aimed at the protection of small-scale farm producers. But they were also meant to operate without any bureaucratic guidance, favouring a bottom-up decision-making process.[126]

Morichika's disillusion with the possibilities of government action to resolve rural problems steered him toward socialism. He also perceived a disjunction between the Russo-Japanese War and his stance as a civil servant. On a tour in the prefecture in the summer of 1904 in order to encourage a boost in rice production to provide for Japanese troops, he can only see the harshness imposed on farmers. The war represents 'all damage, and no gain', and he suggests that passive resistance, i.e., a refusal by rural communities to respond to compulsory public loans could at this stage stop the conflict.[127] Like other members of the cohort, sympathy with the struggling rural population, compounded by the shock of the war, clinched Morichika's opposition to the state and rejection of its institutions. By 1904, he had started contributing to the *SHS*, and became actively involved in socialist proselytizing.

Within Morichika, sympathy and anger co-existed. While his friends directed their indignation broadly to capitalists, military, landowners, nobility, bureaucrats and other power-wielding officials, Morichika targeted primarily the government's incompetence and lack of knowledge. In an article censored by the police, he criticizes the bureaucrats and scholars who supposedly devise improvement measures for the countryside but never held a plough in their hands and make the peasants

[126] Morichika, *Morichika unpei kenkyū kihon bunken,* p. 769-71.
[127] Morichika, *Morichika unpei kenkyū kihon bunken,* p. 783.

worse off by their actions.[128] In April 1906, he writes a long piece in the journal *Hikari*, in which he opposes maintaining the import tax on rice that has been imposed at the time in order to raise funds for the Russo-Japanese War. As he explains, such measures tend to prop up prices artificially, but in the long run they do not address the intrinsic needs of farming communities. He strongly rejects the idea that the tax would protect the agricultural sector and sees it benefitting only a few large landowners.[129] Official ineptitude and collusion is a recurring theme of his recriminations as he is constantly searching for a practical alternative to farmers' exacting living conditions in the form of increased productivity and self-reliance. He concludes that the monopolistic system has to be replaced by collective ownership and use of agricultural land.

In 1907, he devotes an entire book chapter to 'Socialism and Agriculture', where he expands on why socialist principles are well suited to bring relief to the countryside.[130] Morichika rejects the conventional idea that socialism applies only to industrial workers, but also recognizes that farmers' natural conservative disposition and steady flight to the cities represent difficulties. Faithful to socialism's theoretical underpinnings, he insists on pure class struggle as an essential factor of farmers' liberation.[131] In spite of professed adherence to historical materialism, he does remain grounded, however, in an anarchist interpretation of the man-nature interaction. At the end of the chapter, he romanticizes farm work, asserting that a competitive struggle for survival does not suit agriculture and makes work in the fields lose its beauty and pleasure. But he also warns about the consequences of a break between

[128] Morichika Unpei, 'Shinjitsu no nōji kairyō' (For a true reform of agriculture), *Osaka Heimin Shinbun* (*OHS*) (5 May 1908), in *Meiji shakaishugi shiryōshū*, vol. 5, p. 383.
[129] Morichika, *Morichika unpei kenkyū kihon bunken*, pp. 96-8.
[130] A chapter in a book called *Shakaishugi no kōyō* (Elements of socialism). Penned with Sakai Toshihiko but mostly written by Morichika. Morichika, *Morichika unpei kenkyū kihon bunken*, pp. 298-9.
[131] Morichika, *Morichika unpei kenkyū kihon bunken*, p. 551.

man and nature. Nature is diversity and what makes man. Thus, 'if the type of soil allows, the cultivation of a variety of plants, regardless of the economy of land and labour, leads to the best method for the enjoyment of work, which is man's natural claim.'[132]

In a last note to his wife Shigeko, written on the day of his execution, he hopes she will find happiness and that their child will be properly educated. Then, he adds:

> In order for the village to remain fully self-governed, the utmost efforts must be devoted to the management of its forests. Tell the people that, looking at the history of other countries, if there is a strong correlation between the rise and fall of afforestation and that of nations, it is a comparison always to keep in mind.[133]

That man is inseparable from his natural environment was the gist of Morichika's last words.

'NATURE'S FORMIDABLE ANGER'

For Akaba Ganketsu, another member of the cohort, there was no question of a systematic approach to socialism, as he readily admitted his lack of theoretical understanding.[134] Socialism, however, offered the most direct channel for his engagement, which rested primarily on indignation about the misery of peasants and man's neglect of his duty towards the natural environment. This individual narrative particularly matters here because of its lingering impact on Ishikawa's activism, long after Akaba's early death in prison in 1912. He was a close friend that Ishikawa

[132] Morichika, *Morichika unpei kenkyū kihon bunken,* pp. 553-4.
[133] Morichika, *Morichika unpei kenkyū kihon bunken,* p. 755.
[134] Fujita Yoshimi, *Meijiteki ningenzō* (Meiji portraits) (Tokyo, 1967), p. 111.

fondly remembers as a poet and man of outstanding intelligence, someone who seemed perpetually consumed by anger in the face of injustice and inequalities.[135] Both men participated in the non-war movement, Akaba from America where he stayed between December 1902 and July 1905. Afterwards, they met often as Akaba collaborated on each issue of *Shinkigen*, then on *Sekai Fujin*. They joined forces during the campaign to save the village of Yanaka. Akaba described the Meiji government as the 'abode of demons', willing to uproot the children of Yanaka from their land, and in so doing annihilating their destiny.[136]

Akaba perished at the age of thirty-six after a short hunger strike in Chiba prison. He had been imprisoned for the clandestine publication in 1910 of *Nōmin no fukuin* (Gospel to the peasants), a provocative essay that government censors banned from distribution. Almost entirely neglected by scholarship, it is Akaba's only full-length text written after his commitment to socialism. In many respects, it is reminiscent of Uchiyama's own harangue to the peasants, published a couple of years earlier. It contains the same indictment of the rich, the landowners and the aristocrats, labelled as society's vermin, and, through them, of the evil of private property. Akaba questions the reasons for peasants' submissiveness, and their ability to fight for the betterment of their condition, but concludes that they can be inculcated with a revolutionary spirit that will foment rebellion. After the eradication of landowners' oppression, there will follow a blissful state of '*museifu kyōsan*' (anarcho-communism).[137]

Interestingly, we find again an encouragement to organized resistance, as tenants are urged to form an alliance for withholding rents (年貢を払わぬ同盟). For

[135] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 6, pp. 116-7.
[136] Akaba, 'Yanaka no haison o tou ki', *Shinkigen* (10 June 1906), p. 9.
[137] Akaba, *Nōmin no fukuin*, p. 35. In this chapter, I use for citation Ishikawa's reproduction of Akaba's text as in his 'Kyōgaku Pamphlet'.

Akaba, revolution is more the work of reason (道理の仕事) than emotions, and poor farmers must steadily acquire a sense of their rights.[138] This echoes Uchiyama's emphasis on 'ordinary consciousness', which guides peasants' liberation thanks to a gradual awakening embedded in the practices of daily life. In another tone, the pamphlet also instigates peasants to take back by force the rice kept in landowners' storehouses, that they should consider their own, or to 'pronounce the death penalty for landowners'.[139]

The 'Gospel to the peasants' is not, however, reducible to a revolutionary tract aimed at raising class consciousness in the countryside. A close analysis reveals its author's deep appreciation for the natural world and concern for its neglect by humans. The peasantry are prime witnesses to the degradation of nature caused by modernization. Akaba's specific contribution lies in the way he links the emancipatory political potential of the countryside to the necessity of maintaining a balanced man-nature relationship. It is the refusal to break with nature and the linkage to his political stance that constitute Akaba's specificity. Assumptions that his warnings about environmental degradation only illustrate nostalgia for the past have led historians to miss the significance of this text.

Thus, the concentration of land ownership into a few hands and squeezing out of exorbitant rents make peasants 'sink into a living hell (四苦八苦の地獄)'.[140] But the real danger lies in the resulting separation between man and the soil as a primordial source of life. Akaba warns against forgetting that humans are 'children of the soil' (土地の子) and that without the ability to nurture a direct bond to earth,

[138] Akaba, *Nōmin no fukuin*, p. 25.
[139] Akaba, *Nōmin no fukuin*, pp. 34, 38.
[140] Akaba, *Nōmin no fukuin*, p. 7.

'they will die like fish removed from the water'.[141] Undermining a Christian world outlook that posits man's unique status at the apex of creation, he asserts that, as he feeds from the soil, 'man is no different from an earthworm'.[142] In fact, too much disrespect towards nature will have dire consequences. The decline of past civilizations, from Egypt and Babylon to Persia and Rome, ensued from a monopoly of land ownership, which ignored that the bounty of the earth should belong to all. For Akaba, this caused 'nature's formidable anger' (自然の大なる憤怒). Only by eliminating inequalities, domination and falsehood from this world will the authority of nature be restored.[143]

It is worth noting some remarks made by Furukawa Rikisaku (1884-1911), a self-proclaimed anarcho-communist and one of the forgotten victims of the High Treason incident, in a text probably written in prison before his execution. He asserts that 'man is just one amongst the many beings of creation' and that 'nature should by no means be subdued.'[144] That humans should not unnecessarily set themselves in opposition to nature is a constant thread of anarchist protest at the time. It will expand during the following decades, with Ishikawa being a central figure in its development.

The exhortation to rebellion and to a return to a village community based on principles of mutual aid reveals the influence of Peter Kropotkin, whose translated writings had found their way to the Japanese radical fringe at the time.[145] So does the emphasis on daily bread, or basic nourishment denied to the small tenant farmers Akaba describes, as they must give away the rice they produce in order to pay for

[141] Akaba, *Nōmin no fukuin*, p. 6.
[142] Akaba, *Nōmin no fukuin*, p. 5.
[143] Akaba, *Nōmin no fukuin*, p. 9.
[144] Furukawa Rikisaku, 'Boku' (I), in Kanzaki (ed), *Taigyaku jiken kiroku* (Records of the High Treason incident) (3 vols, Tokyo, 1964), vol. 1, p. 172.
[145] Ōsugi Sakae and Kōtoku Shūsui were amongst Kropotkin's translators.

rents and taxes. He notes the irony that the bourgeois treat them like horses and cows while insisting they are the backbone of the nation.[146] But mere reliance on Kropotkin's ideas does not suffice to define Akaba's political views. His reference to 'nature's anger', as the trigger of civilizational decline collapses his self-proclaimed socialism into an anarchist stance which has some native Japanese antecedents. As a concerned ecologist in defence of the oppressed peasantry, he follows in the steps of Tanaka Shōzō.

There is an additional reason to pay attention to Akaba's essay. Despite official efforts to prevent its diffusion, it did not disappear with its author's death. In May 1929, Ishikawa Sanshirō, having settled in a quasi-commune in the outskirts of Tokyo, resurrected *Nōmin no fukuin* as one of his self-published pamphlets. Mention of it even made its way a couple of months later to the French anarchist monthly *Plus Loin* (Going further*),* with whose editors Ishikawa kept in contact following his stay in France.[147] Unlike the first version, however, it was self-censored by Ishikawa who feared persecution if its provocative content fell into the hands of the police. The Public Security Preservation Law of 1925 targeted socialist, communist and anarchist opposition, making punishable any attempt to alter the *kokutai* (national essence) or the system of private property. Akaba's text was certainly guilty on both counts and Ishikawa's publication replaced all sensitive statements with neat little circles (*fuseji*). They substituted expressions like 'land grabber' (土地泥棒), 'anarcho-communism', and all encouragements to revolt, whether passive or violent. The Japanese authorities, however, banned it from publication a second time, almost two decades after the first attempt. As much as Ishikawa considered that its content was still

[146] Akaba, *Nōmin no fukuin*, p. 35.
[147] *Plus Loin* (July 1929).

relevant to farming communities, the state saw it as an enduring example of dangerous thought to be stamped out from social consciousness.

Ishikawa went to recover Akaba's body from prison after his death, as he had done for other friends after the High Treason executions a year earlier. He kept alive the memory of a man whose visceral hatred of authority and empathy with peasants caused him to veer towards anarchism and led to his death. Ishikawa pondered on his own fate, which had allowed him to remain standing while so many of his friends saw their lives cut short by repression.[148] The belief that these men should not have died in vain haunted him and helped to drive his activism for the rest of his life.

CONCLUSION

If 'socialism for the countryside' never represented an elaborated corpus of ideas, enough evidence points to the existence of a distinctive strand of thought that privileged rural communities as a prime site for action by late-Meiji radicals. The emotional community that formed around Ishikawa Sanshirō in the early years of the 1900s concretized the new meaning of the Russo-Japanese war as a catalyst for the emergence of competing visions of progress. The members of the cohort were bound in part by common preoccupations for the plight of peasants. They had a close familiarity with rural life and the problems that modernization brought to the countryside. They saw it as a locus where their feelings of sympathy found their best outlet. They identified it as a source of liberation from capitalist exploitation in

[148] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū,* vol. 6, p. 118.

distinction to the conventional view that posits the industrial proletariat as the sole conduit of revolutionary socialism. They set everyday practices of cooperation indigenous to agrarian settings against the teleological vision of competing nation-states. Crucially, they articulated a vision of the human-nature interaction and warned of the separation of man with the natural environment.

The weaving together of the individual narratives explored in this chapter thus foreshadows the emergence of the specific strand of anarchism championed by Ishikawa. By engaging closely with the predicament of struggling farmers in modernizing Japan, the cohort claimed an affinity with the agrarian mode of participation in the world, which, they believed, valued environmental awareness and cooperative ethics against the competitive and 'unnatural' ethos of capitalism. In their minds, rural settings were not only a necessary site of liberation but also provided the very practices of everyday life that would make possible and complete this liberation. The experience of socialist activism that Ishikawa had accumulated with his cohort would inform the remaining four decades of his intellectual journey.

CHAPTER 3: BREAKING BOUNDARIES

INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on Ishikawa's self-imposed exile in Europe between 1913 and 1920 and its significance for the articulation of his anarchist vision. Far from representing a sudden break in activism that consigned the thinker to near oblivion for more than seven years, his stay abroad marked a continuity of thought and practice between the socialist period in the early 1900s and his renewed commitment as an intellectual after his return to Japan. More specifically, I suggest here that Ishikawa actively participated in the fostering of a borderless community of like-minded thinkers and activists dedicated to transcending man-made divisions. I show that the nurturing of this global fellowship went together with the formulation of a new moral vocabulary, for which Ishikawa acted as a crucial conduit and original force.

The Japanese government's crackdown on progressive intellectuals motivated Ishikawa's departure from Japan. By illegally boarding a French liner in the port of Yokohama in March 1913, he was running for his life. The feeling that, without an escape, his and his dead friends' ideas would soon be condemned to oblivion was an additional incentive. Historians have either dismissed Ishikawa's exile years as a complete retreat from activism,[1] or concluded they were simply the occasion to study

[1] Notehelfer, Fred, *Kōtoku Shūsui: Portrait of a Japanese Radical* (Cambridge, 1971), p. 201; Stanley, Thomas, *Ōsugi Sakae, Anarchist in Taishō Japan: the Creativity of the Ego*

and absorb indigenous European thought that he would disseminate in Japan in later years.[2] My analysis, based on the consultation of new epistolary sources and other unexploited material, underscores Ishikawa's creative role in the fostering of a specific emotional community and its impact over time.

Overall, the historiography of modern Japan favours a narrative of unidirectional transfer of knowledge from West to East. It is governed by the understanding that the country had been engaged since the mid-nineteenth century in a catch-up race with Western nations.[3] The history of political thought follows this same template, assigning to Japan the status of a laggard in the formulation and adoption of political concepts.[4] I argue in the present chapter, however, that Ishikawa's European years brought about encounters of a different nature. The creative building of transnational links he initiated represented a means to discuss and refine his pre-exile ideas and the related praxis. At the same time, it aimed to address the universal aspirations of these ideas through a constant re-negotiation of Western and Eastern intellectual specificities.

The careful tracing of Ishikawa's travels and connections during and after the years abroad reveal that he actively sought the friendship of thinkers and activists

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(Cambridge, 1982), p. 53; Crump, John, *The Origins of Socialist Thought in Japan* (London, 1983), p. 301.

[2] See for example Inada Atsuko, *Kyōsei shisō no senkūteki keifu: ishikawa sanshirō to edwādo kāpentā (Vision and lineage of ideas of symbiosis: Ishikawa Sanshirō and Edward Carpenter) (Tokyo 2000);* Nozawa Hideki, 'Ishikawa sanshirō ni okeru elize rukuryu no shisō' (The thought of Elisée Reclus according to Ishikawa Sanshirō), *Chirigaku Hyōron,* 79-14 (2006), pp. 837-856; Yonehara Ken, 'Daiichiji sekai taisen to ishikawa sanshirō' (The First World War and Ishikawa Sanshirō), *Handai Hōgaku* (1996) 46-2, pp. 1-122.

[3] See for example Jansen, Marius, *The Making of Modern Japan* (Cambridge, 2000).

[4] Crump, *The Origins of Socialist Thought*; Howland, Douglas, *Translating the West: Language and Political Reason in Nineteenth-Century Japan* (Honolulu, 2002); Hirakawa Sukehiro and Wakabayashi, Bob Tadashi, 'Japan's Turn to the West' in Jansen (ed), *The Cambridge History of Japan: the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 432-98; Duus, Peter, and Scheiner, Irwin, 'Socialism, Liberalism, and Marxism, 1901-1931' in Duus (ed), *The Cambridge History of Japan: the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 654-710; Scheiner, Irwin, *Christian Converts and Social Protest in Meiji Japan* (Berkeley, 1970).

who, like him, rejected state affiliation and institutional legitimacy. The people with whom he mingled believed that man-made boundaries had first to be overcome in order to create a human community free of oppression. The very existence of a loose network such as theirs – this emotional community - represented an embryonic version of the wider human community they envisaged. In broad terms, they sought to redefine man's view of his place in the world along egalitarian and non-hierarchical lines. The underlying concept was that humans are part of a web of complex relations within a cosmic order governed by interdependence rather than competition, and by freedom rather than coercion. More precisely, they adhered to a realm of ideas that denied the validity of artificial dualities such as East and West, Buddhism and Christianity, man and nature, self and other, higher and lower class, racial and social divisions, or even theory and practice.

Many Japanese of Ishikawa's generation spent time in Europe's artistic or academic centres, learning from established figures in their fields, and thus enacting a hierarchical master-pupil relationship between the West and Japan.[5] Ishikawa, however, arrived in Europe as a recognized figure of his country's socialist movement, bringing with him his own intellectual tradition. He sought the company of radical thinkers linked together not by institutional allegiances but by loose associations of personal and intellectual fellowship. With them, he was on equal terms. Unusually, also, he spent much time in a rural area of Southwest France, choosing to cultivate the soil while engaging in pursuits of the mind. He remained in

[5] For monographs on Japanese artists and thinkers who, in the early twentieth century, spent formative years in Europe's main intellectual centres, such as Paris, London, Frankfurt or Heidelberg, see for example Pincus, Leslie, *Authenticating Culture in Imperial Japan: Kuki Shūzō and the Rise of National Aesthetics* (Berkeley and London, 1996); Townsend, Susan, *Miki Kiyoshi, 1897-1945: Japan's Itinerant Philosopher* (Boston and Leiden, 2009); Hutchinson, Rachael, *Nagai Kafū's Occidentalism: Defining the Japanese Self* (Albany, 2011).

contact with many of the friends he made in Europe well into the post-Second World War era.

Friendship with English social philosopher Edward Carpenter (1844-1929) and the close bonds forged with the family of Paul Reclus (1858-1941), nephew and professional heir of Elisée, formed the core of the association of men of which Ishikawa was part. The variety of other contacts he cultivated further enriched his European experience. He had been corresponding with Carpenter before 1913 and meeting him in person in England sealed the ties between them. It confirmed also that they had congruent ideals – ones that looked beyond an East-West division to a universal sphere of human fellowship.

Carpenter's interest in, and influence from, Eastern spirituality fuelled such reflections. Ishikawa, for his part, had long denounced the materialistic and rationality-driven ideology of modern civilization. The intellectual context of the late Meiji years predisposed him to the investigation of more spiritual forms of apprehending reality. The present chapter assesses the depth of his civilizational critique through the study of a key philosophical text. It suggests that *Kyomu no reikō* (虚無の霊光/ Chaotic spirituality*)*, Ishikawa's first full length essay, written before his departure from Japan, holds keys to understanding the mindset of the times and the binding force of the community of friends with whom he engaged.

Ishikawa's meeting with Paul Reclus in Brussels took place shortly before the start of the First World War. Both men soon found themselves confronted at close hand with the conflict and its horrific implications. The experience not only marked their friendship, but also intensely influenced the Japanese exile's assessment of the perilousness of modern civilization. The diary he wrote during the German invasion of Brussels gives a clear insight into his thinking at the time. It highlights his

prophetic understanding in geo-political terms of Japan's siding with the allies during the conflict, revealing at the same time the strength of the bonds he forged while in Europe. This chapter provides a detailed analysis of the war diary.

The intellectual exchanges Ishikawa and his friends developed in the context described above shaped a corpus of ideas that defined their activism thereafter. Moreover, the experience of exile – his own and that of several of his companions in Europe, such as Reclus – deepened the commitment to the borderless values of 'humaneness', where individual freedom, empathy and egalitarian inclusiveness mattered first and foremost. It also constituted a way to cope with the emotional impact of geographical displacement. The vision they all shared derived from an attachment to a realm of spirituality and ethics unaffected by political, institutional and ideological boundaries.

In the present chapter, I characterize this particular notion of 'humaneness' as representing an ethical mode of participation in the world that valued individual responsibility in society and non-sectarian empathy toward fellow human beings and the natural world that encompasses them. It was characterized by a core human feeling that Ishikawa alternatively termed as *jindō* (人道), *ninjō* (人情) or *hakuai* (博愛), which drew on both East Asian traditions and Western anarchism to describe the underlying oneness of humanity and, indeed, all life. The participation of Ishikawa in defining and using this new moral vocabulary suggests he played a larger role in the intellectual landscape of modern Japan than so far acknowledged.

The study of the cross-border emotional community described in this chapter also helps to reevaluate the significance of the agrarian-based thought developed by Ishikawa. Although his anarchism emerged from a focus on the countryside and the plight of the peasantry, it acquired further meaning during his years of exile. Indeed,

it was refined and expanded in the context of exchanges and aspirations typically defined as cosmopolitan, yet enriched by references to agrarian settings and traditions. The present transnational history thus offers new perspectives for the understanding of interwar cosmopolitanism.

'CHAOTIC SPIRITUALITY'

Ishikawa wrote his first full-fledged essay, *Kyomu no reikō*, during incarceration in Tokyo between April 1907 and May 1908. He owed this period of confinement to several condemnations he had incurred as editor of the newly established *Daily Heimin Shinbun* in respect of contraventions of press laws and threats to public order. After he left prison, his activities again fell under the scrutiny of government censors, who prevented the publication of his essay.[6] Composed of eleven short chapters, its prose is dense and difficult, and the handful of scholars who have investigated its meaning have come up with a variety of conflicting interpretations.[7]

It remains, however, illuminating material for the study of Ishikawa's political thought. Not only does it offer solid clues for the understanding of the anarchist

[6] 虚無の霊光 – translated as 'Chaotic spirituality'. Ishikawa had hoped to publish it in the journal *Sekai Fujin*, but this did not materialize. It finally became available to a larger audience in his 'Collected works' (*Chosakushū*) of 1978. Two short sections of the text have not survived.

[7] Gotō Akinobu, 'Ishikawa sanshirō no shisō keisei to dentō shisō' (The formation of Ishikawa Sanshirō's thought and intellectual traditions) in Matsunaga (ed), *Kindai nihon bunka no saihatten* (Rediscovery of the culture of modern Japan) (Tokyo, 2006), pp. 81-112; Itagaki Tetsuo, 'Ishikawa sanshirō no 'kyomu no reikō' no shisō' (The thought in Ishikawa sanshirō's 'kyomu no reikō'), *Nihon Rekishi* (1987) 466, pp. 90-3; Ōhara Ryokuhō [Ōsawa Masamichi], *Ishikawa sanshirō: tamashii no dōshi* (Ishikawa Sanshirō: priest of the soul) (Tokyo 1987), pp. 149-55.

vision he would develop later on. The text is also an expression of the wealth of intellectual cross-currents, originating from both East and West, which contributed to his thinking and that of his contemporaries during the late Meiji and early Taisho years. References to such varied thinkers as Lao Tzu, Rousseau, Schopenhauer, Aristotle, Wang Yang Ming and Spinoza, and texts such as Buddhist scriptures, the Bible, the Analects and the Kojiki amongst others, may at first suggest a deliberate exercise in syncretism. But what *Kyomu no reikō* ultimately illustrates is that, by the turn of the century, ideas debated in Japan's progressive circles could no longer pretend to a claim of purity of origin. The process that sustained the intellectual momentum of the era was one of constant fusion, filtering, and back and forth movement between East and West, the modern and the ancient. Crucially, it also drew distinctively on a mystical or spiritual vein for inspiration. A careful contextualization of a text like *Kyomu no reikō* highlights this synergy of ideas, and how it informed a systematic civilizational critique.

In the introduction to the essay, Ishikawa offers some simple reminiscences about his childhood in the village of Honjō, located by the Tone River in what is now Saitama Prefecture. Before the Meiji Restoration, the river provided the preferred means of transportation between the capital, Edo, and other parts of the country. Ishikawa's house lay not far from the banks of the river, and his father's business, a boat wholesaling operation, was a source of work for most of the residents in the area.[8] The building of a rail network after the restoration, however, dramatically reduced the need for river transportation, eventually forcing his father to shut down his business.

[8] Ishikawa Sanshirō, 'Kyomu no reikō', in Tsurumi *(ed), Ishikawa sanshirōshū – Kindai nihon shisō taikei 16* (Collected works of Ishikawa Sanshirō – Compendium of modern Japanese thought), p. 3.

Less than twenty years into the Meiji period, the river started to run empty. In a factual tone, the author observes that 'the new venture of the new civilization caused the collapse of our house and village'.[9] His father kept providing for the young Ishikawa's education in spite of the financial hardships, and the text is dedicated to him, thirteen years after his death. No doubt the memory of the days spent at the village of Yanaka with Tanaka Shōzō a couple of years earlier (1906) was still vivid in Ishikawa's mind. His concerns relate here to both human interaction with the riparian environment and the shattering effect of modernization on his ancestral village community.

The language that follows, however, turns immediately more abstract. Ishikawa addresses man's destiny in metaphysical terms, alluding to the meaninglessness of human existence in the immensity of time and space.[10] The underlying concept of his thought is deep-seated scepticism about the civilizational discourse of his era. He examines the trappings of material progress, pointing to the insatiability of human desires as the root of all ills. Men pursue worldly desires (butsuyoku/物欲), but end up just chasing their shadow. They become unable to distinguish between the actual desires and the shadow. At the source of this misperception lies an estrangement from the original state of nature. [11]

Alienation arises because man starts relying on knowledge that exceeds what he inherently possesses in this natural world. One can see in this how Ishikawa draws on Taoist teachings to support his argument.[12] The Tao Te Ching, or at least its modern interpretation, with its references to a natural order and timeless ethical

[9] Ishikawa, 'Kyomu no reikō', p. 4.
[10] This conception sustained his vision throughout his life. See chapter 5.
[11] Ishikawa, 'Kyomu no reikō', pp. 10-1.
[12] Gotō, *Ishikawa sanshirō no shisō keisei*, p.93.

principles, provides a crucial tool for his indictment of modernity. In *Kyomu no reikō*, it is because of misguided knowledge that humans fall into the predicament of unhappiness. Mention of Taoism is a recurrent feature in Ishikawa's work.[13]

But one can also infer from the text Ishikawa's strong familiarity with Zen Buddhism. This religious source gives meaning to the title while shaping the author's conception of political activism.[14] The references to, and criticisms of, the *Hekiganroku* (碧巌録/Blue Cliff Record), one of Zen's major collection of *koans*, indicate Ishikawa's attention to the teachings of Yuquan Shenxiu (606-706), the spiritual leader of the so-called 'Northern School' of Chinese Zen. This, in turn, suggests an understanding of enlightenment as something that is 'acquired' through the practice of meditation, which represents the constant clearing of the mind from its impurities and worldly desires. It contrasts with the teachings from the 'Southern School', where practice and enlightenment are not causally connected.[15]

As a corollary, we should see in Ishikawa's use of the term *kyomu*, not an allusion to 'nothingness', but rather to a state of 'chaos' (mu/無) that preexists enlightenment. Otherwise formulated, it means that the mind at first is not total emptiness (kū/空) but a yet unformed container that will take shape through self-realization. This is a simplified explanation, which does not take into account the various nuances offered by Taoism or *Yōmeigaku,* which are numerous in the text. But it clearly points to the author's belief in the potential for change through individual experience and choice.

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[13] For example in Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 5, p.392; see also his article on Lao Tzu in *Shobutsu tenbō* (Dec. 1938) 8-12, pp.476-9.
[14] I am grateful to Professor Sawai Keiichi for his comments on this topic.
[15] Dumoulin, Heinrich, *Zen Enlightenment: Origins and Meanings* (New York, 1979), p. 49.

Indeed, in the second stage of his argument, he suggests that the only way to reconnect with the primordial state of nature is to search deeply into one's soul. Only then will we be able to distinguish between desires and their shadow. Facing the light, rather than turning one's back to it, will clear the confusion.[16] Ishikawa refers to this self-examination, or soul-searching, as *naikanjisei* (内観自省), which evokes the aforementioned Buddhist practices of introspection aimed at refining and purifying the mind. He stresses the importance of self-cultivation in order to attain a higher truth that implicitly rejects constraints imposed by the state, law, and social customs. As he also explains, this higher truth is no more than consciousness of the universe (宇宙), in other words, nature (自然).[17]

Ishikawa's revolutionary stance appears in a less abstract manner in the second half of the text. There, he compares Marx and Kropotkin's perspectives, critiquing the former for his delusional belief that centralized power can bring about a free and equal society. He gives his preference to Kropotkin's model of anarchist communism, doubting, however, that its realization can happen in the present state of the revolutionary movement.[18] In a universe he sees as essentially centre-less, in constant renewal and without a dominant directing principle, Ishikawa assigns the highest importance to human freedom.[19] But the condition of possibility of this freedom lies entirely within the self. Only intense reflection and self-cultivation can liberate the spirit from the constraints that human knowledge has imposed on it. Ultimately, it is thus training of the mind – the awakening of each individual cell in

[16] Ishikawa, 'Kyomu no reikō', p. 11.
[17] Ishikawa, 'Kyomu no reikō', p. 13.
[18] Ishikawa, 'Kyomu no reikō', p. 19.
[19] Ishikawa, 'Kyomu no reikō', p. 15.

society - that will play the crucial role in social transformation.[20]

My contention is that the striking feature of *Kyomu no reikō* is not so much the actual logic of its argument than the deliberate recourse to a spiritual or mystical vocabulary to support it. Here Ishikawa implicitly challenges the ability of modern science and rationality to offer a sufficient means of knowing the world. If man is to comprehend his place in the cosmic order, he cannot solely rely on the mechanical and empirical methods of inquiry offered by modern civilization. In other words, Ishikawa warns against reducing the acquisition of knowledge to abstract reasoning and categories of the mind, prompting his readers not to discount more spiritual forms of apprehending reality, whether cosmic intuition, religious experience or other mystical inspiration.

Ishikawa's education in 1894-95 at the Tokyo Tetsugakukan, precursor to Tōyō University, may have influenced his predilection for the spiritual dimension of knowledge. Its founder was Inoue Enryō (1858-1919), a noted Buddhist scholar, also known for establishing the discipline of *Yōkaigaku* (妖怪学), or the 'study of the mysterious'. More decisively, Ishikawa was immersed in the cultural trends of the times, permeated as they were by an intense search for ways to overcome what was perceived as the restrictive framework of scientific reasoning and Western rationality.[21] Japanese scholars refer to this affinity with the mystical and spiritual as *shinpishugi* (神秘主義), a broad concept that extends from a simple interest in the mysterious, to investigation of supernatural phenomena or direct experience as a

[20] Ishikawa, 'Kyomu no reikō', p. 25.
[21] Gerald Figal offers a glimpse of this mindset in *Civilization and Monsters: Spirits of Modernity in Meiji Japan* (Durham, 1999), though his analysis covers mostly the literary expressions of this mindset.

philosophical inquiry.[22]

The movement emerged in the late 1890s, after the Sino-Japanese War, and would culminate during the Taisho period with the growing reputation of figures such as philosopher Nishida Kitarō (1870-1945) and Zen proselytizer Suzuki Daisetsu (1870-1966).[23] Its beginnings, however, were diffuse, and owed much to similar interrogations explored by Western artists and intellectuals in the midst of the fin-de-siècle anguish that gripped them. The critic and religious scholar Anezaki Chōfū (also Masaharu) (1873-1949) was thus an early enthusiast for German philosophy, in particular the works of Arthur Schopenhauer, whose fascination for, and knowledge of, Eastern thought is well known.[24] Anezaki's travels to Germany, England and India at the turn of the century, confirmed his conception of a necessary religious spiritual dimension to the understanding of science and aesthetics. He strove to offer a metaphysical vision of the world in which Brahmanism and Buddhism shared an affinity with Christian mysticism.[25]

Contemporaries such as philosopher Tsunashima Ryōsen (1873-1907) and writer Iwano Hōmei (1873-1920) shared related preoccupations. The former spent much of his short and tragic life addressing the sense of distress and anomie that rapid modernization had made pervasive. He, too, searched for reconciliation between

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[22] See Kawai Daisuke, 'Shinpi o meguru shichō to zōchōshugi' (Thought current of *shinpi* and symbolism), *Nihon shisōshigaku* (2012) 44, pp. 231-50; Tsuruoka Yoshio, 'Kindai nihon ni okeru [shinpishugi] gainen no juyō to tenkai' (Reception and development of the concept of *shinpishugi* in modern Japan), in Shimazono (ed), *Kindaiteki 'shūkyō' gainen to shūkyōgaku no keisei to tenkai: nihon chūshin toshita hikaku kenkyū* (Formation and development of the modern concept of 'religion' and religious studies: comparative research with a focus on Japan) (Tokyo, 2001), pp. 33-43.

[23] Tsuruoka, 'Kindai nihon ni okeru [shinpishugi] gainen', p.34.

[24] Urs App has explored in depth Schopenhauer's encounter with Eastern thought. See for example 'Arthur Schopenhauer and China: a Sino-Platonic Love Affair', *Sino-Platonic Papers* (2010) 200, pp. 1-177.

[25] Tsuruoka, 'Kindai nihon ni okeru [shinpishugi] gainen', p. 36; Kawai, 'Shinpi o meguru shichō', p. 239.

Eastern and Western religious thought, finding much insight in the works of William James (1842-1910), particularly *Varieties of Religious Experience*.[26] Iwano, on his part, paid attention to authors such as Maurice Maeterlinck (1862-1949), Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) and Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), investigating the concept of nature to formulate his own interpretation of *shinpishugi*. This included an attempt to overcome the mind-body duality and the unearthing of the half-beast half-god image to support his thinking.[27]

These precursors helped to disseminate conceptions of the mystical amongst intellectuals. Likewise, Japan's brief infatuation with theosophy, stirred by Henry Steele Olcott (1832-1937)'s successful tour in the country in 1889, played its part in moulding the mind-set of the era's intelligentsia.[28] A decade or so later, words such as esotericism, occultism and spiritualism had gained currency, while academic circles debated earnestly on a possible religious dimension to the perception of reality. The young literary critic Taoka Reiun (1871-1912), who became close to the late Meiji socialist group at the time of the Russo-Japanese War, was himself drawn to Schopenhauer and theosophy.[29] And Ishikawa's explicit reference to *The Ascent of Man*, a work by the scientist and evangelist Henry Drummond (1851-1897), suggests that he conceived socialism as a spiritual as much as political endeavour.[30]

There were many facets and a fair amount of contradictions to the *shinpishugi* movement, while its advocates did not necessarily all abide by the same political

[26] Tsuruoka, 'Kindai nihon ni okeru [shinpishugi] gainen', p. 37.
[27] Tsuruoka, 'Kindai nihon ni okeru [shinpishugi] gainen', p. 38.
[28] Yoshinaga Shin'ichi, 'Theosophy and Buddhist Reformers in the Middle of the Meiji Period: an Introduction', *Japanese Religions* (2009) 34 -2, pp. 110-131.
[29] Loftus, Ronald, 'The Inversion of Progress: Taoka Reiun's "hibunmeiron"', *Monumenta Nipponica* (1985) 40-2, p. 196; Yoshinaga, 'Theosophy and Buddhist Reformers', p. 129.
[30] Ishikawa, 'Kyomu no reikō', p. 13.

allegiances.[31] But the underlying current was strong enough to colour the reflection of a large number of thinkers of the period. Its attempt to transcend the East-West dichotomy, i.e. its search for a form of religious or philosophical universalism, is of particular interest here. The present investigation also highlights what I would call 'reverse orientalism', a claim that goes against the assumption of a unidirectional transfer of knowledge. By turning to spiritual and mystical thought through the intermediary of the West - where oriental traditions had been attracting much curiosity - Japanese intellectuals were revisiting their own traditions.

In that sense, Ishikawa's re-consideration of Taoist teachings may well have depended on this indirect route. As shown further in this chapter, his affinity with the ideas of Edward Carpenter was part of the same process. The ultimate aim, however, was not a return to indigenous traditions per se – a nativist emphasis – but rather a way of drawing out a certain conception of human nature, or essence (人間性 /*ningensei)*, as something that supersedes artificial boundaries. It stressed the importance of feelings, sentiment, human sensations and emotions, common to all, against the pre-eminence of rationality and materialism.

Likewise, the insistence on introspection according to Buddhist precepts represented a response to Western preoccupations with individualism. It relied on the re-examination of indigenous thought in order to explore a concept - the individual - that was never central to the pre-Meiji intellectual framework. [32] In his memoirs, Ishikawa enthusiastically recalls as 'ecstasy' (歓天喜地) the few days of Zen meditation he spent at the temple of his friend Uchiyama Gudō after the revolutionary

[31] There are wide ideological differences between Iwano's fanatical nationalism, Taoka's apology for Japanese imperialism and Anezaki's egalitarian social thought.
[32] I am very grateful to Professor Sawai Keiichi for his insightful comments on this topic.

epiphany experienced at Yanaka in April 1906. My argument is that, whilst attesting to the importance of the practice for him, it also brought about an instant association of political activism with spirituality.[33]

The difficulty of fitting *Kyomu no reikō* neatly into a pre-existing category partly explains why intellectual historians of modern Japan have tended to ignore it. For what unsettles the reader here is that a self-proclaimed socialist would employ a vocabulary suffused with so many mystical references. A superficial analysis has justified this by referring to Ishikawa's inclination for 'Christian socialism' as opposed to 'dialectical materialism'.[34] That the *shinpishugi* movement affected more noticeably the spheres of philosophical and religious studies, as well as the arts, meant that its influence on political thought failed to attract much attention.

An appreciation of the context of a growing interest in spirituality amongst intellectuals at the turn of the century clarifies the significance of a text such as *Kyomu no reikō* for the understanding of late Meiji progressive thought. For someone like Ishikawa and many of his friends, the suggestion of a non-rational mode of apprehension of reality contributed to the shaping of political activism. It conditioned the possibility of social change, which, they believed, depended on the gradual awakening of the individual more than a merely mechanistic process of class struggle.[35] From this perspective, their versions of socialism and anarchism constituted practices of everyday life more than a political ideology. This represents a

[33] Ishikawa Sanshirō, 'Rō' (wander), in *Shakaishugi bungakushū* (Collected socialist texts) (Tokyo, 1963), p. 212. Kinoshita Naoe, Ishikawa's friend and co-founder of the monthly *Shinkigen*, also considered quiet meditation essential to political engagement. Ruth Harris has insightfully explored the link between spirituality and politics in 'Rolland, Gandhi and Madeleine Slade: Spiritual Politics, France and the Wider World', *French History* (2013) 27-4, pp. 579-600. Accessed 10 Apr. 2015. *doi: 10.1093/fh/crt048.*

[34] See previous chapter.

[35] See letters between Sakai and Ishikawa about class struggle as an end or a means to social revolution, in *Ishikawa sanshirōshū,* pp. 27-34.

central argument of this dissertation.

The broader implications for Ishikawa's choices as a thinker and activist are twofold. First, his acceptance of mysticism helps to elucidate his rejection of Marxist socialism and preference for a form of anarchism that stressed revolutionary transformation without the framework of party affiliation and the inevitability of historical development. He made clear early on that he would not belong to any political party, explaining to Sakai Toshihiko, one of the founders of the Socialist Party in 1906, that he had chosen the freedom of a communicator over the submission to a party.[36] In other words, for him revolution must be the result of an internalized process rather than an external imposition.

A second issue relates to Ishikawa's transnational practice. I suggest here that his belief in the spiritual dimension of political activism inspired his endeavours to develop further a global, emotional community of like-minded thinkers. What held its members together was the shared intuition of a human fellowship that transcended state constraints and formal categories of belonging. The bonds created were strong enough to last for four decades: on Ishikawa's death, Jacques Reclus (1894-1984), an active member of this community, would suitably write that 'we are all part of a big family – the spiritual family of our dear deceased'.[37] A family, just like their community, is not based on ideological agreement but on the existence of ties that transcend materialism.

[36] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 1, p. 127.
[37] *Ishikawa Sanshirō Papers* (Honjō), foreign correspondence, N. 35, Jacques Reclus to Ishikawa Eiko (14 Dec. 1956).

Indeed, this idea of a family was dear to Ishikawa. A few weeks after his arrival in Brussels in April 1913, he called on Paul Reclus. As he remembers, 'from that first meeting I was treated as a member of the family'.[38] The two men immediately find common ground in their experience of exile and persecution. When Paul Reclus inquires about his prison experience, Ishikawa reflects that 'this was not a gratuitous question from Reclus who, like Bakunin and Kropotkin, had spent time in jail … and was presently an exile due to a twenty year sentence imposed on him.'[39] Indeed, it is an earnest question that underscores the specific nature of their friendship: a shared distrust of the state's coercive and alienating power, moulded by direct personal experience.[40] The bonds are sealed further when, after months of uncertainty, financial hardship, and at one point considering a risky return to Tokyo, Ishikawa is invited in the spring of 1914 to move in with Paul and his wife Marguerite in the southeast quarter of Brussels.

It would only take a short while for the Japanese intellectual to encounter at first hand the full extent of the violence inflicted by the state apparatus and increasing international rivalry. From the first day of the invasion of neutral Belgium by German forces on 4 August 1914 until his flight to France six months later, he is sucked into the brutality of the global conflict. Not only does he feel renewed concerns for his safety, but also outrage. The realities of the war confirm his deepest fears of a world run amok because of a blind and pointless competition for power by

[38] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol.8, p. 20.
[39] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol.8, p. 18.
[40] Exiled a first time in Switzerland, then a second time in England and Scotland from 1895, Paul Reclus moved to Brussels in 1903 in order to help his uncle Elisée with the redaction of *L'homme et la terre*.

nation-states.

The foreword to his 'Diary of a Siege' expresses his bewilderment at 'citizens who have suddenly become vicious wild animals preying on their own kind, hating and cursing and trapping each other.'[41] He goes on:

> In fact wild animals are not as cruel. Why then do we say that 'man is the supreme being of all creatures'? In today's world the human race is trash amongst all animals. The so-called civilized humanity of the present times, which has organized the murderous, thieving, plundering outfit known as the state, is really as cursed as a poisonous insect of the natural world. Ah, what a disaster is this humanity that builds nations, destroys nature, devours its own kind and even demolishes its own natural character. [...] Some karma has brought me here now, the only Japanese besieged in Belgium's capital. [...] If I am fortunate enough to survive, then the history of this siege will generate reflections for the rest of my life.[42]

After the confirmation of German violation of Belgium's neutrality pact, the mood of Ishikawa and his hosts fluctuates between anxiety for their wellbeing and utter dejection about the turn of events. Their days are punctuated by regular gun noise and widespread rumours of atrocities perpetrated by the invaders. They hear with disbelief reports of burning, looting, and killing, together with unspeakable humiliations, brutality and cruelty.[43] Then comes the news of the devastation inflicted on the university town of Louvain, with its summary executions, rounding up of priests, deportations and razing of the old library and surroundings.[44] The massacre of civilians in the small town of Andenne in the southern part of the country makes his friends weep, stunned by this pitiful image of European civilization.[45]

On learning about some new case of atrocity, Ishikawa hopes that 'the

[41] Ishikawa, 'Rōjōnikki' (Diary of a siege), *Chosakushū,* vol. 2, p. 13. The diary was penned in Brussels between 19 August 1914 and 6 January 1915.
[42] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū,* vol. 2, p. 14.
[43] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū,* vol. 2, p. 18.
[44] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū,* vol. 2, pp. 31, 67.
[45] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū,* vol. 2, p. 66.

Japanese military, who take the German army as a model, are more sensible than them'.[46] But mostly, he laments that violence has become the highest benchmark of justice in the international sphere.[47] He is well aware that Belgium, as a little country with an unlucky geographical location, is a nation-state artificially constructed for the sake of the big powers' strategic concerns, and, as Larry Zuckerman notes, treated as 'a rag doll for neighbours to squabble over'.[48]

In that sense, Belgium shares much with Korea, annexed by Japan a few years earlier. The comparison does not escape Ishikawa, who suggests that annexation threatens the little European country if France and England were not to defeat Germany. He observes that resentment amongst the French against their former enemies because of their actions during the War of 1870 is a feeling not unlike those of Taiwanese and Korean people toward their Japanese rulers.[49] As he also points out, 'ultimately, this war is a fight (for expansion) amongst the capitalist great powers, and their spirit of insulting the black and yellow peoples has rubbed off amongst themselves.'[50]

He turns his wrath to his own government further when learning of the latter's designs on the German colonial possessions of Jiaozhou Bay on the Shandong Peninsula in China, suggesting that Japan is behaving like a thief taking advantage of a fire. He considers this a potentially disastrous entanglement in the worldwide conflict.[51] In fact, his assessment of his country's role in the latter appears

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[46] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū,* vol. 2, p. 78.
[47] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū,* vol. 2, p. 44.
[48] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū,* vol. 2, p. 21; Zuckerman, Larry, *The Rape of Belgium: the Untold Story of World War I* (New York, 2004), p. 8.
[49] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū,* vol. 2, pp. 37, 47, 109.
[50] Ishikawa Sanshirō, 'Kindai bunmeikoku no tenbatsu' (The punishment of modern civilized countries), *Chosakushū,* vol. 2, p. 176.
[51] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū,* vol. 2, p. 127.

surprisingly visionary. Historians have mostly characterized the relationship between Japan and the First World War as one of economic impact, indicating that it emerged as a clear beneficiary because its factories made the most of the disrupted supply of goods generated by the hostilities. Ishikawa points, however, at the tangible geo-political risk taken by his government in acquiring Jiaozhou Bay.

In a 'Letter to Japanese Citizens' of October 1914, he cautions that this small act of vanity will seem like a step toward a future war with the U.S. because it fuels anxiety amongst Europeans and Americans with regard to access to the Chinese territory.[52] He maintains that Japan presently bears a heavy responsibility for peaceful developments in the international sphere.[53] The unfolding of the war would intensify Ishikawa's abhorrence of colonial domination. In a letter to his novelist friend Tokutomi Kenjirō (1868-1927)[54] in 1916, he is enraged by the 'despicable behaviour' (浅ましい醜態) of 'civilized' Europeans. He warns of the threat of a new feudal system taking hold of the world: 'as long as the Great Powers have colonies, true peace is just a dream'.[55]

In his analysis of the transformative effect of the First World War, Frederick Dickinson stresses that in the minds of Japanese contemporaries to the conflict, it represented a new dawn, the springboard for a fresh vision of the country's place in the international sphere. Despite the disenchantment with European civilization, the tone was one of positive renewal.[56] Ishikawa's assessment of impending doom right

[52] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 2, p. 172.
[53] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 2, p. 173.
[54] Pen name Tokutomi Roka, a popular writer who corresponded with Tolstoy.
[55] Ishikawa Sanshirō, *Shokanshū* (Collected letters), Karasawa (ed) (Tokyo, 1957), p. 25.
[56] Dickinson, Frederick, 'Toward a Global Perspective of the Great War: Japan and the Foundations of a Twentieth-Century World', *The American Historical Review* (2004) 119-4, p. 1165; see also Dickinson, *World War I and the Triumph of a New Japan, 1919-1930* (Cambridge, 2013).

at the start of his country's involvement contradicts this view. This highlights the potential of transnational history for our further understanding of the global context of the war.

While musing on the predicament of dominated nations, the Japanese exile has to cope daily with practical worries and fear for his physical safety. Whether he and his friends will find enough food supplies to keep them going throughout the 'siege' of Brussels is a constant concern, compounded for Ishikawa by the drying up of his employment income.[57] Once German forces occupy Brussels, it is the dread of being rounded up that grips him. He ventures outside with circumspection and has a few close calls, aware also that it would perhaps prove less dangerous to pretend to be a Chinese rather than a Japanese national.[58] When Paul and Marguerite depart to France for safety reasons, Ishikawa remains alone in their house, keeping, however, in regular contact with common acquaintances. He talks of solitude, a feeling he knows from prison confinement, but reflects again about his fate which will disclose its meaning in due course.[59]

Woken up in the middle of the night by a succession of artillery blasts and war cries, Ishikawa notes that 'the world is afflicted by a strange disease of which we are hearing the scream'.[60] For him, the sense of civilizational collapse is overwhelming. He denounces with anger and despair this war governed by technology, science, economics and money that makes officers transform their soldiers into canon fodder and blood spilling machines, all this in the name of civilization.[61] Less than three months into the hostilities, he is already keenly aware of the distressing human toll

[57] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū,* vol. 2, pp. 18-19, 35, 83, 105.
[58] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū,* vol. 2, p. 26.
[59] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū,* vol. 2, p. 102.
[60] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū,* vol. 2, p. 79.
[61] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū,* vol. 2, p. 80.

and moral incomprehension they were to generate. He sees clearly the war's potential for devastation, forecasting that the world would soon become 'a sea of blood, a mountain of death, a field of white bones.'[62] Indeed, it was a civilizational trajectory that Japan was to share.

The possibility of a crisis of civilization was of course much debated in the West too. A book like Edward Carpenter's *Civilization: its Cause and Cure*, published in 1889, early on illustrated the pessimistic strand in the mind-set of its era. It had inspired Ishikawa while he was still in Japan, and fostered a sustained exchange of correspondence with its author.[63] A couple of decades later, the ravages of the First World War substantiated these views, as the conflict plainly demonstrated to some European intellectuals that the presumption of inevitable progress, with its unchecked reliance on scientific advances, was flawed. The army doctor George Duhamel (1884-1966), amongst others, denounced at the close of the war the savagery unleashed by this so-called Western civilization with its narrow focus on material achievements.[64] If Ishikawa was therefore not the only one to lament the civilizational sham exposed by the conflict, by the coincidence of his situation as a lone exile in a besieged city, he did it from a uniquely Japanese perspective.

In his view, the most crucial concern is that humanity's blind march forward has broken the bond between man and nature. Two years into the war, having joined the Reclus in southwest France, he writes a lyrical text in French that conveys this anxiety: 'we, humans, are all born from nature. Don't we need its lessons? Isn't it because of the separation from nature that civilized people can no longer live happy

[62] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū,* vol. 2, p. 13.
[63] The book advocated closer association to the land and spiritual introspection. See further in this chapter for Ishikawa's exchanges with Carpenter.
[64] Adas, Michel, *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology and Ideologies of Western Dominance* (Ithaca, 1989), p. 368.

and satisfied?'[65] In 1927, Ishikawa would conclude that for him the First World War had revealed human life in all its bareness. He suddenly understood clearly that without a direct association to the land, life was only 'falsehood and illusion', and that 'people who keep on living a life that relies on power and systems lose entirely their foothold and fall into distress'.[66]

Ishikawa's acquaintance with Carpenter's ideas likely coloured this perception. But his engagement at the side of Tanaka Shōzō in the anti-pollution campaign of 1906 shaped it just as surely. A growing dominance of the scientific worldview in Western culture from the mid-eighteen century onwards had reinforced mankind's elevation above nature and spilled over to modernizing Japan. These anthropocentric presuppositions appeared to legitimize humans' ever growing exploitative dominion over the natural environment, with potentially destructive consequences.[67] The war followed the Ashio pollution case in illustrating this trend in shattering terms. As Ishikawa would reflect later, rather than signaling nations' advance toward a higher stage of development, war and pollution demonstrate retrogression, a retreat from humans' innate tendency to mutuality and cooperation.[68]

The harmful subjugation of nature was another expression of man's predilection for assigning levels of hierarchy in realms of human understanding. It is a concept Ishikawa considered fundamentally flawed and which he attacked whenever

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[65] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 7, p. 390.
[66] Ishikawa, 'Hannō seikastusha' (Living the life of a half-time farmer), *Chosakushū*, vol. 3, pp. 20-1.
[67] For an examination of man's relationship with nature, see Glacken, Clarence, *Traces on the Rhodian Shore: Nature and Culture in Western Thought from Ancient Times to the End of the Eighteenth Century* (Berkeley, 1967); Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men;* for Japan's encounter with Western science, see Watanabe Masao, and Benfey, Theodor, *The Japanese and Western Science* (Philadelphia, 1990).
[68] Ishikawa, 'Rō', in *Shakaishugi bungakushū*, p. 219.

he came across it for the rest of his life.[69] Ever since his socialist period, he had voiced his rejection of all forms of discrimination on the basis of sex, class or race. His editorship, with Fukuda Hideko (1865-1927), of the pioneering feminist journal *Sekai Fujin* between 1907 and 1909 in Tokyo is but one example of his stance against all forms of discrimination.

A careful textual analysis of the war diary reveals that the transnational experience reinforced his critique of status hierarchy. If the war has one interesting consequence for Ishikawa, it is the upsetting of usual social categories. On a long hike with one of his acquaintances to reach the latter's pillaged house in the countryside off Brussels, he reflects on the deep meaning of what is happening around him. Many people are walking like him along the train tracks, stopping often to exchange greetings, news and tales of hardship. He realizes that there is none of the 'stupid separation between first, second and third class carriages like on a train', and that 'violence has opened up the possibility of this journey for a multitude of people, all equal in the midst of the beautiful nature.'[70]

The irony of being called up for help with translation by the Japanese legation in Brussels, where one attaché remains, prompts similar comments. Invited to dine with his host, he remarks that, in the shadow of the war, a pariah like him (私のようなエタ村人種) ends up sharing a meal with a government representative.[71] For someone who has been for years on the Japanese police's black list and fled his country because of persecution, the turn of fortune is indeed incongruous. On a previous occasion, he is left with an uncomfortable impression when treated to a

[69] Ishikawa Sanshirō, *Hishinkaron to jinsei* (Non-evolutionary theory and human life) (Tokyo, 1925), p. 6; see chapter 5 of this dissertation for further elaboration on this topic.
[70] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū,* vol. 2, p. 35.
[71] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū,* vol. 2, p.131.

course of Japanese cuisine at the legation. He muses that taxes squeezed from Japanese citizens pay for this. Ultimately eating this sweet rice feels like chewing the bones of ordinary people (*heimin*/平民), while the miso soup tastes like their blood. But as Paul Reclus observes with a laugh on his return home, it is not the first time that the Japanese government provides for Ishikawa's meals, as he also consumed a fair amount of prison food in the past.[72]

Most striking here is the frequent return in the text to the term *heimin*, meaning commoner or ordinary man, which recalls Ishikawa's activism at the helm of the *Heimin Shinbun*, as well as Tanaka Shōzō's characterization as a 'new *heimin*' able to uphold morality and fight state oppression.[73] With the use of this vocabulary, the Japanese intellectual underscores the plight of ordinary men and women who fall prey to 'the whims of the Kaiser, Tsar, Emperor, 'Roi' and President'.[74] He is clear about his own allegiance: he is on the side of the *heimin*, proclaiming himself to be a mere labourer.[75] He points out that a bourgeois sense of elitism already taints the attitude of the Belgian Socialist Party's leaders. It is why, he explains, after more than a year in Brussels, he deems it not worth mingling with them. In comparison, it is much easier to associate with *heimin*.[76]

While conveying his egalitarian aspirations and rejection of artificially constructed hierarchy, Ishikawa uses this vocabulary to define the kind of relational mode he favours. For him, the breaking of boundaries between people, between men and nature, and between other man-made concepts, is essential to his vision. It is on

[72] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū,* vol. 2, p. 48.
[73] See Chapter 2; on the use and meaning of the term *heimin* during the Russo-Japanese War and beyond, see Konishi, Sho, *Anarchist Modernity: Cooperatism and Japanese-Russian Intellectual Relations in Modern Japan* (Boston, 2013), in particular pp. 160-77.
[74] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, p. 103.
[75] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū,* vol. 2, pp. 18, 26.
[76] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū,* vol. 2, p.115.

this basis that he would engage in nurturing the intellectual community in which he became a crucial presence as years went by. The transnational encounter in Europe was paramount for the development of this relational mode. It was not just an ideological meeting of minds. The coming together during and after the First World War generated the formation of unusually solid bonds, because the circumstances in which they were forged were so traumatic. For that reason, they endured in spite of long years of separation. A 1954 letter to Ishikawa from Franz Castille, a friend he had made during his stay in Brussels forty years earlier, attests to the persistence of these bonds, while also associating the period of exile with the memory of Elisée Reclus:

> My dear friend Ishikawa, it is always with joy and emotion that I think of you every day of the year. Your portrait hangs on the wall of my study, next to those of Shiina's, my father's and Elisée Reclus's. You are the companions of my intimate thoughts, my refuge against the ugliness of the present time, the selfishness and the foolishness of men … [77]

CREATING THE BONDS OF A SPIRITUAL FELLOWSHIP

Ishikawa's first year in Europe, before moving in with the Reclus family, had stretched his financial and mental resources to the limit. He was poor and jobless, stringing together a life thanks to the generosity of a handful of friends. More often

[77] *Ishikawa Sanshirō Papers* (Honjō), foreign correspondence, N. 8, Franz Castille to Ishikawa (27 Dec. 1954). My translation from the French. Shiina Sonoji was an anarchist, translator and friend of Ishikawa, who spent a large portion of his life in France.

than not, he felt 'like a lonely traveller in a desert'.[78] He held on, however, because the existing ties he had with Europe made him a member of a community he was keen to expand.

In his memoirs, he recounts that at his first meeting with Paul Reclus, he was shown a photograph taken in 1904 to commemorate the first year of the *SHS*.[79] It portrayed Ishikawa together with his socialist friends Kōtoku Shūsui, Sakai Toshihiko, and Nishikawa Kōjirō (1876 - 1940). The photograph had circulated overseas at the time of the High Treason incident and his hosts were thus aware of his involvement in socialism and predicament as a persecuted opponent of the regime. It was apparent that the Japanese radical already belonged to a community of like-minded thinkers. In a sense, he was 'present' in Brussels, even something of a celebrity in anarchist circles, before arriving there.[80]

Likewise, Ishikawa's correspondence with Edward Carpenter, initiated before his departure for exile, established the commonality of views between the two intellectuals. To his friend in Japan, the English social philosopher writes in 1910:

> How sweet it is to hear from you all across the world and to know that the same thoughts are moving you far away in the land of the Rising Sun, as here on the shores of the Atlantic! The same inspirations and hopes of a newer truer human society, and the same struggles and battles against the forces of Tyranny.[81]

Friendship between the two intellectuals blossomed over the years. When Ishikawa manages to reach London and finally locate his correspondent in November

[78] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 7, p. 78.
[79] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 8, p. 18.
[80] In France, the photograph was sold as a postcard with the caption 'Les martyrs japonais (Tokio, 24 janvier 1904)'. See Tanaka Hikaru, 'The reaction of Jewish Anarchists to the High Treason Incident', in Gavin and Middleton (eds), *Japan and the High Treason Incident* (Abingdon, 2013), p. 85.
[81] *Ishikawa Sanshirō Papers* (Honjō), foreign correspondence, N. 6, Carpenter to Ishikawa (18 Feb. 1910).

1913, he accompanies him all the way back to Millthorpe, the cottage Carpenter owned near Sheffield in Derbyshire. He had acquired it in 1883, determined to embrace a life of simplicity, characterized by a closer association to the land, away from the social degeneration caused by industrialization and what he perceived as the corruptions of his class. Ishikawa remains there for three days, keeping a vivid impression of his host's lifestyle and seemingly inexhaustible intellectual curiosity. [82] The same happens when he returns one last time to Millthorpe in August 1920. They discuss the Chaldean origin of myths and Ishikawa promises to explore Japanese mythical records further once he is back home.[83] He remarks in his memoirs that the room in which he is staying was once occupied by the artist and socialist William Morris (1834-1896), thus highlighting the affinities and lineage of ideas that link these men together.[84]

In his autobiography, Carpenter remembers clearly his first meeting with Ishikawa, while acknowledging his place in the larger group of activists he esteemed.[85] He notes with warmth his intelligence and that,

> Anything less dangerous-looking as a revolutionary it would be hard to imagine. Small in stature, timid in manner, and with a very gentle voice, he seemed the embodiment of quietude and sympathy. It was not difficult however in his case, as in that of many Japanese, to discern, beneath that composed exterior, a strong undercurrent of' resolution and courage.[86]

Historians have amply analyzed Carpenter's life and writings, exploring various aspects of his extraordinarily versatile intellect and multifaceted activism. He voiced support for socialism, sexual freedom, women's suffrage, prison reform and

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[82] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 8, p. 336. Ishikawa Sanshirō, *Ishikawa sanshirōsenshū* (Selected works) (7 vols, Tokyo, 1977), vol. 7, pp. 24-8.
[83] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 8, p. 400.
[84] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 8, p. 401.
[85] Carpenter, Edward, *My Days and Dreams* (London, 1916), p. 276-9.
[86] Carpenter, *My Days and Dreams*, p. 278.

the education of the masses amongst other causes, while variously engaging in poetry, the study of Indian mysticism and the pursuit of gardening and sandal-making and other crafts. Thanks to a prolific literary production and willingness to challenge taboos and preconceptions, he exerted a considerable impact on the cultural and political life of his times, anticipating in many ways the reforming impulses within society that emerged much later in the twentieth century.

At the same time, Carpenter cultivated an extended circle of friends and acquaintances, both in his home country and abroad. Noted amongst them were the American poet and essayist Walt Whitman (1819-1892), the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) and the English art critic and social thinker John Ruskin (1819-1900). As the title of Tsuzuki Chūnichi's book so aptly states, Edward Carpenter was a 'prophet of human fellowship', someone who not only believed in the value of human bonds but also in their fundamental ability to foster a fair and equal society. It was the depth and breadth of his personal contacts that served his aspirations of creating a world of men linked to each other not by the rigidities of class and institutional structures, but by a spiritual sense of brotherhood that would transcend discriminations of any sort.[87]

Amongst the few scholars who have paid attention to Ishikawa's encounter with Carpenter, none explores fully the role of the Japanese intellectual in the creation and transformative development of a spiritual fellowship. Typically, the transnational relationship is characterized in terms of the one-way transmission of ideas and their

[87] Millthorpe Cottage was a privileged place for nurturing these contacts. See in Rowbotham, Sheila, *Edward Carpenter: a Life of Liberty and Love* (London, 2008), pp. 229-243.

diffusion to Japan.[88] I suggest here, however, that the investigation of Ishikawa's agency in transnational circles during the 1910s and beyond sheds further light on the effective fostering of this fellowship. The friendship between the two men must be understood as part of the web of connectedness in which they both strongly believed. Their contacts flourished not only because of evident intellectual affinities but also because of the possibilities inherent in their shared vision of a borderless spiritual community.

It is true that Ishikawa readily admitted the admiration he felt for Carpenter's philosophy and its impact on his own ideas. In a first letter of 1909, he writes to Carpenter of his hopes to 'proclaim your gospel over our country'.[89] He published in 1912 a book entitled *Carpenter: Poet and Prophet*, a copy of which he sent to his friend. He would later acknowledge that Carpenter's vision of life and the universe, completely different from that of other social thinkers, had rescued him from the profound dissatisfaction he felt due to the lack of unity in his thoughts, feelings and daily life.[90] But at the core of both thinkers' convictions lay a deep congruence of thought that a simple model of intellectual flow from West to East cannot capture.

This is apparent in Ishikawa's conception of the *heimin* outlined above, as one most adept to promote the relational mode he favours. As he stressed on many occasions, both in words and in deeds, he is definitely on the side of 'ordinary people'. And so is Carpenter, whose underlying faith is in 'the ultimate triumph of

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[88] Inada, *Kyōsei shisō;* Rowbotham, *Edward Carpenter*, pp. 348-9, 394, 399; Tsuzuki, Chūshichi, ''My Dear Sanshirō': Edward Carpenter and his Japanese Disciple', *Hitotsubashi Journal of Social Studies* (1972) 6, pp. 1-9.
[89] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 7, p. 47.
[90] Ishikawa Sanshirō, 'Ka-ō no museifu shisō' (The anarchist thought of Edward Carpenter), *Dinamikku* (1st June 1930), in Ishikawa Sanshirō's *Kojinshi* (self-published leaflet), reprint edition (Tokyo, 1974), p. 40.

the common people'.[91] It is a point he conveys in *Towards Democracy*, one of his most influential works, declaring that:

> If I am not level with the lowest I am nothing; and if I did not know for a certainty that the craziest sot in the village is my equal, and were not proud to have him walk with me as my friend, I would not write another word - for in this is my strength.[92]

The two thinkers have a common understanding on this. It is what Carpenter clearly conveys to his friend when he writes that 'the future of mankind is leading us beyond patriotism to humanity'.[93] Indeed, they share the vision of a community of humans that supersedes state relations and whose strength lies in its egalitarian creed.

Their common intellectual ground, however, goes even deeper, as both thinkers address in similar terms the necessary articulation of the universal within the individual. The process of 'reverse orientalism' I have outlined above is most apparent in the notion of 'cosmic consciousness' advocated by Carpenter. For him, it is key to the attainment of genuine democratic ideals. As Kirsten Harris explains, cosmic consciousness refers to the awareness of the interconnectedness of all people and matter existing in the past, present and future.[94] The inclusion of matter in the realm of interconnectedness suggests a denial of Christian convictions that see the ultimate superiority of an all-powerful God. It is this awareness that leads to a point where all distinctions of caste and class disappear, and equality and freedom can truly become the guiding principles of life in society. But it is only when people have (individually) come to the realization that they are all part of a universal self that this

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[91] Tsuzuki, Chūshichi, *Edward Carpenter, 1844-1929: Prophet of Human Fellowship* (Cambridge, 1980), p.4.
[92] Carpenter, Edward, *Towards Democracy* (Manchester, 1896), p. 6.
[93] *Ishikawa Sanshirō Papers* (Honjō), foreign correspondence, N. 6, Carpenter to Ishikawa (21 May 1910).
[94] Harris, Kirsten, 'The Evolution of Consciousness: Edward Carpenter's "Towards Democracy"', Victorian Spiritualities, *Leeds Working Papers in Victorian Studies* (2012) 12, pp. 226-235. See also Tsuzuki, *Edward Carpenter*, p. 104.

can happen.[95]

Carpenter likens thus the achievement of cosmic consciousness to overcoming self-consciousness, a process which, for him, induces flashes of illumination or a kind of mystical revelation. One is here reminded of Ishikawa's encouragement of self-cultivation and the sense of ecstasy that filled him during meditation. Both Carpenter and Ishikawa relate their socio-political vision to the notion of revelatory experience. In other words, the reliance on a spiritual inspiration originating outside the bounds of rational knowledge informs their political project. The conception of 'ordinary consciousness' favoured by Ishikawa's socialist friend and Buddhist priest Uchiyama Gudō invokes a similar journey toward self-awakening and suggests a clear religious influence.[96]

That Carpenter derived much insight from Eastern thought in the course of his intellectual development supports the present analysis. He located for instance his understanding of the 'universal self' within a long philosophical tradition, which included the Hindu sacred treatises, the *Upanishads*, as well as Buddhism and Taoism.[97] His conversations with Ishikawa reflected a genuine interest in Japan, as part of his thirst for knowledge about Eastern spirituality and an enlightened approach to sexuality. This is why he keenly discussed with him Zen practices and Shintoism or the erotic stories of Ihara Saikaku (1642-1693).[98] In his correspondence, he was curious to find out more about samurai habits, as he wanted to show that 'warm

[95] Harris, 'The Evolution of Consciousness', p. 233.
[96] See previous chapter.
[97] Rowbotham, *Edward Carpenter*, p. 271.
[98] Tsuzuki, 'My Dear Sanshirō', p. 5; Rowbotham, *Edward Carpenter*, p. 349.

friendship between men may have very good results in the life of the people'.[99]

As demonstrated by the above, a focus on the English thinker's affinities with Ishikawa reveals the complexity of early twentieth-century intellectual exchanges. It underscores the entanglement and cross-pollination of ideas rather than their unidirectional transmission. Both men relied on a wealth of intertwined philosophical traditions to articulate their convictions. By the early 1900s, they had reached the same conclusions on the possibility of a higher, egalitarian cosmic order and that its realization was 'a thing of the heart, rather than a political creed'.[100]

The impression Ishikawa left to his Belgian friend Franz Castille illustrates these ideas well. In correspondence, he likens the Japanese intellectual to a Buddha, inquiring whether he still regularly practises meditation as he did while in Brussels in 1914.[101] He remembers him as one 'whose moral values always rose above that of the multitude of men and the times *('au-dessus des foules et des temps'*), thus endorsing Ishikawa's aspirations towards a superior realm of human connectedness.[102]

[99] *Ishikawa Sanshirō Papers* (Honjō), foreign correspondence, N. 6, Carpenter to Ishikawa (9 Jan. 1913). Sexual friendship between men constituted another way to achieve the kind of awakening to the universal self which Carpenter had in mind.
[100] Beith, Gilbert, foreword to Carpenter, *Towards Democracy* (London, 1949).
[101] *Ishikawa Sanshirō Papers* (Honjō), foreign correspondence, N. 8, Franz Castille to Ishikawa (2 Apr. 1954).
[102] *Ishikawa Sanshirō Papers* (Honjō), foreign correspondence, N. 8, Franz Castille to Ishikawa (Jan. 1949 - day unclear)

CORRESPONDENCES WITH NEW-BUDDHIST THOUGHT

Ishikawa worked quietly to expand the spiritual kinship to which he belonged. If men could pretend to a higher realm of understanding, one of his missions was to facilitate the making of connections and appreciation of intellectual congruence between East and West. His acquaintance, through Carpenter, with the social reformers Henry Salt (1851-1939), founder of the Humanitarian League, and his wife Catherine (1857-1919), known as Kate, thus becomes an opportunity to reflect on his links to the New Buddhist movement back home.

The first encounter takes place in November 1913, while Ishikawa is spending a few days in Millthorpe. He then contrasts the kindness and aura of the couple to the unpleasant environment he experienced earlier in London.[103] Shortly after the Millthorpe visit, Salt acknowledges his bond to Ishikawa, conveying his curiosity that the latter has read his pamphlet on 'Humanitarianism': 'I did not know that any copies had reached Japan; but it is pleasant to find that we have friends in distant countries'.[104] The English couple would keep in touch over the years, Ishikawa always grateful for the generosity and thoughtfulness they had expressed towards him during his stay in England.[105] In effusive terms, Kate's correspondence hints too at a community of like-minded thinkers that transcends borders. She suggests that 'one's real friends are to be found in all lands', wishing Ishikawa 'all the freedom that comes to those who understand what Freedom is.'[106]

A dear friend of Carpenter, with whom he shared amongst other things the

[103] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 8, p. 333.
[104] *Ishikawa Sanshirō Papers* (Honjō), foreign correspondence, N. 40, Henry Salt to Ishikawa (14 Nov. 1913).
[105] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 6, p. 197.
[106] *Ishikawa Sanshirō Papers* (Honjō), foreign correspondence, N. 39, Kate Salt to Ishikawa (17 Mar. 1914).

inclination for living a life of simplicity, Henry Salt remains one of the forgotten visionaries of his era. He was a noted scholar of Thoreau and an enthusiast for ethical socialism, through which he befriended the likes of George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950), William Morris, John Ruskin (1819-1900) and many other radical thinkers. That he is mainly remembered for his ardent vegetarianism and denunciation of animal cruelty obscures the wider reach of his views, much like Carpenter, whose defense of homosexuality tends to overshadow other concerns in scholarship.[107]

Both men's living practices, however, must be related to the broader sense of universal kinship with all creatures, the aforementioned superior realm of connectedness that they espoused. Salt readily contrasted Christian attitudes towards animals with Buddhist statements on the sacredness of all life.[108] He rejected the conventional divide between animals and mankind, arguing that one 'must recognize the common bond of humanity that unites all living beings in one universal brotherhood.'[109] In the belief that man is part of nature, not its unaccountable master, he denounced despoliation of the natural environment at a time when ecological consciousness was not as prominent as today.

Salt's emphasis on 'universal brotherhood' and the Humanitarian League illustrates the existence of the special moral vocabulary favoured by the community to which he belonged. It attributed a strong significance to feelings of empathy intrinsic to the human condition and valued as well as applied regardless of any distinctions of status or ethnicity. It was a vocabulary well known to Ishikawa, whose sense of

[107] See for example Copley, Antony, *A Spiritual Bloomsbury: Hinduism and Homosexuality in the Lives and Writings of Edward Carpenter, E.M. Forster, and Christopher Isherwood* (Oxford, 2006).
[108] Tsuzuki, *Edward Carpenter*, p. 110; Hendrick, Willene and George (eds), *The Savour of Salt: a Henry Salt Anthology* (Fontwell, 1989), p. 12.
[109] Salt, Henry, *Animals' Rights: Considered in Relation to Social Progress* (New York, 1984), chapter 1.

'humaneness' had permeated his late-Meiji years.[110] He would soon condemn German militarism as 'non-humane' (非人道的) and promote after his return to Japan a similar conception of *ninjō* (人情), a distinctly human moral consciousness that initiates and sustains changes in society. As he observes, 'with all these multifarious phenomena of the cosmos as external force, *ninjō*, the internal factor that affects human society is essentially constant from ancient times to the present day and from West to East.'[111] That this moral consciousness has universal pretensions is best represented by the recurring character '人' (*hito/*man), which reduces it to its simplest expression. In this sense, humans care for all living things, notwithstanding their status or origin, a meaning similarly embodied in Salt's 'humanitarian' activities.[112]

The title of Salt's last book, *The Creed of Kinship*, clearly reflects the character of his convictions. And to his credit, no less a person than Gandhi recognized that his *A Plea for Vegetarianism* (1886), allegedly the first English book the Indian thinker came across on the subject, 'was of immense help to me in steadying my faith in vegetarianism.'[113] Ishikawa was certainly intrigued by the practice of vegetarianism. After all, it constituted one of Elisée Reclus's beliefs,[114] and the Japanese intellectual remained inquisitive on the issue years later, as appears from his correspondence with German anarchist and historian Max Nettlau (1865-

[110] See chapter 2 of this dissertation.
[111] Ishikawa, *Hishinkaron to jinsei*, p.8.
[112] For the concept of Japanese philanthropic practices without regard for government-sanctioned social hierarchy, see Konishi, Sho, 'The Emergence of an International Humanitarian Organization in Japan: the Tokugawa Origins of the Japanese Red Cross', *The American Historical Review* (2014) 119-4.
[113] Gandhi to Salt, letter of 12 Oct. 1929, quoted in Hendrick, George, *Henry Salt: Humanitarian Reformer and Man of Letters* (Urbana, 1977), p. 110. The same letter acknowledges that Salt's work on Thoreau had been to him of equal profit.
[114] See Reclus, Elisée, *On Vegetarianism* (1901) in The Anarchist Library, http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/elisee-reclus-on-vegetarianism.

1944).[115]

But his interest extended to the connections he saw between the principles of Salt's Humanitarian League and those promoted by the adepts of New Buddhist thought in Japan, with which he had long been familiar. To a friend of his student days at Tetsugakukan, Takashima Beihō (1875-1949), a prominent supporter of progressive Buddhism and founder of the Heigo Press (丙午出版), he reports on an invitation to the Salt's cottage during his stay in England. In his letter, he enquires about the periodical on animal protection, *The Humanitarian*, that Henry offered to send to Takashima in Japan, and concludes that his English friend is truly 'a man of peace and pure virtue (平和な純潔な君子人).'[116]

Takashima was himself a fervent advocate of animal protection, together with other moral precepts such as the abolition of prostitution, temperance and gender equality. He campaigned as a core member of the New Buddhist Society (新仏教徒同志会), an organization established in 1899 as the Buddhist Puritan Society (仏教西清徒志会), which changed its name to the former in 1908.[117] Takashima was thus one of the many individuals involved in the rehabilitation of Buddhist religion during the Meiji era, following its overshadowing by Shinto at the time of the Restoration.[118] This rehabilitation drive took different forms, including the rise of scholarly

[115] *Ishikawa Sanshirō Papers* (Honjō), foreign correspondence, N. 31, Nettlau to Ishikawa (30 Sept. 1933); there is also here an implicit association between meat-eating, as non indigenous to the Japanese, and Western progress.
[116] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 7, pp. 95-6.
[117] Hoshino Seiji, 'Rational Religion and the Shin Bukkyō (New Buddhism) in Late Meiji Japan', in Yoshinaga (ed), *Kindai nihon ni okeru chishikijin shūkyō undō no gensetsu kūkan: 'Shin Bukkyō' no shisōshi, bunkashiteki kenkyū* (The discursive space of an intellectual religious movement in modern Japan: a study of the 'Shin Bukkyō' journal from the viewpoint of the history of culture and thought) (2008-2011), at http://www.maizuru-ct.ac.jp/human/yosinaga/shinbukkyo_report.pdf.
[118] For more on this issue, see Ketelaar, James, *Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan: Buddhism and its Persecution* (Princeton, 1990).

Buddhism in universities and the emergence of various reform movements, such as the one spearheaded by the Shin Buddhist Society.

The official aims of the Society embraced the promotion of a religion that would be non-sectarian and rational, i.e., not reliant on superstitions. Its charter also stressed the notion of free investigation of Buddhism and other religions, clearly an attempt to disengage itself from the country's old Buddhist institutions and traditions.[119] Reform movements had an ambivalent relationship to Christianity. The latter's expansion in modernizing Japan represented a challenge, but there was an accompanying realization that it should also serve as a model, particularly concerning methods of dissemination and campaigns to encourage moral behaviour.[120] The New Buddhist Society kept a close interest in Unitarian practices, hence, for example, its own advocacy of temperance. In the background, a universalist perspective that aspired to the construction of a 'world religion' was never far from the minds of Meiji spiritual thinkers.[121]

Even so, doctrinal differences often appeared irreconcilable, such as the ongoing debate about a pantheistic view of the world, according to which all phenomena of the cosmos reflect a divine reality, versus the monotheist understanding. Simply put, it represented the opposition between a Buddhist immanent vision and a Christian transcendent one, an issue that also preoccupied Ishikawa and Takashima when the former was still in his 'Christian phase' at the

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[119] Thelle, Notto, *Buddhism and Christianity in Japan: from Conflict to Dialogue, 1854-1899* (Honolulu, 1987), p. 211; Hoshino, 'Rational Religion', p. 209.
[120] Thelle, *Buddhism and Christianity*, pp. 198-201.
[121] Ketelaar, *Of Heretics and Martyrs*, p.41; Thelle, *Buddhism and Christianity*, p. 218. See also Mohr, Michel, *Buddhism, Unitarianism and the Meiji Competition for Universality* (Cambridge and London, 2014). This was particularly true in the wake of the World's Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893. See also Duara, Prasenjit, 'The Discourse of Civilization and Pan-Asianism', *Journal of World History* (2001) 12-1, p. 102.

helm of the periodical *Shinkigen*. Takashima writes then that in spite of his friend's persuasive argument, he cannot yet surrender to it, proposing further examination of the fundamental tenets of pantheism and monotheism.[122]

But the two friends keep exchanging letters, talking about the benefits of meditation, literary criticism or the travails of life as an exile.[123] Ishikawa asks a second time whether the copy of *The Humanitarian* has reached Tokyo, concerned whether his friend has duly received it.[124] His letters are published in *Shin Bukkyō*, the journal issued by the New Buddhist Society, which is right from the start an important outlet for his reflections on civilization and exile and was for many years a forum of exchange between Christians and progressive Buddhists.[125] His 'Diary of Exile' (亡命日記) appears in four issues, thus making his voice heard in intellectual circles back home.[126] The demise of the journal in 1915 put a halt to the collaboration.

The progressive outlook of the New Buddhist movement meant that several of its representatives were close to the late Meiji socialists. Apart from Ishikawa's personal connection to Takashima because of a shared Alma Mater, personalities such as Sakai Toshihiko, Morichika Unpei, Kinoshita Naoe and Kōtoku Shūsui had links with the Society or its journal. Socialists attended regular meetings held by New Buddhists, who had to suffer increased police surveillance as a result even though they didn't claim to be socialists themselves. The two groups, however, had in common strong reformist aspirations, the investigation of freedom and opposition to

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[122] *Ishikawa Sanshirō Papers* (Honjō), Japanese correspondence, N. 363, Takashima to Ishikawa (11 Sept. 1906).
[123] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 7, pp. 73, 79, 80, 98.
[124] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū,* vol. 7, p. 99.
[125] Thelle, *Buddhism and Christianity,* p. 211; Ishikawa introduced the work of Edward Carpenter and Elisée Reclus in the journal, see vols 13-4 and 15-1. Cited in Yoshida Kyūichi, *Nihon kindai bukkyōshi kenkyū* (Study of Japan's modern history of Buddhism) (Tokyo, 1959), pp. 413-4.
[126] Vols 14-4-5-6-7, cited in Yoshida, *Nihon kindai bukkyōshi,* p. 413.

government authority. [127]

Takashima recalls vividly in his memoirs how the decision to publish Kōtoku's last essay before his execution was fraught with hesitation. He knew too well the potentially fatal (致命的) outcome a too close association with socialism could have.[128] The essay was entitled 'On the obliteration of Christ' (基督抹殺論), a rejection of the myth of Jesus. Its author was aware that it was a matter of posthumous publication - his last message – a fact that may have swayed Takashima into accepting to set it into print. That the exploration of different views on Christianity was one of the hallmarks of *Shin Bukkyō* also made it a logical outlet. But there was an evident feeling of awe on the part of Takashima for the bravery and sense of freedom displayed by the late Meiji socialist dissenters, of which both Kōtoku and Ishikawa were potent symbols.[129] No doubt he kept communication flowing with the lone Japanese exile as with one of the few representatives of the group who survived the state's harshly repressive measures.

Scholarship has shown that the ambitions of the New Buddhist movement went beyond the repositioning of Japanese Buddhism in the face of the Meiji administration's repressive policies. Indeed, it addressed not only purely religious concerns, but also the aspects of mysticism and self-cultivation that preoccupied many thinkers of the time and that they related to projects of socio-political reform.[130] Ishikawa's bonds with the movement reflect this trend. That he considered a correspondence between Henry Salt's Humanitarian League and Takashima Beihō's

[127] Yoshida, *Nihon kindai bukkyōshi,* p. 395; Mohr, *Buddhism, Unitarianism,* pp. *112-4.*
[128] Takashima Beihō, *Beihō kaikodan* (Beihō's reminiscences) (Tokyo, 1951), p. 136.
[129] Takashima, *Beihō kaikodan*, pp.134-8; Yoshida, *Nihon kindai bukkyōshi,* p. 397.
[130] See for example Yoshinaga, 'Theosophy and Buddhist reformers'; Tedo, Kiyonobu, ''Shin bukkyō' ni miru bukkyōkai no kyōyōka' (Self-cultivation and religion in the New Buddhist movement), *Annual Review of Religious Studies* (2000) 18, pp. 31-43.

New Buddhist precepts highlights his role as a connector of ideas and people. The commonality between the two cannot be reduced to the focus on animal cruelty. It extends to the promotion of the common moral vocabulary to which they are attached. It also derives from a broad weave of philosophical concepts, and an extensive community of intellectuals linked together by the agency of the Japanese exile.

ENGAGEMENT WITH THE EUROPEAN ANARCHIST MOVEMENT

The kind of loose associations Ishikawa forged with Carpenter's circle of friends would take a more overtly political expression two years into the war, when he signs the *Manifeste des Seize* (Manifesto of the Sixteen), together with Paul Reclus and several other prominent figures of the European anarchist movement. The Manifesto, dated 28 February 1916, supported the allied efforts to defeat Germany, signaling a break from the mainstream pacifist and non-interventionist position of anarchists at the time. For Ishikawa, this bold political commitment would have ramifications at both the international and domestic levels. It comes after his grueling, life-changing experience in occupied Brussels and a difficult flight from Belgium in January 1915. Having reached Paris via Holland and London in February of that year, he is reunited with the Reclus family, and, thanks to their help, settles in Liancourt, in the Oise Department, about fifty kilometers north of the French capital. Renewed contact with Paul thus motivates his more active role in the European anarchist movement.

Published first in the French syndicalist daily *La Bataille* (The Battle) in

March 1916, then in *La Libre Fédération* (The Free Federation) of Lausanne a month later, the manifesto had been drawn up by Kropotkin with the help of French activist Jean Grave (1854-1939).[131] It owed its name to the (assumed) number of its signatories, with amongst them another revolutionary exile, Georgian Prince Varlaam Cherkesov (1846-1925), Dutch syndicalist Christiaan Cornelissen (1864-1942) and French anarchists Charles Malato (1857-1938) and Marc Pierrot (1887-1942).[132] In the months that followed, a hundred and seven more signatories, including activists from England, Belgium, Portugal, Italy and Switzerland, added their support.[133] The text, unashamedly pro-entente, caused a split within the European anarchist movement, precipitating its demise in some views, and in any case prefiguring the acute contradictions that would undermine socialist parties, notably after the October revolution of 1917.[134]

The signatories make clear they attribute to Germany not only responsibility for the conflict, but also the aggravating circumstance of having long intended its attacks on Belgium, France and Russia. They warn of peace talks that at the present moment would overwhelmingly favour the aggressor, exempting it from due reparation and indemnity while rubber-stamping the annexation of territories. According to them, the German government has deceived the country's workers. Moreover, the latter were poorly represented at the conference of Zimmerwald,

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[131] Confino, Michaël, 'Anarchisme et internationalisme: autour du *Manifeste des Seize* [Correspondance inédite de Pierre Kropotkine et de Marie Goldsmith, janvier-mars 1916] ' (Anarchist and internationalism: about the *Manifesto of the Sixteen* [Unpublished correspondence between Peter Kropotkin and Marie Goldsmith, January-March 1916]), *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique* (1981) 22-2-3, p. 232.
[132] In reality, the signatories numbered fifteen, one place-name having been mistaken for a surname.
[133] Ishikawa*, Chosakushū,* vol. 3, p. 49.
[134] Confino, 'Anarchisme et internationalisme', p. 231.

purging it from any real meaning.[135] In other words, there is no reason to believe in German peaceful dispositions, but enough to see that the aggressor's objective is the pure and simple annexation of Belgium and the territories of Northern France.

As the text makes clear, the excesses of German militarism incarnate the worst contemporary evils, while France, the land of revolution and of the Commune of 1871, can claim a more advanced sense of freedom:

> From the viewpoint of our deep conscience, German aggression was a threat, carried out not only against our hopes of emancipation but also against the whole of human evolution. It is why, we, anarchists, anti-militarists, enemies of war and passionate supporters of peace and the brotherhood of peoples, have taken side with resistance and did not consider separating our plight from that of the rest of the population. [136]

Further on, the signatories insist that Germany must be defeated in its own terms precisely because they are internationalists and wish for the eradication of borders.

The *Manifeste*, however, immediately attracted the condemnation of the London International Anarchist Group, whose leading representatives included the Italian exile Errico Malatesta (1853-1932) and prominent Dutch socialist Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis (1846-1919). It seems that the London Group represented the majority faction amongst the international anarchist movement.[137] In an April letter published in the journal *Freedom*,[138] Malatesta stresses the paradox of suggesting collaboration with the government and capitalists of some countries in order to

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[135] Conference held in Sept. 1915 amongst delegates of anti-militarist socialist parties from several countries with the aim of coordinating international socialist opinion and action with respect to the war.
[136] Manifeste des Seize (http://anti.mythes.voila.net/a_propos_du_mouvement_anarchiste/anarchistes_et_premiere_guerre_mondiale/manifeste_des_seize.pdf). My translation.
[137] Confino, 'Anarchisme et internationalisme', p. 231.
[138] Anarcho-communist journal founded in 1886 in London by Peter Kropotkin and Charlotte Wilson (1854-1944).

eliminate the government and capitalists of others.[139] The London Group's stance relied on the conventional anarchist understanding that war was the inevitable result of the existence of a capitalist system. The contest for dominance among imperialist nation-states should then only be opposed through revolutionary insurrection.

It is hard to deny that the *Manifeste des Seize* strayed from the basic anarchist principles, derived from Marxist thought, which had sustained the movement throughout its history. And it is somewhat odd to find a Japanese name at the bottom of a document that addresses anarchist tactics, which are clearly preoccupied with the future of Belgium. There is no doubt that chance, in the form of his friendship with Paul Reclus, played a part in Ishikawa's decision to engage directly with this issue. But a close investigation of the context of the incident and related developments is revealing in two respects. First, in spite of his strong anti-war stance during the Russo-Japanese War, Ishikawa's signing of the *Manifeste* is much less of a volte-face than it appears. Second, his participation must be assessed in light of the network of individuals, several of them exiles, of which he was part. Their increasing attachment to a competing notion of human progress rather than rigid pacifist principles suggests a transformation of anarchist thinking at the time, something that a study of the Japanese intellectual's experience helps to elucidate.

Ishikawa's siding with the allies in the midst of the First World War has drawn criticism in scholarship for the inconsistency of his views. Yonehara Ken in particular points to rising pro-France partisanship found in Ishikawa's writings at the time and the ideological contradiction between his fierce opposition to the Japanese

[139] In http://anti.mythes.voila.net/a_propos_du_mouvement_anarchiste/anarchistes_et_premiere_guerre_mondiale/me_freedom_04_16_.pdf.

government's military intervention against Russia in 1904-1905 and the *Manifeste*.[140] It is true that during his stay in Belgium, then in France, Ishikawa is immersed in conflicting political arguments about the limits of pacifism, the nature of militarism and meaning of patriotism. Thus, he is hopeful, then disappointed by the results of the conference of Zimmerwald of September 1915, which reflects infighting rather than conciliation.[141] The assassination of prominent pacifist and socialist Jean Jaurès (1859-1914) on 31 July 1914 by a French nationalist sympathizer had equally disillusioned him. Soon he devotes a long essay to the life and thought of the French politician, remarking that the latter's high moral virtue was not incompatible with a deep love for his country.[142] At times, he also longs for Japan, observing at one point to his friend Sakai Toshihiko: 'after all, I am a patriot'.[143]

As a lone anarchist exile cut off from his roots and thrown into the chaos of the war, Ishikawa understandably oscillates between possible allegiances. In the context of crumbling certainties all around, however, he remains throughout his experience acutely aware of one reality: what he perceives as the unjust plight of neutral Belgium, which lies at the heart of the conflict. More than an attachment to philosophical principles, his considerations are largely dictated by the feeling of empathy he has for the population of the small and effectively defenceless country. In his war diary, correspondence and other essays, he repeatedly laments Belgium's cruel fate, which 'is right in the middle of the confusion, an awful thing'. [144] As he notes, 'Brussels, which was a second Paris, full of life's pleasures, is now shut by the

[140] Yonehara, 'Daiichi sekai taisen', p. 73.
[141] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 7, pp. 110-11; vol. 8, p.369.
[142] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol.8, pp. 344-357.
[143] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 7, p. 108.
[144] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 7, p. 99.

silence of grief and terror.'[145] And though he is not always complimentary about the locals' reaction to German occupation, he can see how they are victimized by international geopolitics.[146]

In other words, with the *Manifeste*, he once again declares himself on the side of the oppressed, the 'little people' whose destiny is at the mercy of state power and organized system of exploitation. In that sense, Belgium is a kind of *heimin* caught up in the conflict of imperialisms and as such deserves his loyalty. As much as the indignation Ishikawa felt for Japan's rural population motivated his antagonism to the Russo-Japanese War, the plundering of Belgium, to which he is a prime witness, encourages him to support the *Manifeste*. The emotional nature of Ishikawa's commitment, which focuses on those he considers as hapless victims of subjugation, emerges in both instances. Rather than ideological consistency at an abstract level, it provides a thread of continuity anchored in the reality of everyday life.

It is clear to him that the Japanese government, which mobilizes its soldiers to fight Russia and imposes its iron-fist on political dissidents, embodies the excesses of the state apparatus as much as German militarism demonstrates its deviousness. As he states on several occasions during the conflict, the latter represents a denial of humane values, - it is 'non-humaneness' (非人道主義) - and the response by French forces expresses rightful anger (義憤).[147] Accordingly, Ishikawa relates encounters with French soldiers that convey the compassionate, humane side of their character. In his words, they are men who long for their hometown and families; they think of the ideals inherited from the 1789 Revolution, a sense of freedom unseen amongst

[145] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū,* vol. 2, p. 20.
[146] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū,* vol. 2, pp. 21, 42.
[147] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 2, pp. 167, 202.

Japanese or German soldiers.[148]

In comparison, Ishikawa views German militarism as a faceless phenomenon, an abstract emanation of power and oppression. In 1915, his view of Japanese militarism, a dangerous phenomenon in embryo that follows the German model, is also prescient.[149] His condemnation of Bolshevism in later years would derive from the same instinctive distrust of ruthless authoritarianism that demands unquestioning obedience from the people.[150] Likewise, his denunciation of the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931 was a rejection of yet another manifestation of faceless oppression.[151]

In a text of 1904, Ishikawa explains that the love he has for his own country naturally transposes into love for other countries, while the real enemies are the Japanese elite wielding the power of the state.[152] Twelve years later, he expresses the same idea. He feels deeply for the inhabitants of Belgium, but this time, the real enemy is aggressive German militarism. The issue would flare up again in 1929, in the context of a controversy in Japan with Hatta Shūzō (1886-1934), a leading representative of 'pure anarchism', who opposed 'anarcho-syndicalism', to which Ishikawa gave his support. Hatta intimates that association with French syndicalism influenced his opponent's views in 1916, hence the reversal of his anti-war stance.[153] In a systematic response, Ishikawa denies that syndicalism had any impact on his

[148] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 8, pp. 365-366.
[149] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 2, p. 208.
[150] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū,* vol.3, p. 50, 231.
[151] Ishikawa Sanshirō, 'Manchū jihen' (The Manchurian Incident), *Dinamikku* (1st Dec. 1931), in *Kojinshi*, p. 113.
[152] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 1, pp. 178-9.
[153] Hatta Shūzō, 'Aikokushin no mondai nitsuite' (About the issue of patriotism), *Hatta Shūzō Zenshū*: *museifu kyōsanshugi* (Complete works: anarcho-communism) (Tokyo, 1981), p. 110. On Hatta Shūzō, see Crump, John, *Hatta Shūzō and Pure Anarchism in Interwar Japan* (Basingstoke, 1993).

decision. He explains, however, that:

> When I saw the young and the old, women and children, of both Belgium and France subjected to the persecution and indignity of military occupiers acting like predatory animals, I could not say I was a pacifist. Robbers entered my own house and inflicted inexcusable violence to members of my family. To fight was the only way to get rid of them. That was the meaning of our declaration.[154]

References to one's 'own house' and 'members of a family' are not fortuitous, as they reinforce the notion of a bond of affection between the author and his temporary land of adoption. The investigation of Ishikawa's exile status – its genesis and particularities – also suggests that his political commitment cannot be understood without a reference to these emotional ties. From the vast scholarly literature that addresses this theme, perhaps Edward Said's *Reflections on Exile* best describes the profoundly intimate and distressing experience that a forced displacement from one's roots represents for a human being. The need to reconstruct a sense of belonging – 'to reassemble an identity out of the refractions and discontinuities of exile' - becomes a latent drive for thought and action.[155]

For Ishikawa, whose departure from his homeland coincided with the death of several friends, the feeling of dislocation is doubly harrowing. The process of reconnection with a trusted community takes place gradually. A self-proclaimed 'pariah' (エタ) and isolated, Ishikawa dissolves his ethnic identity and finds fellowship in the commonality of experience of oppression. It is in Brussels, his first destination as an exile, that he finds an initial sense of attachment, one that would grow as the war proceeds. He also spends much of his spare time mastering the French language, with which he had no affinity before leaving Japan and which

[154] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 3, p. 50.
[155] Said, Edward, *Reflections on Exile and Other Literary and Cultural Essays* (London, 2000), p. 179.

increases the process of reconnection to a community.[156]

Ishikawa's signing of the *Manifeste* in 1916 crystallizes this new sense of belonging. Amongst the signatories, several had like him a history of incarceration, persecution and exile. Apart from Reclus and Cherkesov, such was the experience of Kropotkin, forced away from his homeland between 1876 and 1917. In 1916, Paul Reclus had just returned to France after twenty years of absence, first in Scotland, then in Belgium. Of Prince Cherkesov, Ishikawa kept a particularly warm memory, as a trusted friend and affable man whose small stature, black eyes, beard and hair were to him reminiscent of Asian features.[157] During his stay in London in late 1913 and early 1914, Ishikawa remembers visiting the Georgian exile on a weekly basis. With another reference to the notion of family, he notes that 'to a lonesome wanderer like me, visits to Cherkesov's felt like returning to my father's house.'[158]

To the Japanese intellectual, his friend was yet another remarkable man amongst exiles, known for his critical analysis of Marxism, his fight for Georgian independence and utter disappointment with Bolshevism.[159] Ishikawa's close acquaintance with the circle of Russian émigrés during his stay in Europe also marked his understanding of revolutionary activism. In 1928, he would introduce to Japan a comprehensive account of the role of the Ukrainian revolutionary Nestor Makhno (1888-1943) in the organization of peasant movements and struggle against state authority.[160] Thus, Ishikawa's various encounters in Europe before and during the

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[156] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 8, p. 21.
[157] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 6, pp. 248, 277.
[158] Ishikawa Sanshirō, foreword to *Kyōsantō sengen no tanebon* (Origins of the Communist Party Manifesto) by Warlaam Cherkesov (Tokyo, 1925).
[159] Cherkesov returned to Georgia in 1917 but went back to London after a while, as he feared for his life under the Bolshevik regime. See Avrich, Paul, *The Russian Anarchists* (Oakland, 2005).
[160] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 5, pp. 331-79.

First World War weaved some intense personal connections and contributed to shaping his perceptions of what defined radical activism.

RECONFIGURING ANARCHIST THOUGHT AND ACTION

If the *Manifesto of the Sixteen* agitated the anarchist press in 1916, its true legacy lay in the fostering of a new emotional community that persisted through the years. What held the signatories together was the sense that anarchism needed to reclaim human agency and attachment to higher spiritual values than the mechanical conception of struggle and revolution. They were intent on upholding ideals of resistance to any form of state oppression, as well as remaining apart from institutional affiliations and ideological categories. But theirs was also a fight with a human dimension. Over time their lives and work redefined the ideas of anarchist engagement and non-state transnational politics.

The signatories set to work on the diffusion of their moral convictions of freedom and solidarity through a loose net of publications and activism, of which Ishikawa became an integral part, thereby expanding its reach to the Far East. Several years after the war, the journal *Plus Loin* (Further) in particular became a major outlet for the dissemination of their ideas. This publication in French of a dozen pages described itself as a 'periodical about social progress and human emancipation, outside of any party allegiance and against any class privilege, for the whole development - material, intellectual and moral – of individuals in a freely organized

society'.[161] Together with concerns about social progress and labour conditions, *Plus Loin* denounced Bolshevism and colonialism, with by-lines by Paul Reclus and his son, Jacques, Jean Grave, Kropotkin and others.

Ishikawa remembers meeting its editor, Marc Pierrot (1871-1950) on a number of occasions at his house in the company of Reclus and other friends. He writes of a man who expressed anarchism not only by his words, but also in his studies and attitude to life.[162] Pierrot, a medical doctor by training and one of the *Manifeste*'s signatories, embodied the ambitions of *Plus Loin*, a title chosen to reflect the need for proponents of social change not to stop at the kind of solution Bolshevism offered, but to 'go further'.[163] Thus, the journal's opening issue reproduced a letter of Max Nettlau, urging its readers to reconsider the work and spirit of Elisée Reclus, Paul's uncle, as someone whose open-mindedness transcended petty polemics, someone who 'was above the movement.'[164] Nettlau continues:

> There are enough anarchists who are feisty, intolerant, organizers, sectarian, specialists, in a word, anarchists with a narrow spirit. There are too few men of goodness, tolerance, and broadmindedness, men who would be somewhat parents of Reclus's spirit. … If an anarchism that is wide, generous, humane should re-appear, disparate elements will fuse into unity.[165]

As detailed in chapter five, the promotion of Elisée Reclus's legacy became one of Ishikawa's main tasks after his return to Japan in 1920. Between the spring of 1916 and then, he had spent much of his remaining time in exile with Paul and Marguerite in Domme, a small village in South West France. There, he tilled the earth while familiarizing himself with Elisée's geographical and political writings.[166] Besides a wealth of practical and intellectual knowledge, however, he brought back

[161] *Plus Loin* ran from March 1925 to September 1939.
[162] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 6, p. 261.
[163] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 6, p. 261.
[164] Nettlau, Max, 'Une lettre de Max Nettlau' (A letter from Max Nettlau), *Plus Loin*, N. 1 (Mar. 1925) Paris, p. 4.
[165] Nettlau, *Plus Loin*, N. 1 (Mar. 1925), pp. 4-5.
[166] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol.8, pp. 390, 2.

home the reality of the community of friends and activists nurtured during his exile years.

Ishikawa's links to *Plus Loin* show that long after his return home he remained a trusted member of this community. A few instalments of the publication acknowledge anarchist pamphlets 'received from Japan', for which Ishikawa provided a title in French.[167] One of them is the 'Gospel to the Peasants', written by his friend Akaba Ganketsu before his death in 1912,[168] while the others are of his own authorship. The translation of an article by anarcho-feminist Takamure Itsue (1984-1964) about the women's front in Japan also made it to *Plus Loin*.[169] So did the report on a detailed talk about the peasant condition in Japan by Shiina Sonoji (1887-1962), a Japanese resident in France and friend of Paul, through whom he also met Ishikawa.[170] Clearly, the journal held a special meaning for Japan as an important node within a net of global transnational connections.

Conflicting opinions about the 1916 *Manifeste* resurfaced amongst European anarchists in 1928. In *Plus Loin*, Paul reaffirms that militarism had been the main enemy, denying that patriotism had swayed his views at the time. Again, he mentions his experience of exile and explains that his homeland is 'anywhere there are men of heart and intelligence, comrades and friends'.[171] In a subsequent issue, a letter 'from our friend Ishikawa' reiterates that the Japanese intellectual is 'in full agreement' with

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[167] *La restauration de la vie primitive*, in N. 36 (Mar. 1928); *La critique de la conception matérialiste de l'histoire*, in N. 38 (May 1928); *Le mouvement makhnoviste*, in N. 52 (July 1929).
[168] *Nōmin no fukuin*/*Evangile aux paysans,* in N. 52 (July 1929). See chapter 2.
[169] Takamure Itsue, 'Le front féminin au Japon' (The feminist front in Japan), *Plus Loin,* N. 66 (Sept.-Oct. 1930), pp. 14-5. It is likely that Ishikawa, or his publishing partner Mochizuki Yuriko (1900-2001), introduced Takamure to *Plus Loin*.
[170] For contacts between Shiina and Ishikawa, see Ninagawa Yuzuru, *Pari ni shisu – Hyōden: shiina sonoji* (To die in Paris – A critical biography of Shiina Sonoji) (Tokyo, 1996).
[171] Reclus, Paul, 'Dans la mêlée' (In the scuffle), *Plus Loin*, N. 40 (July 1928), p. 4.

his co-signatories, but also, taken in by the full swing of the 'Taisho Democracy', expresses some optimism about present Japanese militarism 'which cannot resist against the great popular democratic movement'.[172]

Plus Loin's corresponding publication in Japan was Ishikawa's own *Dinamikku*, a four-page leaflet printed from the village of Chitose in Western Tokyo, where he had moved in 1927. *Dinamikku* ran between November 1929 and October 1934, sharing with its French language counterpart several of its by-lines, including Jean Grave, Marc Pierrot, Paul and Jacques Reclus, as well as an anarchist view of social and human progress. The title, date and heading of the paper also appeared in French, reflecting the connection to the unofficial global community to which Ishikawa belonged.[173] In a country where nationalistic sentiments were again intensifying, however, the leaflet's dissenting tone sometimes came at a price. Government censors banned the sale of four issues and its editor remained on the police watch list for many years.[174]

In light of Ishikawa's aspiration to be an educator rather than an agitator, *Dinamikku* represented one important platform of communication.[175] At the core of this endeavour, however, were the links nurtured between Ishikawa and the Reclus family. They endured until the former's death in 1956. Contacts with Jacques were particularly abundant, totalling fifty-four letters over the years.[176] Ishikawa's friendship with Jacques flourished after he had settled in Chitose. Twice, in the

[172] Ishikawa Sanshirō, *Plus Loin*, N. 43 (Oct. 1928), p. 10.
[173] *La Dynamique - Organe mensuel de culture anarchiste*
[174] For example the February 1932 issue, in which Jacques Reclus criticises the Japanese action in Manchuria (but also the Chinese political system). Police reports from December 1920 mention Ishikawa's participation in a meeting with members of the Esperanto association, and he is again mentioned in June 1926 for meeting with foreigners.
[175] Chapter 5 further explores the importance of *Dinamikku*.
[176] The letters from Ishikawa to Jacques (or Paul) have not been found despite much effort made to track them down. Jacques's direct descendants have refused to answer queries.

summers of 1929 and 1933, the Frenchman traveled to Japan from China where he lived for twenty-five years. Author of a book on the Taiping rebellion and of several translations from Chinese into French, Jacques maintained the anarchist tradition of his forebears. He mingled with local activists, several of them also known to Ishikawa, and remained a pivotal contact and intermediary on Chinese soil for the Japanese intellectual. He taught French and social history, believing, like his friend, in the gradual and non-violent diffusion of anarchist ideals.

The abundant exchange of letters between the two men before the war reflects the chaos slowly engulfing Chinese society and growing anti-Japanese sentiments after the 1931 Manchurian incident. Jacques, however, condemns the Japanese invasion in ambivalent terms: despite the evil nature of imperialism, he sees in foreign intervention an opportunity to clean up the endemic corruption and socio-economic mismanagement in his country of residence.[177] Yet, he urges Ishikawa to keep up his work for the persistence of their shared moral convictions.[178] Harassment by the Japanese police is a constant concern for both men, and Jacques observes rightly that, given the country's authoritarian tendencies, the political situation in Japan will lead more quickly to war than revolution.[179] Their continued exchanges embody the values of the loose and borderless network they were resolute to maintain.

Ishikawa could also count on numerous informal channels of communication with China. Several of his Chinese acquaintances had belonged to the revolutionary fringe active in Tokyo before his exile years. He met others through Paul Reclus in Brussels and France in the 1910s. Most remained friends or contacts well into the

[177] *Ishikawa Sanshirō Papers* (Honjō), foreign correspondence, N. 35: Jacques Reclus to Ishikawa (15 Nov. 1931).
[178] *Ishikawa Sanshirō Papers* (Honjō), foreign correspondence, N. 35, Jacques Reclus to Ishikawa (6 Dec. 1929 and 26 Jan. 1933).
[179] *Ishikawa Sanshirō Papers* (Honjō), foreign correspondence, N. 35, Jacques Reclus to Ishikawa (26 Jan. 1933).

Second World War. The efforts to reach Chinese readers relied partly on *Dinamikku,* which made its way to China, more specifically Shanghai, Beijing and Nanking, through the intermediary of Jacques amongst others. He acknowledges reception of the journal on several occasions. A short note from a Chinese acquaintance named only as Zhang (張) congratulates Ishikawa on adopting a life of self-sufficiency and bearing the flame of freedom, suggesting Ishikawa's influential standing amongst China-based anarchists. [180]

Ishikawa's activities as a translator also meant he was in contact with biographers and publishers of Reclus's work in several countries. In a 1929 letter to Max Nettlau in Vienna, he thanks the German historian and anarchist for the permission to use his work on Reclus, observing, '*we* are very enthusiastic about your work'.[181] By saying 'we', he is emphasizing the existence of the wider, borderless community of supporters he nurtured.

The dangers of state control and encroachment never ceased to preoccupy the members of their community. In a long letter to his Japanese friend, Paul Reclus deplores the fact that 'individual property and the supreme role of the state remain untouched dogma for the majority of men', though he sees some reasons for optimism in recent international developments. [182] Occasionally, he reaffirms the strength of the links within the community, assuring Ishikawa that 'the Paris's friends are well'.[183] In his last note in 1938, three years before his death, Paul would restate the commonality of their aspirations: 'I have been moved by your nice postcard, which

[180] *Dinamikku* (1 Feb. 1930), p. 22. This is a possible reference to Zhang Renjie (1877-1950), friend of Li Shizeng and member of the Paris anarchist group familiar to Ishikawa.
[181] *Max Nettlau Papers* (IIHS), general correspondence, N. 654, Ishikawa to Nettlau (27 Nov. 1929). My italics and translation from the French.
[182] *Ishikawa Sanshirō Papers* (Honjō), foreign correspondence, N. 38, Paul Reclus to Ishikawa. Only the second half of the letter has been preserved. As it refers to the recent Conference of Locarno, it was probably written in 1925.
[183] *Ishikawa Sanshirō Papers* (Honjō), foreign correspondence, N. 38, Paul Reclus to Ishikawa (1 Jan. 1931).

tells me that you are well and that we have similar sentiments on many issues', but his final words also imply that the tide was running against their shared anarchist struggle against militarism: 'I hope that your book will be successful, though [I fear that] now warlike literature has a greater chance than philosophy'.[184] Indeed, he lived just long enough to see his predictions validated by the upheaval of a new world war.

CONCLUSION

If Ishikawa left Japan in 1913 marked by persecution and a sense of the demise of his and his friends' ideas, his exile years offered a rich intellectual and personal experience which sustained his thought long after his return home in 1920. The convictions about the man-nature relationship and cooperative ethics he had acquired as a leader of the late Meiji socialist movement found an echo amongst the thinkers and activists he met throughout his stay in Europe. The links he forged with Edward Carpenter, Paul Reclus, and their circle of friends thus contributed to what constituted his transnational practice: the development, and extension to the Far East, of a borderless spiritual and emotional community that upheld the specific kind of mode of participation in the world he championed.

The hallmark is the attachment to egalitarian social bonds and consequent rejection of hierarchical categories in the human realm. It is apparent in Ishikawa's reflections in the war diary he penned in Brussels in 1914 as it is in his decision to support the *Manifeste des Seize* in 1916. The affinity he shared with Carpenter's

[184] *Ishikawa Sanshirō Papers* (Honjō), foreign correspondence, N. 38, Paul Reclus to Ishikawa (2 Feb. 1938).

conception of 'cosmic consciousness' draws from a similar appreciation of egalitarian values. It underscores the congruence with, and partial derivation from, Asian spiritual traditions. It also finds inspiration in the non-rational modes of knowledge and self-cultivation which became familiar to Ishikawa from the intellectual and cultural trends of the second half of the Meiji era. Breaking free from East-versus-West categorization is thus part of a broader aspiration to a higher realm of universal connectedness. Underlying the overall vision is the rejection of any mechanistic understanding of historical change, as his early criticism of Bolshevism indicates.

Ultimately, the study of Ishikawa's exile years highlights the importance of lived experience and intense personal connections in the formation of political agency. Through the community of friends he nurtured, he stressed the diffusion and use of a new moral vocabulary essential to the breaking of boundaries that was at the centre of his anarchist vision.

CHAPTER 4: STANDING ON THE EARTH

INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines Ishikawa's practical experiments in an alternative model of socio-political organization during the decade that followed his return to Japan in 1920. His conception of *domin seikatsu* (土民生活) – an understanding of democracy rooted in man's free and unmediated relationship with the earth – provides the basis for this model. A commitment to self-sufficient daily living at an individual level and the promotion of self-governing farmers' councils under the umbrella of the Nōmin Jichikai (農民自治会) constituted its concrete manifestations.

I suggest here that Ishikawa's vision offered a distinctive template for revolutionary change through the practices of daily life and that as such it gave Japanese anarchism a new impulse of a non-violent nature in the 1920s. The emphasis on human cooperation and close association to the land characterized this outlook. I also argue for the singularity of *domin seikatsu,* as a concept of 'democracy' born and refined amidst the conflicting ideological currents of the decade. It was inspired by personal experience as well as intellectual reflection on both indigenous and foreign sources. Thus, I validate *domin seikatsu* as a stand-alone model for change, which transcends the legacy of such thinkers as Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910), Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921), Edward Carpenter (1844-1929) or Elisée Reclus

(1830-1905), whose ideas permeated to varying degrees Japan's progressive social discourse in the early twentieth century.

I show here that Ishikawa conceived of transformative practices in society, which did not aim at overthrowing state structures and other hierarchies but simply vowed to disregard them through tactics of self-management and autonomy. These experiments express in essence both an attitude of resistance to what is perceived as an oppressive and exploitative hierarchical framework, and the recognition of the value of agrarian communities and traditions as guarantors of the perpetuation of human wellbeing. This conception is reminiscent of the stance taken by Tanaka Shōzō on the occasion of the protest in the village of Yanaka during the early 1900s (see chapter 2). Ishikawa's own revolutionary thought, however, has distinctive theoretical premises and transnational dimensions that underscore its specificity as a model of democracy.

The activism in which Ishikawa engaged in the 1920s represents a logical development from the years of exile spent in Europe, which reinforced his egalitarian convictions and willingness to transcend human-made boundaries. The belief that humans are part of, and indebted to, the natural world is reflected in his respect for farmers, who are harvesters of the nourishing force of nature. Ishikawa's direct involvement with agricultural work for over four years in southwest France further gave substance to his thought. As this chapter shows, the daily experience of physical labour with the soil helped to distance him from emperor-centered nationalist ideologies of agrarianism that spread in the 1930s.

The Japanese intellectual's concerns with the plight of peasants were already evident at the time of his engagement with late Meiji socialism. During the 1920s, they formed an essential part of his activism. This has two important consequences

for our understanding of that period. First, it sheds light on the agrarian roots of a specific, non-violent strand of anarchist thought, one that has so far received little attention from academia. It developed alongside urban centered anarchism, of which Ōsugi Sakae was a leading representative until his early death in September 1923. It also distinguished itself from the 'pure anarchism' of Hatta Shūzō (1886-1934), who, unlike Ishikawa, rejected syndicalism as an organizing tool amongst peasants and workers.[1]

Both Ōsugi's and Hatta's currents of thought contributed to define pre-war Japanese anarchism, but they focused more on the purely ideological aspects of the movement. Ishikawa brought to it a philosophical and concrete dimension. He sided with farming communities because he believed in the importance of an inalienable link between man and his natural environment. He also thought they were repositories of valuable practices of solidarity that needed to be harnessed in the modern world. Most importantly, Ishikawa viewed agricultural work as a metaphor for social change through everyday actions. He believed in revolution as progressive and accretive rather than an act of violent insurrection.

Second, a study of Ishikawa's attempts to organize farmers into autonomous councils from 1925 helps to re-evaluate the notion of popular agrarianism that marked this period. During the late 1920s, *nōhonshugi* (農本主義), a post-1868 ideology that sees farming as a fundamental principle for the flourishing of an ideal Japanese social and political order, garnered mounting interest within the bureaucracy. It also rallied a growing proportion of the peasantry together with thinkers and agitators, hence

[1] See Crump, John, *Hatta Shūzō and Pure Anarchism in Interwar Japan* (Basingstoke, 1993).

'popular agrarianism'.[2] Historians of modern Japan have paid particular attention to its role in fueling pre-war nationalism.

English speaking academia has tended to attach the label of rightwing fundamentalism to agrarian movements of the era rather indiscriminately, thereby amalgamating various viewpoints into a single ideological category.[3] Even when recognizing the existence of several strands of popular agrarianism, intellectual historians have predominantly focused on thinkers who supported Japan's 'national essence' in one form or another, such as Kita Ikki (1883-1937), Gondō Seikyō (1866-1937) or Tachibana Kōzaburō (1893-1974).[4] This effectively removes from historical inquiry intellectual zones of political dissent that consider man's relationship to the land as essential, yet do not accept the nation-state as the prime source of validation. Against conventional thinking, Ishikawa's practical experiments in the 1920s demonstrate that attachment to the soil and to agrarian practices does not necessarily equate to heightened nationalism.

Both Ishikawa's personal choice of cultivating the land and the willingness to reorganize farming communities along different socio-political lines rely on a given conception of economic self-sufficiency. The quest for a certain level of food autonomy is never neutral. It determines the degree of integration or allegiance of an individual, or collectivities of regional or national scale, to the larger institutional and political framework. Interestingly, from 1918 onward Japanese government policy

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[2] The distinction between bureaucratic and popular agrarianism is drawn from the seminal study of Havens, Thomas, *Farm and Nation in Modern Japan* (Princeton, 1974).

[3] In her study of pan-Asianism, Eri Hotta assimilates Ishikawa to agrarian agitators pitting Japan against the West. Hotta, *Pan-Asianism and Japan's War, 1931-1945* (Basingstoke, 2007), p. 65; for ideological amalgamation see also Harootunian, Harry, and Najita, Tetsuo, 'Japanese Revolt Against the West: Political and Cultural Criticism in the Twentieth Century' in Duus (ed), *The Cambridge History of Japan: the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 722.

[4] Havens, *Farm and Nation* (1974); Najita and Harootunian, 'Japanese Revolt Against the West'.

steered the country toward imperial self-sufficiency in rice, thereby locking colonial territory into the essential production of the staple commodity.[5] The shock of that year's nationwide rice riots and the widespread belief that Germany's defeat in the First World War had partly been the result of its inability to feed its population provided strong incentives to achieve self-subsistence.[6]

Ishikawa's experience in occupied Brussels in 1914 – when food was scarce and the pursuit of material progress had seemingly precipitated the horrific European conflict - may have similarly motivated his own search for an autonomy in harmony with nature.[7] But unlike national policies that subjected colonial populations to external rule and domination, Ishikawa's vision sought a complete break with restraints imposed by hierarchical power. He also strove to rescue farmers from a state of despondency and dependency on what he perceived as exploitative landlords and unjust central government policies. He felt that for too long preeminence had been given to cities, which exploited and dehumanized the countryside. From that perspective, a focus on rural conditions called for a return to the dignity of farming activities and to the autonomy of peasants. Ishikawa's socio-political model demands, however, that autonomy should never unfold at the expense of cooperation and individual freedom.

As the following pages highlight, *domin seikatsu* emerged in a context of ideas open to the notion of 'return to the land', but an exploration of the concept's genesis and implementation reveals its singularity. Ishikawa's engagement with farmers – his conviction they needed to organize autonomously and operate without control from

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[5] Francks, Penelope, *Rural Economic Development in Japan: from the Nineteenth Century to the Pacific War* (London and New York, 2006), pp. 179-83.
[6] Szpilman, Christopher, 'Fascist and Quasi-Fascist Ideas in Interwar Japan, 1918-1941', in Reynolds (ed), *Japan in the Fascist Era* (New York, 2004), pp. 75-7.
[7] See previous chapter.

above – was the motive force behind *domin seikatsu*. In 1920s Japan, the implementation of such a vision had to navigate through the dominant intellectual currents of communism, liberal capitalism and soon rising ultra-nationalist sentiments, and it is precisely the positioning of *domin seikatsu* amongst these tensions that gives it its specificity. I trace here the intellectual conflicts as well as the personality clashes that developed over time. Indeed, the emphasis is on the constant dialectic between Ishikawa's theoretical exposition and attempts to put his ideas into practice. During these years of intense ideological strife, what becomes obvious is the formidable challenge he faced of 'standing on the earth'.

INTELLECTUAL PREMISES OF *DOMIN SEIKATSU*

The notion of 'back to the land' is ambiguous. It has a symbolic as well as a politico-economic dimension, and the two aspects tend to rub off on each other. The symbolism refers to a set of values and beliefs embodied by the direct physical work of cultivation. Often, it presupposes a specific conception of nature, for instance as a bountiful provider or as an essential link to human origins. Simply put, it is a question of identity – what gives meaning and a sense of belonging to a human community in a specific time and place. Again, though national identity often comes to mind, this chapter contends that other dimensions apply. The kind of politico-economic terms associated with this symbolic aspect varies from one case to another, signifying different degrees of allegiance to a national or state framework.

In Japan, ideas and practices that privileged a return to the land (帰農/kinō) flourished noticeably during the 1910s and 1920s. They attracted not only members of the progressive intelligentsia but also numerous young people disillusioned by life in the cities and inspired by projects that appeared to offer a productive relationship with cultivation and land management.[8] The influence of European figures such as Edward Carpenter and Peter Kropotkin, and most notably Leo Tolstoy, has been widely documented.[9] Beyond the physical work on the land that these authors recommended was a moral element that directly questioned human worth and resonated particularly with those left behind in an era of rapid economic changes.

The practical experiment in communal and autonomous living initiated by Mushanokōji Saneatsu (1885-1976) exemplifies this willingness to redefine man's identity in modernizing Japan. Atarashiki Mura (New Village), which he established in 1918 in Miyazaki Prefecture in Kyūshū, openly referenced Tolstoy's *Yasnaya Polyana* as its model and celebrated the work of peasants as 'necessary for human beings to lead a humane life'.[10] Work as an agricultural labourer represented a necessary dialogue with nature and several projects similar in inspiration and emphasis marked the Taisho and early Showa years. Renowned intellectuals such as Nakazato Kaizan (1885-1944), Tokutomi Roka (1868-1927), Katō Kazuo (1887-1951), Eto Tekirei (1880-1944) and Sōma Gyobu (1883-1950) amongst others saw a close rapport with the land as a core element of their philosophy and way of life.

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[8] Iwasaki Masaya, 'Taishō.shōwazenki nōhonshisō no shakaishiteki kenkyū' (Socio-historical study of Taisho and early Showa agrarian thought) (Kyoto Univ. Ph. D. thesis, 1995), p. 26.
[9] For example Akamatsu Katsumaro and Nobori Shomu, *The Russian Impact on Japan: Literature and Social Thought: Two Essays*, Berton, Langer, and Totten (eds) (Los Angeles, 1981); Nishimura Shun-ichi, *Nihon ekolojizumu no keifu* [The lineage of Japanese ecological thought] (Tokyo, 1992); Kominz, Laurence, 'Pilgrimage to Tolstoy: Tokutomi Roka's Junrei Kikō', *Monumenta Nipponica,* (1986) 41-1, pp. 51-101; Abe Gunji, *Shirakabaha to Torusutoi* (The White Birch Society and Tolstoy) (Tokyo, 2008); Crump, John, *The Origins of Socialist Thought in Japan* (London and New York, 1983).
[10] In Kikuchi Yūko, *Japanese Modernization and 'Mingei' Theory: Cultural Nationalism and Oriental Orientalism* (London, 2004), p. 30.

To what extent the appeal of 'Tolstoianism' or Carpenter's civilizational critique acted as driving forces behind these various projects is debatable. For James Shields, there is no question that the Russian impact largely motivated for example Eto Tekirei's decision to set up in 1910 an agrarian experiment in Musashino, near Tokyo, where he named his new home Hyakushō Aidōjō (The Farmer's Institute of Love).[11] Though Shields also mentions Kropotkin, Tokugawa philosopher Andō Shōeki (1703-1742), Buddhist and Christian influences, for him the popularity of Tolstoy amongst progressive intellectuals at the time was the main inspiration for Eto's 'return to the land'.

For his part, Sho Konishi takes a novel approach to the study of Japanese-Russian intellectual relations between 1870 and 1930, debunking the conventional understanding of a unidirectional transfer of ideas rooted in Western modernity with Japan inevitably at the receiving end. His conception of 'cooperatist anarchist modernity' draws attention to an active network of non-state actors that supplied a creative impetus for change untethered by national allegiance. In his view, Tolstoianism appears not so much as an exemplary way of life transmitted to Japanese disciples as a mode of criticism of, and resistance to Western modernity itself.[12]

The appeal of Tolstoy in Japan at the turn of the century was notable but it is also worth stressing that it addressed a wide spectrum of themes to various degrees, from religion and literature to politics, agriculture and ecology. If it proposed a 'model', it was a multifaceted one, although generally mindful of social injustice and

[11] Shields, James, 'One Village, One Mind: Eto Tekirei, Tolstoy and the Structure of Agrarian-Buddhist Utopianism in Taishō Japan', *Numata Conference in Buddhist Studies* (Violence, nonviolence, and Japanese religions: past, present and future) (20-21 Mar. 2014), p. 2, at http://hdl.handle.net/10125/32964.
[12] Konishi, Sho, *Anarchist Modernity: Cooperatism and Japanese-Russian Intellectual Relations in Modern Japan* (Boston, 2013), pp. 93-141.

open to anti-materialistic ideals.[13] Ishikawa was well aware of Tolstoy's aura in his own country. Even during his exile years, he kept in contact with his friend Tokutomi Kenjirō (or Roka), one of the Russian sage's most ardent supporters. Likewise, his familiarity with Kropotkin, whom he avidly read in prison, was evident. As for Edward Carpenter, his writings were available in Japan before the turn of the century and inspired such figures as Taoka Reiun (1870-1912), who contributed like Ishikawa to the socialist weekly *Heimin Shinbun.*[14]

A close association with nature, physical agricultural work, the plight of the peasantry, these issues were debated in the West by thinkers of radical inclination in works that appealed to a fraction of the Japanese audience early on. Indigenous sources of reflection on the very same issues, however, were also widely known. Ninomiya Sontoku (1787-1856) is celebrated for setting up the *hōtoku* (報徳) movement in the early 1800s with the objective of 'rescuing farmers' from structural poverty or agricultural hazards. This socio-economic scheme emphasized their self-reliance, and Testuo Najita has aptly stressed the role of the movement in motivating commoners' organizational consciousness.[15] He also points out Ninomiya's enduring influence beyond pre-modern times, with figures such as socialist Abe Isō (1865-1949) and evangelist Uchimura Kanzō (1861-1930) praising his achievements and qualities.[16] Indeed, members of Ishikawa's Nōmin Jichikai would invoke on several occasions the name of the early nineteenth-century agrarian thinker.

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[13] For a recent biography of Tolstoy, see Bartlett, Rosamund, *Tolstoy: a Russian Life* (London, 2010).
[14] Loftus, Ronald, 'The Inversion of Progress: Taoka Reiun's "hibunmeiron"', *Monumenta Nipponica* (1985) 40-2, pp. 191-208.
[15] Najita, Tetsuo, *Ordinary Economies in Japan: a Historical Perspective, 1750-1950* (Berkeley, 2009).
[16] Najita, *Ordinary Economies in Japan,* p. 107.

Affected by similar concerns at roughly the same time as Ninomiya was agrarian reformer Ōhara Yūgaku (1797-1858). He is remembered for his dedication to organizing farmers into cooperatives and encouraging higher productivity in order to alleviate both the pressure of feudal taxation and the endemic conditions of famine that prevailed during the period. The historian Izumi Seiji refers to Ōhara's achievements as practical agricultural experiments in 'self-sufficiency and natural economics' (*jikyūjisoku, shizenkeizai*). This highlights his approach of withdrawing from an increasingly commercial system of agriculture and rejecting central power.[17]

In Confucian vocabulary Ōhara's accomplishments and vision adhere to the notion of 'practical ethics'. In concrete terms, however, it was the immiseration of the countryside brought about by a conjunction of economic, political and cyclical factors, which motivated his actions. By advocating self-sufficiency, he put forward the conditions of farmers' emancipation. In 1857, he committed *seppuku* to escape harassment by feudal authorities, as it seems they were displeased by activities they considered politically heretical.[18] His distrust of feudal authorities, empathy for the peasantry and insistence on a form of autonomy has clear similarities with Ishikawa's thought.

It also links him to early eighteenth-century thinker Andō Shōeki (1703-1762), whose legacy has been much debated in scholarship for its perceived radical opposition to the feudal system and exploration of the concept of nature.[19] Historians recognize Shōeki's critical independence, and the willingness to provide 'a theoretical underpinning for an action ethic – *jissen rinri* – that would lead to saving other people

[17] Izumi Seiji, *Kinsei no ryūtsū keizai to keizai shisō* (*Early modern market economy and economic thought*) (Tokyo, 1998), p. 323.
[18] Izumi, *Kinsei no ryūtsū*, p. 324.
[19] See for example Najita, Tetsuo, 'Andō Shōeki – "The Forgotten Thinker" in Japanese History', in *Learning Places: the Afterlives of Area Studies,* Miyoshi and Harootunian (eds) (Durham, 2002); Izumi, *Kinsei no ryūtsū keizai*.

– *kyūmin, saimin'*.[20] In that last sense, he is certainly close to the other figures mentioned above. Despite his insistence on direct cultivation of the land, it is not so clear-cut that he should be classified as one of Japan's early ecologist thinkers or that his notion of nature should be understood as the natural world including man.[21]

Ishikawa was nevertheless well aware of Shōeki's status as a symbol of resistance to authoritarian oppression and promotion of values of equality. He mentions in his autobiography the deep lineage of ideas to which the Tokugawa era doctor and intellectual belonged, noting parallels with European thinkers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Charles Fourier.[22] The editorial staff of the *Nihon Heimin Shinbun* had already in 1908 pointed to Shōeki's understanding that the action of cultivating the earth like a humble peasant would eventually bring about equality amongst men.[23]

Clearly, this cross-pollination of ideas, from East and West, provided Ishikawa with a fertile ground for inspiration. But what concerns us here is the particular conjunction of factors that led him to present in the 1920s a fresh understanding of anarchism as a non-violent, everyday means of social transformation with a focus on peasants' liberation. In other words, how did the notions of freedom, peasant emancipation, agricultural work and daily life come together and find embodiment in *domin seikatsu,* Ishikawa's concept of democracy, and the associated development of the Nōmin Jichikai*?* As I show further in this chapter, in several respects Ishikawa challenged or extended the so-called 'models' supplied by foreign thinkers. He 'read' them in a way that deconstructed and re-purposed them. My argument is that the

[20] Najita, '"The Forgotten Thinker"', p. 68-9.
[21] Joly, Jacques, *Le naturel selon Andō Shōeki* (The natural according to Andō Shōeki) (Paris, 1996), pp. 57-61.
[22] Ishikawa Sanshirō, *Chosakushū,* vol. 8, p.428.
[23] 'Hyakugojūnenmae no museifushugisha andō shōeki' (Andō Shōeki, anarchist of a hundred and fifty years ago), *Nihon Heimin Shinbun* (20 Jan. 1908), in *Meiji shakaishugi shiryōshū,* vol. *5*, p. 255.

resistance to rising authoritarian tendencies was a driving force of his thought and shaped the development of his vision, thereby giving it its distinctiveness.

DOMIN SEIKATSU

On 17 November 1920, shortly after his return to Japan, Ishikawa addressed the Shinjinkai (New Man Society), a left-wing student organization affiliated with Tokyo Imperial University.[24] The title of his lecture was *domin seikatsu* – literally 'The life of the people of the earth'. It laid the theoretical principles of the singular social thought he would promote until the end of his life. Ishikawa was for the first time articulating his convictions regarding social organization and progress according to concepts he had himself developed and named. *Shakaishugi* (Socialism), the journal of the Socialist Federation, published the text of the lecture in April 1921. Though the talk was well received at the time, interest in this alternative socio-political model soon abated in the midst of intense ideological battles in left-wing intellectual circles.[25]

Nevertheless, over the following years, Ishikawa refined and expanded his conception of *domin seikatsu*. He gave talks in various cities around the country to promote his views.[26] In 1933, he published *Kinsei domin tetsugaku* (Philosophy of the modern people of the earth), considered to be the summation of his reflections on

[24] As a platform for the concerns of the youth and social protest of the times, it was first recognised for its intellectual diversity but soon became a predominantly Marxist forum.
[25] Ōsawa Masamichi, *Domin no shisō: taishū no naka no anakizumu* (The thought of people of the earth: anarchism amidst the masses) (Tokyo, 1990), pp. 273-5.
[26] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 7, p. 408.

the subject. This later text refines several concepts and gives various theoretical underpinnings, including some drawn from Western sources, to his vision. It elaborates on the particular situation of the Japanese agricultural sector while distinguishing *domin seikatsu* from the rising current of agrarianism in the country. It also expands on the notion of 'social aesthetics' (社会美学/shakai bigaku), which would feature prominently in the Japanese intellectual's willingness to incorporate the creative arts into his revolutionary stance and conceive of them without reliance on cultural intermediaries.[27]

By then, Ishikawa put equal emphasis on the terms *domin shisō* and *domin seikatsu*, respectively the 'thought' and 'life' of the people of the earth. The initial lecture of 1920 contains, however, the seeds of all further considerations. Fresh from his intense experience of exile, Ishikawa spells out in clear terms the essential tenets of his philosophy, which combine his distrust of state interference, attachment to agrarian traditions and cosmological understanding of social phenomena.[28] Moreover, the specificity of his activism relies from the start on the notion of daily life practice as a basis for the transformation of society. My view is that his theoretical exposition makes sense only in light of the concrete experiments with which he engaged in the 1920s and beyond, which I explore further in this chapter. To underestimate this practical aspect would obscure the significance of Ishikawa's contribution to modern Japanese thought.

[27] For more on Ishikawa's notion of 'social aesthetics', see Stolz, Robert, *Bad Water: Nature, Pollution and Politics in Japan, 1870-1950* (Durham and London, 2014), pp. 117-158,
[28] Cyrian Pitteloup provides an excellent translation and commentaries in French of a 1926 text of Ishikawa on *Domin seikatsu*, which highlights this too. 'La pensée du peuple de la terre'. L'anarchisme agraire d'Ishikawa Sanshirō au début du XXe siècle' ('The thought of the people of the earth'. The agrarian anarchism of Ishikawa Sanshirō at the beginning of the twentieth century) (Univ. of Geneva Master's thesis, 2011), p. 75.

The definition he gives of *domin seikatsu* is 'democracy'. He connects its meaning to his first encounter with Edward Carpenter in 1913. On this occasion, the Englishman discussed his 1883 collection of poems, *Towards Democracy*. As Ishikawa recalls, the conversation considered the origin of the word 'democracy', with the Greek word *demos* referring to 'people attached to the land', a meaning that current uses had tarnished.[29] He proceeded to translate *demos* as *domin* (土民) – rooted people or people of the earth – while '-cratie' became the homophone *kurashi* (くらし or 暮らし), a term meaning 'life' and interchangeable with *seikatsu.*[30] More than a play on words, Ishikawa's linguistic choice has clear significance, since both *domin* (as rootedness) and *seikatsu* (as daily life doing) express the very essence of his social thought.

The term *domin* draws from Japanese history the notion of upheaval or resistance to authority. Ishikawa clearly points to pre-modern peasant revolts – the *hyakusho ikki* (百姓一揆) – as an inspiration, referring to a time of 'straw banners and bamboo spears' (蓆旗竹槍) when the '*domin* stand up' (土民起きる) in order to fight oppression.[31] For him, no one better symbolized this spirit of defiance than Tanaka Shōzō, his early mentor and supporter of the Yanaka peasants who, at the turn of the century, became victims of pollution caused by the Ashio Copper Mine and suffered expropriation by the government. Indeed, Ishikawa's first major

[29] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 8, p. 427.
[30] The kanji '土' (tsuchi) can be translated as 'soil' or 'earth'. I chose the latter because it better expresses Ishikawa's vision of a socio-political model that could ultimately link all human communities of the earth. Stolz translates 土民生活 by *domin kurashi*, which in my view misses the word pun intended by Ishikawa and misrepresents his vision of democracy.
[31] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 2, p. 318.

philosophical publication bore in 1925 these telling words in its heading: 'I dedicate this book to the soul of Tanaka Shōzō, the first martyr of *domin seikatsu*.' [32]

In Ishikawa's idealist vision, *domin seikatsu* supplies the building blocks for the development of a balanced and free societal arrangement. For him, knowledge of nature and the recognition of its innate order and bountifulness should be the starting point of socio-political organization. He proclaims that 'we are children of the earth' (吾等は地の子である) and that our wisdom derives from cultivating the soil. Breaking the bond with nature alienates humans' sense of morality.[33] Peasants can appreciate better than anyone else the quality and necessity of that bond, hence their place in Ishikawa's philosophy. An ideal society thus takes men's relationship to the soil as a central element, around which industry, government and education should be organized.[34]

Concretely, the accent is on autonomy and the creation of ties of solidarity. In conventional anarchist thinking, what matters is the absence of an exploitative relationship: it is the understanding that men should not submit to others, not exploit others but lead a life of free cooperation 'standing on the earth' (自ら大地にたって).[35] Again, self-management supplies the conditions of human emancipation. As Ishikawa clarifies in the preface of his 1933 text, this does not mean that everyone should necessarily make a living from land cultivation (土民は … 必ずしも農民ではない):

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[32] *Hishinkaron to jinsei* (非進化論と人生/Non-evolutionary theory and human life).
[33] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū,* vol. 2, p. 313.
[34] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 2, p. 317.
[35] Ishikawa Sanshirō, 'Kinsei domin tetsugaku' (Philosophy of the modern people of the earth) in *Ishikawa sanshirōshū - kindai nihon shisō taikei* (Collected works of Ishikawa Sanshirō – Compendium of modern Japanese thought), N. 16, Tsurumi (ed) (Tokyo, 1976), p. 39.

> Metal workers, carpenters and plasterers are *domin*. The workers who cultivate the earth – not simply in the literal sense, but who participate in the great art of the universe - they are all *domin*. The *domin* are the people who have settled on the land. Those who hold a hoe, even farmers, if they have political ambitions, or use others to satisfy their own vain greed are not *domin*. The ultimate ideal of *domin* is not personal success; it is freedom for oneself and one's fellow citizens. It is the freedom of equality.[36]

Most details on the actual organization dictated by *domin seikatsu* can be derived from various texts published after 1920, and deduced from the practical experiments inspired by the scheme. Thus, Ishikawa's notion of 'direct democracy' - the management of human affairs on the basis of an unmediated relationship to core forces of production and a non-reliance on political institutions – fits into a framework of free consumers' unions and producers' cooperatives. He develops this aspect by highlighting the history of French syndicalism and its applicability to the Japanese situation.

'Sandikalizumu no hanashi' (サンヂかリズムの話/Considerations on syndicalism), a text of 1925, underscores his familiarity with the aims and origins of the French CGT (Confédération Générale du Travail). He is clear, first of all, on the ultimate objectives of *syndicalisme*: it must aim not only at the improvement of workers' conditions, but act as the motor of creative change in order to form a new society. In that sense, true syndicalism separates itself from socialism and communism.[37] Ishikawa knew of the specificity of the French CGT, which in its initial aspirations of independence and attention to the needs of producers and consumers closely followed a certain strand of anarchist thinking.[38] His acquaintance with supporters of syndicalism in France, such as Marc Pierrot, most likely influenced

[36] Ishikawa, 'Kinsei domin tetsugaku', *Ishikawa sanshirōshū*, p. 41.
[37] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 5, p. 241.
[38] For an in depth analysis of the French syndicalist movement and its relationship with anarchism, see Maitron, Jean, *Le mouvement anarchiste en France – Des origines à 1914* (The anarchist movement in France – From its origins to 1914) (Paris, 1975).

his views. He had been able while in Europe to discuss at length various forms of labour organization, including with Edward Carpenter and his friends, and pointed to the limited scope of English trade unions.[39]

Ishikawa was not the only one to advocate French syndicalism in Japan and discussion of its possible merits must be understood in the context of the fierce and complex ideological debates that dominated the Japanese labour movement, especially from 1918 onwards. The constant police harassment and censorship that targeted political dissenters, particularly after the enactment in 1925 of the Peace Preservation Law, was an additional feature of the tense context in which they operated. The infamous *ana-boru* dispute (アナ．ボル論争), which pitted anarchists against socialist-reformists and Bolshevik-leaning militants, peaked in 1922 with a definite split between the two tendencies.[40] The militancy of the Bolshevik faction would strengthen in 1925 when it separated from the reformists. The formation of the Japanese Communist Party in 1922, with its strong links to the Comintern, hardened its stance.[41]

Vocal opposition to Bolshevism came most prominently from Ōsugi Sakae before his death in September 1923.[42] His fierce polemic with Yamakawa Hitoshi

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[39] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 5, p. 235.
[40] Most prominently at the occasion of the September congress of the *Nihon Rōdō Kumiai Sōrengō* (日本労働組合総連合/General Association of the Trade Unions of Japan, GAT). For an overview of the issue, see Pelletier, Philippe, 'Un oublié du consensus: l'anarchosyndicalisme au Japon de 1911 à 1934' 'Forgotten from the consensus: anarcho-syndicalism in Japan between 1911 and 1934), *De l'histoire du mouvement ouvrier révolutionnaire, actes du colloque international "Pour un autre futur"* (About the history of the revolutionary labour movement, proceedings from the international colloquium "Towards another future") (Paris, 2001); Crump, *The Origins of Socialist Thought* (1983); Hoston, Germaine, *Marxism and the Crisis of Development in Pre-War Japan* (Princeton, 1986).
[41] Wilson, Sandra, 'The Comintern and the Japanese Communist Party', in Rees and Thorpe (eds), *International Communism and the Communist International, 1919-43* (Manchester, 1998), pp. 285-307.
[42] Thomas Stanley, *Ōsugi Sakae, Anarchist in Taishō Japan: the Creativity of the Ego* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 139-41.

(1880-1958) remains the most powerful entry in the *ana-boru* debate.[43] Ishikawa's own instinctive distrust of Bolshevism, muted at first, only intensified as years went by. Though he rose above sectionalism and did not formally enter the debate, he took over where Ōsugi had left off as one of the most trenchant critics of the Russian revolutionary apparatus, and this while Marxist ideologies increasingly overshadowed other dissenting trends in Japan. In his mind, however, the promotion of free-standing unions in the context of *domin seikatsu* and efforts to put it into practice represented the best answer to the communist style totalitarian and centralizing drive that was increasingly dominant amongst Japanese anti-capitalist advocates.[44]

The *ana-boru* polemic coincided with theoretical dissensions within the anarchist fringe itself. The rejection of syndicalism as organizing tool amongst workers by figures such as Hatta Shūzō and Iwasa Sakutarō (1879-1967) directly contradicted Ishikawa's beliefs. English language scholarship has highlighted Hatta's 'pure anarchism' as a forceful influence during the interwar period, perhaps obscuring the alternative socio-political model put forward by someone like Ishikawa.[45] The 'pure' anarchists urged a reliance on a more literal Kropotkinian vision of anarcho-communism, with an emphasis on the rural, self-sufficient commune as organizational unit. While it is true that Hatta and Ishikawa shared an interest in the plight of the countryside, their anarchism had quite diverging ambitions and inspiration.

Hatta's radicalism made him envisage not only the abolition of the state but also doing away with cities altogether and returning to life in autonomous villages, which would limit their production to that of their own needs.[46] He suggested the

[43] Hoston, *Marxism and the Crisis of Development*, pp. 24-5.
[44] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 8, p. 429.
[45] Crump, *Hatta Shūzō*.
[46] Crump, John, 'Green Before their Time? The Pre-War Japanese Anarchist Movement', in Neary (ed), *War, Revolution and Japan* (Folkestone, 1993), p. 86.

dismantling of factories and dispersion of their workers in the countryside, where they could apply their skills in small-scale workshops. The sense of solidarity unique to village life would guarantee stability and social transformation.[47] Hatta's dismissive views extended to the supposedly perverting role played by modern science in society. As a tool used by the ruling class, it essentially served, according to him, to expand and consolidate exploitative capitalism and must be discarded in favour of a new system of knowledge.[48]

As this dissertation makes clear, Ishikawa held a more nuanced position on the rural-urban imbalance and, though critical of some aspects of modern science, recognized many of its benefits.[49] Also, quite unlike Hatta, who was above all a theoretician of anarchism, he was a practitioner, always seeking to reconcile opposites and fuse socio-political life into a creative web of connections. Though his syndicalism has an undeniable idealistic tone, it also expresses an attractive breadth of practical aims and motivations that sets his thought apart from the narrowly sectarian inclinations of other contemporary labour activists.

According to Ishikawa, workers should turn their back on parliamentary and political party methods and shoulder all social organization by themselves (一切の社会生活を自分達が背負って) through unions regulating production and distribution. This applies to both peasants and industrial workers, who, by joining forces, can create a new vitality in the workplace, imbued with freedom, justice and fraternity.[50] This necessary cooperation between rural and urban workers will generate mutual benefits. A similar spirit must govern the creation and management of consumer

[47] Crump, 'Green Before their Time?', pp. 86-7.
[48] Crump, *Hatta Shūzō*, pp. 123-8.
[49] See chapter 5 for Ishikawa's views on modern science.
[50] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 5, p. 243.

unions. Moreover, this understanding of unions as links in a wide net of solidarity has the potential to spread across institutional and national borders.[51]

The wide scope of his vision finds illustration in what he calls *fukushiki mōjō soshiki* (複式網状組織), a 'system of interrelated networks' that links together these various rooted entities and embodies social liberation. He envisages a network of free organizational units, separated on the basis of occupation, organically (有機的) connected at a regional level and world level, with these two levels also mutually interconnected. Yet, there is no central body to regulate this multitude of links.[52] It is an obvious reminder of Reclus's idea of federalism. That men are 'children of the earth' also harks back to Kropotkin's vocabulary. Not surprisingly, Ishikawa cites in support of his views Kropotkin's *Memoirs of a revolutionist* and the Russian anarchist's belief that a new and unstoppable kind of order, and hence progress, will emerge from the spirit of freedom and solidarity at work within and amongst unions.[53]

But Ishikawa's reliance on the Russian anarchist for the conception of his socio-political model has its limits. The two men attach a different quality to the revolutionary spirit that will bring about change. For Kropotkin, the need for insurrectional action dominates. For the Japanese, only a progressive internalization of a sense of freedom and action will lead to social change. In other words, individual emancipation precedes collective revolution. This emphasis on a daily spiritual struggle distinguishes Ishikawa's vision from our conventional understanding of anarchism.

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[51] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 8, p. 430.
[52] Ishikawa, 'Kinsei domin tetsugaku', *Ishikawa sanshirōshū*, p. 41. Ishikawa also elaborates on this concept in the context of his theory of social aesthetics in 1932. See 'Shakai bigaku toshite no museifushugi' (社会美学としての無政府主義/Anarchism as social aesthetics) in Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 3, pp. 190-206.
[53] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 3, p. 203.

He presents this view at many occasions on a theoretical level. He also clarifies his disagreement with Kropotkin. In spite of his dismay with the moral and material decay he saw in industrial capitalism, Ishikawa thought that society was not ready for Kropotkinian, thus sudden, change.[54] In line with his inclination for individual introspection, he was prepared to accept a high degree of invisibility: 'we don't stand up in front of people's sight. We are hidden cells. But to create the healthy arrival of a new society, we have to make the effort to prepare ourselves to be a good cell. This is the real meaning of revolutionary freedom.'[55] Both Uchiyama Gudō's 'ordinary consciousness' and Edward Carpenter's 'cosmic consciousness' come to mind here.

This shows how wide-ranging were the interpretations of European anarchism that pre-war Japanese activists drew from their readings. They extended from Hatta's notion of closed and self-sufficient communes in total denial of cities, to Ishikawa's vast network of interrelated collectivities supplying a bridge between peasantry and industry, consumption and production, and acting progressively as the fabric of a creative social force. Indeed, the above underscores that *domin seikatsu* is more than an anarchist template of European origin imposed as an answer to the tensions of Japanese modernization. Rather, it is the fruit of Ishikawa's lived experience and a blending of visions, where both physical engagement in agricultural work and spiritual reflection on its ethical value contributed to the shaping of a specific social thought and the associated practice.

[54] See in Chapter 3, particularly in *Kyomu no reikō* (Chaotic spirituality).
[55] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū, vol.3*, p.70.

TILLING THE LAND

Domin seikatsu constitutes both an individual and a collective choice. In the former case, the emphasis is on food self-sufficiency; in the latter, on autonomous management through cooperatives and unions. Rootedness, awareness of the natural environment and the rejection of hierarchical interference unite the two. Ishikawa's decision in 1927 to occupy a small plot of land and rudimentary house – formerly a watermill - in Chitose, in the suburbs of Tokyo, sealed his personal choice. He settled down in the same area as his friends Tokutomi Roka and Eto Tekirei.[56] Asked at the time by a journalist whether his move was 'Tolstoyan', he replied 'no', because Tolstoy had been wealthy and he was poor. But he admitted that his decision drew on some Tolstoyan spirit.[57]

This incidental observation points to another distinctive characteristic of Ishikawa's outlook, which is a basic negation of social hierarchy. The figures of Kropotkin, Carpenter and Tolstoy all carried with them the image of an upper class for whom personal land cultivation was a lifestyle choice, not a need. The notions of self-sufficiency and autonomy take a different dimension when they justify the production of basic means of livelihood. Throughout his life, Ishikawa could never depend on family wealth to sustain him and he knew all too well the trappings of poverty. His siding with farmers and encouragement to self-reliance drew in part from that lived experience, as it provided a condition of freedom.

The 'Tolstoyan spirit' to which he referred was of a more spiritual quality. His personal *domin seikatsu* also represented for him a breaking of the most crucial

[56] Tokutomi Kenjirō (Roka) died a few months later.
[57] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 3, p. 492.

boundary, that between man and nature. Having spent several years engaged in agricultural labour, first in Liancourt near Paris close to the frontline of the war, then at the property of Paul Reclus in the village of Domme in southwest France, he could directly relate to the simple act of tilling the land. Indeed, the French experience left him with a sense of wonder and confidence at the same time, which resonates with unique force in his diary and memoirs. In the first article written after his return, he reports on the surprising luxuriance and variety of fruits and vegetables that his hosts and he managed to extract from the small plot they tended.[58] In his view, the skills he acquired then belong to the basic needs of human life; they also teach men how to work with the awe-inspiring beauty of nature. And, he observes, as proven by the Russian revolution, which sent numerous city workers back to the fields, it is foolish to forget this primary relationship to the soil.[59]

Life in the French countryside appears to Ishikawa like a true epiphany. In emphatic terms, he opposes the flimsiness of his own academic knowledge to that of nature, which he describes as an inexhaustible library (無尽蔵の図書館). He displays a kind of childish bewilderment at the sight of bean stalks emerging from the earth or the discovery of potatoes unraveled from the soil, while work in the vineyards and the making of wine produce equal admiration.[60] As he notes, 'in France, the anticipated revolution did not come, but the seeds I sowed sprouted beyond expectations.'[61]

There is more in this last remark, however, than the mere expression of a gardener's satisfaction. It alludes to the symbolism of sowing seeds not only in the

[58] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 2, p. 308.
[59] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 2, p. 308.
[60] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 2. pp. 326-36; vol. 8, pp. 370-3.
[61] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 2. p. 328. See also 'Hyakushō nikki' (A farmer's diary/百姓日記), vol. 2, pp. 414-20.

soil but also in minds, a seemingly tiny accomplishment at first, yet which contains huge transformative potential. It is no coincidence that Ishikawa is listed as one of the sponsors of *Tanemaku hito* (The Sower/種蒔く人), a short-lived publication founded by Komaki Ōmi (1894-1978) and inspired by the French *Clarté* Movement of Henri Barbusse (1873-1935).[62] It adhered to the same symbolism of sowing the seeds of social regeneration and solidarity across borders. The internationalist and pacifist ideals that animated *Tanemaku hito* rallied other prominent figures as their supporters. Besides Henri Barbusse himself, they included many of Ishikawa's friends, such as Paul Reclus, Edward Carpenter and Christiaan Cornelissen, as well as free-thinkers Akita Ujaku (1883-1962) and Arishima Takeo (1878-1923). The journal's title given in Esperanto (*La Semanto*) and contributions by Vassili Eroshenko (1890-1952), a leading Esperantist intellectual in Japan, best illustrate these ideals of borderlessness.[63] The Marxist overtones of the publication do not quite square up with Ishikawa's vocal anti-Bolshevism of later years, a reminder of the thin line that often distinguished dissenting ideologies in the early 1920s.

The task of ploughing the earth offers another persuasive metaphor in Ishikawa's thought. Reflecting on what he has seen in Europe, he suggests that Japanese cultivation techniques would improve if the depth of furrows were systematically increased. In agricultural terms, deeper furrows guarantee according to him a better disinfection of the soil's surface, allowing cultures to grow more fertile.[64] But the notion of 'ploughing deep' (深く掘る or 深く耕す), which he emphasizes, also signifies for the *domin* a different conception of social activism. Ishikawa deplores the relative shallowness of Japanese commoners, whom he urges to 'plough

[62] Published between February 1921 and August 1923.
[63] *Tanemaku hito,* reprint edition, Nihon Kindai Bungaku Kenkyūjo/Research Centre for Modern Japanese Literature (ed) (Tokyo, 1961).
[64] Ishikawa, 'Kinsei domin tetsugaku', *Ishikawa sanshirōshū*, p. 69.

deep', for the sake of activism and the *domin* reform movement.[65] Thus, for all *domin*, 'ploughing deep' is as much a method of changing one's habits of thought as a cultivation technique.[66]

With references to a Buddhist vocabulary of transmigration (輪廻/rinne), Ishikawa stresses once again the futility of man's existence, dragged into an endless whirlpool where even the process of evolution appears of minute importance. Against artificially created institutions, a close relationship with the soil provides anchoring and certainty, a sense of permanence that rescues human beings from being eternal wanderers.[67] As I examine in the next chapter, Ishikawa's philosophy rests on the premise that man is one tiny link in the limitless universe, who has the choice to exercise his freedom to create a web of cooperation. The experience of *domin seikatsu*, thought out, lived and acted out willingly, allows 'the limited human beings to lead a limitless life for the first time'.[68]

Far from a quietist withdrawal from politics, Ishikawa saw *domin seikatsu* as an invisible revolutionary movement that would change human relations at the level of everyday practice. The seeds he envisaged to sow are seeds of human freedom. As he proclaimed in the mid-1920s, 'from now on, I want to exercise the 'authority of the earth' in social life and social action. I want to abolish thoughts of hierarchy and discrimination in daily life, such as heaven and hell, elect people and *domin*, the governed and non-governed, centre and regions, and so on.'[69] In his memoirs, he describes the village of Domme as his second hometown and his life there as *domin*

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[65] Ishikawa, 'Kinsei domin tetsugaku', *Ishikawa sanshirōshū*, p. 69.
[66] Umemori Naoyuki, 'Meiji sōsharizumu.taishō anākizumu.shōwa marukushizumu' (Meiji socialism, Taishō anarchism, Shōwa Marxism), in Karube & al (eds), *Nihon shisōshi kōza - gendai* (The Pelican history of Japanese thought – modern) (Tokyo, 2013), p. 280.
[67] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 2, p. 311.
[68] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū, vol.3*, p.26; vol. 5, p.280.
[69] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū, vol.8*, p.440.

seikatsu.[70] Man can indeed be a *domin* anywhere: rootedness does not suppose attachment to a particular nation-state.

On his return to Tokyo in the autumn of 1920, Ishikawa had immediately lambasted the mind-set that seemed to rule his country. He remarked that Japan was 'sick with capitalism', the government essentially preoccupied with enhancing national prestige.[71] Even so, there was an unprecedented political openness in the air. The period of what historians refer to as 'Taishō Democracy' witnessed the proliferation of progressive debates that sought the enlargement of Japan's political and civil freedoms. For many intellectuals, questioning established norms and thinking about Japan's prospects in the context of evolving worldwide trends translated into a search for the meaning of 'democracy'. *Domin seikatsu* represented Ishikawa's own urgent quest for such a meaning. It is hardly off the boat after almost eight years of exile that he presented its main tenets to the Shinjinkai audience.

But as much as his version of democracy cut against the grain of popular discourses by liberals and Marxists in the 1920s', it was also a vision of *seikatsu* (daily life) that contrasted with the official narrative of Japan's linear development along the path of modernization. The government's aim to shift emphasis from increasing output to higher living standards in the 1920s and 30s included for example a campaign for the improvement in people's 'daily life'. The major reference point, however, remained Western modernity.[72] Considered in this framework, the kind of *seikatsu* advocated by Ishikawa represented an antithesis. It was a template for

[70] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū,* vol.8, p. 423.
[71] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū,* vol.8, p. 412.
[72] See for example *seikatsu kaizen undō* (daily life improvement campaigns) in Garon, Sheldon, 'Rethinking Modernization and Modernity in Japanese History: a Focus on State-Society Relations', *The Journal of Asian Studies* (1994) 53-2, p. 356.

liberation. And his engagement with farmers' unions in 1925 was intended precisely to rally to its principles the members of Japan's most beleaguered class.

ECONOMIC INSTABILITY AND ORGANIZED PROTEST

In 1929, proletarian writer Kobayashi Takiji (1903-1933) published a short novel entitled *The absentee landlord* (不在地主) in the magazine *Chūō Kōron* (Central Review). By the end of the 1920s, the figure of the 'absentee landlord' had long become a common feature of the situation in many parts of the countryside, where the tax and land reforms of the post-Meiji restoration had favoured the concentration of agricultural land in fewer hands, often to the detriment of small tenant-farmers. Kobayashi's grim depictions of peasant life gave a compelling voice to representatives of the country's lower rural class, viewed as helpless victims of the priority accorded to cities and industrial development. His is a tale of hunger, misery, deceit and despair. It is also a story of anger at the contempt allegedly experienced by the farmers, and the possibilities of organized protest.

The feeling of exploitation and unjust neglect of the peasantry had been mounting and denounced by sympathetic observers for years. But the 1920s saw the development of a farmers' movement characterized by a heightened sense of class consciousness. Kobayashi's work not only illustrates the pressing rural issue of the absentee or 'parasite' landowner (寄生地主), a phenomenon which diminished

village cohesion and motivated more confrontational relations.[73] It is also emblematic of the diffusion of socialist ideology in the countryside and hope invested in the rescuing role of farmers' unions. The publication of the novel resulted in Kobayashi's dismissal as a bank clerk. Arrested in 1933 for involvement in communist activities, he died in prison after torture, thereby becoming one of the symbolic casualties of the repression of the left by the Japanese police during this period.

The economic factors that spurred unrest in the countryside in the form of claims for change in rent policy are well known.[74] They include the pressure imposed on tenant-farmers by the introduction of rice inspection in several prefectures from the early 1900s, which generally pushed up the demand for high quality rice. It was resented by tenants, either because of the difficulty of producing the required quality level, or because of the lost opportunity in the market place. The economic boom that accompanied the First World War and vastly inflated rice prices also triggered discontent. Small-scale tenants suffered when they had to buy back rice for their subsistence. Others realized that the practice of paying rents in kind meant a loss of potential gain for themselves. The end of the war boom in 1920 triggered the next economic blow, which unfolded in the shape of several years of price deflation and instability.

Structural changes compounded the economic fluctuations that affected farming households. The agricultural sector experienced the slow erosion in the

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[73] Vanoverbeke, Dimitri, *Community and State in the Japanese Farm Village: Farm Tenancy Conciliation (1924-1938)* (Leuven, 2004), p. 18.

[74] See Francks, Penelope, *Rural Economic Development in Japan*; Hane, Mikiso, *Peasants, Rebels and Outcastes: the Underside of Modern Japan* (New York, 1982); Smethurst, Richard, *Agricultural Development and Tenancy Disputes in Japan, 1870-1940* (Princeton 1986); Waswo, Ann, 'The Transformation of Rural Society, 1900-1950', in Duus (ed), *The Cambridge History of Japan: the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 539-605; Nishida Yoshiaki, 'Dimensions of Change in Twentieth-Century Rural Japan' in Waswo, Ann and Nishida Yoshiaki (eds), *Farmers and Village Life* (London, 2003).

number of small landholdings in favour of larger land-owners, moneylenders and merchants, often because a crisis had forced farmers into tenant or semi-tenant status. In 1872, about 29% of cultivated land was under tenancy, but it had risen to 46.7% by 1930.[75] Internal migration resulted in the equally irremediable depletion of village population. In 1888, 87% of Japan's inhabitants lived in communities of less than ten thousand inhabitants. In 1930, the proportion had fallen to 59% and would decline further.[76]

Ann Waswo has convincingly argued that a complex entanglement of factors generated protest in the countryside and that, besides poor and landless tenants, middling farmers and sometimes more affluent landowners found it beneficial to contest the status quo.[77] Her work highlights the continuity between increased unionization in the 1920s and manifestations of popular agrarianism later on. It also stresses the bureaucratic attempts made to control or co-opt unrest during the period. In the 1930s the military exploited this agitation for nationalistic ends, but in reality farmers claimed a wide range of allegiances.

Overall, for Japan the landmark of the First World War meant an era of transition from a regional economy into a full-fledged industrial power with a global reach.[78] By 1920, the growth of industrial labor had fueled the development of major urban centres, including Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya, Kobe, Kyoto and Yokohama. Their economic and cultural importance towered over that of the countryside. It is during the Taishō period that urban life exploded and monopolized the country's attention. The rising hold on the economy of industrial conglomerates and monopoly capitalism

[75] Hane, *Peasants, Rebels and Outcastes*, p. 104.
[76] White, James, 'Internal Migration in Pre-War Japan', *Journal of Japanese Studies* (1978) 4-1, pp. 81-123.
[77] Waswo, 'The Transformation of Rural Society'.
[78] Dickinson, Frederick, *World War I and the Triumph of a New Japan*, 1919-1930 (Cambridge, 2013), p. 38.

became conspicuous. The sense of a growing rural-urban imbalance, whereby the cities disproportionately reaped the fruits of modernity, became a major factor in the intellectual currents of the day.

The same period witnessed a growing trend toward the creation and improvement of farmers' unions, cooperatives and other agricultural associations in many parts of Japan.[79] Bureaucratic efforts supported this trend, motivated by the need to raise the country's agricultural productivity and enlist farmers into the state project of modernization and imperial expansion.[80] Initiatives also developed on the instigation of both landlords and tenants. The landowning class aimed at bolstering their weight in local politics, as they felt increasingly threatened by the growth of urban economies and rising tensions with farm workers. Tenants, on their part, could no longer rely on a stable, benevolent relationship with landlords and sought to establish a fairer basis for the use of their labour.[81]

Ideas of organized labour and the merits of collective bargaining steadily flowed from major cities to the countryside. Albeit more pronounced in certain regions than others - usually where commercial agriculture was already more developed - the flourishing of organizations that sought to formally represent the interests of various social groups marked the decade. And though historians have rightly questioned the rigid categorization of these bargaining tools into the left and the right of the political spectrum,[82] enthusiasm for the Bolshevik revolution and communist ideology – or at least its authoritarian tendencies - undeniably coloured

[79] See particulary Waswo, 'The Transformation of Rural Society', p. 576.
[80] Havens, *Farm and Nation*, p. 9. See also Tsutsui Masao, 'The Impact of the Local Improvement Movement on Farmers and Rural Communities', in Waswo and Nishida (eds), *Farmers and Village Life*.
[81] See Waswo, Ann, 'In Search of Equity: Japanese Tenant Unions in the 1920s', in Nishida and Waswo (eds), *Farmers and Village Life*; Waswo, Ann, *Japanese Landlords: the Decline of a Rural Elite* (Berkeley, 1977).
[82] See for example Large, Stephen, 'Buddhism and Political Renovation in Pre-War Japan: the Case of Akamatsu Katsumaro', *Journal of Japanese Studies* (1983) 9-1, p. 33.

the trend. In a 'History of Japan's social movement', Akamatsu Katsumaro (1894-1955), a keen political activist in the 1920s, notes the sharp rise in the number of tenant unions and their increasingly confrontational rather than conciliatory nature from 1918 onward.[83] He also praises the success and passionate aspirations of the Japan Farmers' Union (Nihon Nōmin Kumiai), which linked unions nationwide under leftist leadership in 1922.[84]

In many cases, city intellectuals provided the external stimulus for rural mobilization and the formulation of economic and political demands in the countryside. For instance Kobe-based Christian reformer Kagawa Toyohiko (1888-1960) is well known for his role in the promotion of rural activism. Ishikawa's extended travel throughout the country in 1921, which took him all the way to Akita in the north and to several locations in the Kansai region, constitutes one among many lecture tours performed by intellectuals during the period. His involvement through the Nōmin Jichikai in the affairs of the village of Kitamimaki in Nagano Prefecture a few years later confirms the wide reach of his activities.

In her study of tenant unions, Ann Waswo stresses how the spirit that animated rebellion in the 1920s differed from that of previous times such as during the Bakumatsu era. It evolved from the passive expectation of relief from hardship to active demands for the improvement of status in line with the equity to which the claimants felt entitled.[85] That the instigators of unrest were often mid-scale farmers motivated by a willingness to share in the profits of commercial agriculture exemplifies this point. Collective bargaining through a formal association thus indicated not only an alteration of bargaining means, but also one of vocabulary.

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[83] Akamatsu Katsumaro, *Nihon shakai undōshi* (History of Japan's social movement) (Tokyo, 1964), p. 192.
[84] Akamatsu, *Nihon shakai undōshi,* p. 249.
[85] Waswo, 'Japanese Tenant Unions', pp. 81-2.

Ishikawa's engagement for and with farmers illustrates this evolution, which is detectable even when comparing his pre and post exile activism.

The rhetoric of outrage, betrayal and indignation at the misery of peasants that was so prevalent during Ishikawa's socialist years appear toned down in his later writings. Instead, encouragement for independence and self-management, for the autonomy and self-respect of farming activities, increasingly guide his thinking as years pass. In other words, there is less emphasis on the oppressive nature of the situation of peasants than on the potential for them to stand up for justice and lead a dignified existence. Ishikawa's analysis still deplores tenants' miserable life in Japan, particularly compared to the more favourable conditions of the French peasantry he had been able to observe.[86] But he draws attention to the lack of autonomy and particularly the continuous decline in the number of small landowners, which, as he sees it, means for Japan the loss of that many healthy cells in a body. By having to forego independence, not only the farmers, but the entire nation are bound to suffer from the waning of self-respect.[87]

Ishikawa's reflections in the early 1930s stress that farmers who are too reliant on commercial agriculture are at the mercy of circumstances dictated by international trends – and by then he meant by these essentially the United States.[88] Peasants must therefore keep the ability to be self-sustained in order to be free. Only this will allow them to keep essential closeness to the land.[89] Despite his distrust of commercial agriculture, Ishikawa's tone is equally one of positive exhortation, not only for the

[86] Ishikawa. 'Kinsei domin tetsugaku', *Ishikawa sanshirōshū,* p. 55.
[87] Ishikawa. 'Kinsei domin tetsugaku', *Ishikawa sanshirōshū,* p. 55. Ishikawa's encouragement of small-scale farming suggests he supported private property to some extent, which qualifies his notion of socialism accordingly and represents a change from his ealier convictions.
[88] Ishikawa. 'Kinsei domin tetsugaku', *Ishikawa sanshirōshū*, p. 61.
[89] Ishikawa. 'Kinsei domin tetsugaku', *Ishikawa sanshirōshū* , p. 61. Not surprisingly, Ishikawa mentions Edward Carpenter's *Towards Industrial Freedom* to validate his point.

liberation of tenants but also for the status of small landowners. The need to organize outside any state interference and control remains his leitmotif.[90] Moreover, because activism is positively inclined, its scope appears also wider. As the examination of the Nōmin Jichikai shows, in line with the aspirations of the proletarian movement as a whole, the promotion of the arts and education for farmers matter as much as economic and social self-help.

In the midst of the wave of ideological and organizational fever in 1920s' Japan, Ishikawa's project of self-governing farmers' councils would, however, struggle to maintain its specificity and independence from the other intellectual currents that swept the country. The danger was always of being subsumed into either a hardline leftwing or nationalist framework, and it is precisely along these lines that tensions emerged that precipitated the demise of the project. Ultimately, the Nōmin Jichikai was a meeting of men of varying backgrounds and trajectories, all passionately committed to the rural cause, but tempted by different convictions. Ishikawa's virtual absence from English language historiography reflects the appeal of the explanatory power offered by the two dominant narratives of Marxism and popular agrarianism in the lead to the Second World War. His experience in promoting a third path enriches our appreciation of Japanese interwar intellectual life and deserves further attention.

[90] Ishikawa. 'Kinsei domin tetsugaku', *Ishikawa sanshirōshū*, p. 71.

THE NŌMIN JICHIKAI

In his memoirs, Ishikawa recalls that Japan was awash with numerous labour associations and unions that formed in the wake of the 1923 Great Kantō earthquake. He found strange, however, the absence of independent farmers' unions, something he wanted to remedy. His acquaintance with similarly inclined social activists Nakanishi Inosuke (1887-1958) and Shimonaka Yasaburō (1878-1961) led to plans for the establishment of the Nōmin Jichikai.[91] Shibuya Teisuke (1905-1989), a young farmer and poet from Saitama Prefecture, joined them as one of its key founders. Amongst the various engagements Ishikawa pursued after his return from Europe, he remembers the Nōmin Jichikai as having resounded most deeply within him.[92]

Together with the four men mentioned above, four others were present at the inaugural meeting on 1 December 1925 in Kanda in Tokyo, including Ishikawa's life-long friend and educator Ōnishi Goichi (1898-1992) and Nagano area born Takeuchi Kunie (1897- 1974).[93] In April 1925, they published the first issue of their journal, *Jichi Nōmin*,[94] which contained the association's charter. It read as follows:

1. On the basis of a spirit of autonomy for the peasants, we resolve to improve their everyday life.
2. In a spirit of mutual cooperation (協同扶助), we resolve to promote true fraternity.
3. We deny urban culture and encourage rural culture.[95]

[91] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 8, p. 437.
[92] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 8, p. 437.
[93] Ōi Takao, *Nōmin jichikai undōshi: tenkanki no seishun gunzō* (History of the self-governing farmers' movement: leaders of youth in a pivotal era) (Nagano, 1980), p. 107. The last two founding members were Kawai Tadashi (仁) and Takahashi Yūjirō.
[94] From the second issue, the title became *Nōmin Jichi*.
[95] *Jichi Nōmin* (10 Apr. 1926), p.1.

Ishikawa's lead article gives the tone of the founders' mission. He insists that only real autonomy for the peasants will rehabilitate them in the face of the commercialism and competition that thrive in the cities. He tells his readers that the principle of autonomy, sustained by relations of solidarity, governs all creatures and organisms of the natural world. Men tend to forget nature's wisdom and bountifulness. Unlike in the blissful legendary village described by the Chinese poet Bai Juyi (772-846), greed is destroying social stability and human happiness.[96]

The Nōmin Jichikai's core charter appears unashamedly reactionary. But it is essentially a reminder that prosperity in the cities relies on the sweat of peasants and that 'they are humans too'.[97] Rather than a rejection of the city itself – as Hatta Shūzō would have had it – the Jichikai addresses the expanding gap of opportunities between city and countryside. It refers to urban and rural *culture*, appealing for a positive re-evaluation of the latter and its potential. An advertizing leaflet circulated in Saitama Prefecture at the time is thus formulated as a plea to join on the grounds that farmers must stand up for their rights and dignity, and that in order to rejuvenate the countryside, children of peasants need education.[98]

In more general terms, the Jichikai's declaration of intention, issued in March 1927 by its nationwide committee (*zenkoku rengō i-inkai*) affirms that since the beginning of social organization, human history has relied on the blood of peasants, and that the true meaning of liberation is the creation of a history without exploitation.[99] In line with a policy of non-discrimination, the same declaration encourages the diffusion of Esperanto as a leveling language and method of enriching

[96] *Jichi Nōmin* (10 Apr. 1926), 'Wareware no shimei' (Our mission), pp. 3-4. Not signed but attributed to Ishikawa. See Ōi, *Nōmin jichi undōshi*, p. 112.
[97] *Jichi Nōmin* (10 Apr. 1926), 'Nōmin jichikai – shui' (Aims), p. 23.
[98] 'Hyakushō wa hitori nokorazu nōmin jichikai e' (Every farmer should join the Nōmin Chijikai), *Shibuya Teisuke Papers* (Fujimi), N. 80.
[99] 'Nōmin jichikai sengen' (Declaration), *Shibuya Teisuke Papers* (Fujimi), N. 98.

rural culture. The inclusion of Esperanto in the association's declaration is not coincidental. Its promotion responds to a deep anarchist commitment to non-hierarchy and to facilitating the interlinking of each society cell into a vast network of global scale.[100] Addressing the members of the comittee, Ishikawa received the approval of a keen audience when he insisted that peasants had nothing to learn from city folks, as the wind blowing in the countryside was fertile compared to the wind gushing through the cities, which was tainted by bourgeois culture.[101] The perceived urban domination over the countryside only fueled the revulsion he always felt for any form of oppression.

It is true that this anti-urban vocabulary skirts closely to the ideology of popular agrarianism, which would prevail a few years later. My analysis, however, shows that the Nōmin Jichikai's agenda differs from the glorification of rural work and values as pillars of an emperor-centered national essence that defines the views of *nōhonshugisha* (popular agrarianists). The stated objectives of the Jichikai reflect not so much a confrontation between tenants and landowners – the familiar grievance of peasant unions in the 1920s - as a crisis of identity and economic standing faced by the agricultural sector as a whole in an era of intensifying capitalism.[102]

In fact, when formulated in concrete terms by its instigators the founding charter appears much less contentious. Articles of implementation call amongst other things for a gradual shift of the tax burden from country to city, for an overall reduction of areas of non-cultivated land and the encouragement of land donations to self-starting farmers. Besides the clear endorsement of producer and consumer

[100] For the use of Esperanto as a tool of anarchist liberation, see Konishi, *Anarchist modernity*, particularly pp. 258-95; see also Rapley, Ian, 'Green Star Japan: Internationalism and Language in the Japanese Esperanto Movement, 1906-1944 (Oxford Univ. Ph. D. thesis, 2013).
[101] Shibuya Teisuke, in Ōsawa (ed), *Domin no shisō*, p. 203.
[102] On an elaboration of this point, see Hayashi Yūichi, *Kindai nihon nōmin undō shiron* (Essays on the history of Japan's modern farmers' movement) (Tokyo, 2000).

cooperatives and credit unions, they also make a strong case for the equal access of peasants to education. This implies free education and the provision of learning implements to pupils. It suggests the use of proceeds from the common management of land as a means to supply university running costs, while libraries, research, recreation and health facilities should be publicly organized.[103] In other words, the survival of rural communities depends on them becoming a locus of self-managed learning and exchange rather than hapless tax providers.

The Nōmin Jichikai held a deep distrust of political parties, urging its members to participate in local politics on the basis of 'non-partisan' action.[104] A nationwide network developed quickly, the number of adherents increasing 'beyond expectations'.[105] It reached over two hundred, while the activities of the group stretched from Hokkaidō in the north all the way down to the south in Okinawa, and even Taiwan.[106] Compared to the Nihon Nōmin Kumiai, whose membership surpassed eighty thousand people by 1926, Ishikawa's undertaking seems of limited consequence. From that perspective, there was little chance its followers could ever pretend to a strong united front as a means to impart social transformation. But they easily made up for this with the depth and breadth of their considerations of rural issues in the context of Japan's rapidly shifting economic climate.

The Jichikai's stand for independence and freedom was expressed in the diversity of opinions conveyed in its journal. So was the notion that no political project would succeed without apprehending its wider cultural implications, specifically in relation to education and the arts. The contributors represented a

[103] *Jichi Nōmin,* 'Kōryō' (Outline) (10 Apr. 1926), p. 23.
[104] *Jichi Nōmin,* 'Kōryō' (Outline) (10 Apr. 1926), p. 23.
[105] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 8, p. 437.
[106] Ōsawa, *Domin no shisō*, p. 303. Another source, however, cites a more credible countrywide total of 243 branches and 6,300 members. See Neary, Ian, *Political Protest and Social Control in Pre-War Japan: the Origins of Buraku Liberation* (Manchester, 1989), p. 55.

constellation of people, preoccupied with both their local circumstances and a more universal sense of being alive at a time of seminal historical change. The ideas of resistance and renewal they put forward addressed demands by the rural class, but also their own origins and intellectual journey. From the hardships experienced as a young farmer by Shibuya and the proletarian literature of Inosuke,[107] to the philosophical inclinations of Eto and the cosmological outlook of Ishikawa, there was exploration from many angles of what it meant to cultivate the land in 1920s Japan. The story of the Jichikai is thus as much one of social protest as one of interaction and eventual dissension amongst different key personalities.

DIVERGING PATHS

Shibuya Teisuke was just twenty years old when he became one of the founding members of the Nōmin Jichikai and the only land cultivator by profession amongst them. Born the eldest son in a farming household in Saitama prefecture with a status of part tenant and part small landowner, he knew from an early age about the duress and precariousness of labouring the fields. He was also a poet and careful chronicler of peasant life in his area. *Nōmin aishi*, published in 1970, recounts several decades of his engagement with farming communities and remains a reliable testimony of rural transformations during the period.[108] In spite of grueling working hours, he was a precocious reader and writer, often clashing with his father because of his ambitions,

[107] Inosuke had been a contributor to the proletarian culture magazine *Tanemaku Hito.*
[108] Shibuya Teisuke, *Nōmin aishi* (農民哀史/The tragic history of peasants) (Tokyo, 1970).

and cursing a social condition that diverted him from intellectual pursuits. A desire to help liberate the peasant class sustained his resolve to expand his education.[109]

Shibuya's first poetry collection, *Nora ni sakebu* (Screaming at the fields/野良に叫ぶ) went to press a few months after he joined the Jichikai. In a letter published in the magazine *Kaihō* (Liberation) in January 1927, Ishikawa praises the skills of his new friend, as if born from the soil itself. For him, these poems 'covered with mud' are a pure reflection of his raw creativity.[110] In one poem, Shibuya writes that the soil is source of life and joy. Observing millet growing in a field, he enthuses about his work in the midst of nature. But he sighs that the darkness and misery of his peasant house spoils his enjoyment.[111] Indeed, the muddy quality that pleases Ishikawa appears too real for the young farmer.

The sentiments of anger and frustration that run through Shibuya's diary tell of a rural context increasingly exposed to new ideas of emancipation and autonomy. A socialist sympathizer at fifteen, he engages with different activist groups over the years, agitating for a decrease in tenant fees in his area amongst other things.[112] His disappointment with the party politics on which relied the Nihon Nōmin Kumiai awakens his interest in another form of protest, which his acquaintance with Shimonaka and Inosuke confirms in 1925. The establishment of the Jichikai fuels Shibuya's hopes for concrete solutions to rural decline and misery.

He is determined to first transform his own village of Nanbata (南畑) into a model of autonomy.[113] On witnessing the distress of a neighbouring family of four on the brink of starvation, where the father has been bedridden for three years, he

[109] Shibuya, *Nōmin aishi*, p. 307.
[110] *Shibuya Teisuke Papers*, N. 1560.
[111] Shibuya Teisuke, 'Nora de' (In the fields), *Jichi Nōmin* (10 Apr. 1926), p. 1.
[112] Shibuya, *Nōmin aishi*, pp. 624-30.
[113] Shibuya, *Nōmin aishi,* p. 315.

reflects on the need for a system of mutual aid. For him, the Jichikai must quickly address this issue.[114] In a conversation with Shimonaka, the accomplishments of Ninomiya Sontoku, Japan's champion of peasant self-help, attracts his curiosity, sanctioning his new allegiance.[115] Juggling with the demands of the farm, he roams the countryside on his bicycle, delivering the Jichikai's journal and leaflets explaining to farmers his non-partisan political aims.[116]

Beneath this youthful energy and enthusiasm, however, one detects Shibuya's unease about what he feels like a misguided appreciation of agricultural work by those who are not forced by birth to engage with it. As he observes after a day drenched in sweat from hard labour, people like Tolstoy or Mushanokōji Saneatsu are both aristocrats and will never know what farming work is really like.[117] Repeating the same contrast between his heavy perspiration after threshing wheat, and the 'dry', well-meaning attitude of urban intellectuals, he suggests that the Tokyo Jichikai representatives have their own notion of an ideal farmer which has little to do with a 'real' one.[118] In his mind, these people form a kind of 'city club' and that puts him off, making him realize the gap that separates him from them.[119] But he also justifies his distrust of the Tokyo intelligentsia by his uniquely subjective point of view: after all, the first goal of his involvement in the Jichikai movement is personal liberation from the drudgery of his condition.[120]

Ishikawa's response is to claim that 'as an urban intellectual, I can only address (rural issues) from a theoretical perspective, but I have no authority

[114] Shibuya, *Nōmin aishi,* p. 309.
[115] Shibuya, *Nōmin aishi*, p. 291.
[116] Ōsawa, *Domin no shisō,* p. 202.
[117] Shibuya, *Nōmin aishi*, p. 307.
[118] Shibuya, *Nōmin aishi*, p. 345.
[119] Shibuya, *Nōmin aishi*, p. 338.
[120] Shibuya, *Nōmin aishi*, p. 329.

whatsoever over peasants.'[121] He meant he could at the most offer modest guidance, pointing to the need for reasoning in order to avoid a Bolshevik-like outcome to rightful peasant energy. In a lecture entitled *Nōmin jichi no riron to jissai* (theory and practice of peasant autonomy) in Kitamimaki in the winter of 1927, he again elaborates on the tenets of solidarity that must govern human relations and the dangers of losing touch with nature. On the occasion, he observes that displacing cotton milling from India's local workers to Manchester entails economic exploitation. Similarly, the mistreatment of Japanese factory girls forced to mill cotton produced in China results from neglecting the principle of locality of production and exchange dear to *domin seikatsu*.[122]

In his memoirs, Ishikawa tells of his delight in seeing a growing interest in the Jichikai and the attentive audience that one of his lectures attracts.[123] But in Shibuya's words, his friend's thinking is utopian.[124] As he notes,

> Poor peasants like us are in the grip of landowners and capitalists, but if we don't keep working for this exploitative system and its supporters, we cannot live. If we sever the relationship with them, we must be resigned to die of hunger. This is not an abstract viewpoint about poor farmers in general. It is about myself. … Liberation can only happen step by step, even half a step at a time. While bearing with exploitation, we must fight capitalists and landowners through our collective awakening.[125]

By the summer of 1927, the split with the 'city club' was initiated. The Tokyo Jichikai disbanded the following year.[126] Soon, Shibuya opted once again for hardline leftwing affiliated activism. For him, the pragmatism of communism and socialism

[121] Ishikawa, *Nōmin Jichi* (17 Apr. 1927), in *Chosakushū*, vol. 2, p. 421.
[122] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 2, p. 433.
[123] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 8, p. 437.
[124] Shibuya, *Nōmin aishi*, p. 506.
[125] Shibuya, *Nōmin aishi*, p. 508.
[126] Iwasaki Masaya, *Nōhon shisō no shakaishi: seikatsu to kokutai no kōsaku* (The social history of agrarian thought: intertwining daily life and national essence) (Kyoto, 1997), p. 99.

had won over anarchist idealism.[127] In the end, the dispute about being a farmer by choice or by obligation morphed into sectarian differences. Nakanishi Inosuke followed Shibuya's path, therefore returning to a form of mass militancy with which he was more familiar.

In Ishikawa's words, however, 'the tiger had turned into a wolf'. He felt that the conflict between the Nihon Kumiai and the Jichikai was one between the manipulative power of strong unions on the one hand and freedom on the other.[128] Although he admitted unionization had helped to some extent to reduce rent fees, he stressed the paradox of the Nihon Kumiai, which lacked a unified ideology while promoting a tight centralized and standardized organization. This system was creating new enemies: the city-based politicized union leaders, who were even more cunning and dangerous than landowners.[129] It was, he said presciently, laying the ground for authoritarianism (強権主義) under the disguise of liberating peasants.[130]

Clearly, Ishikawa sensed the turning of the wind. He felt he had to act against mounting authoritarian sentiments from all sides, and my contention is that this is exactly what contributes to shape and refine *domin seikatsu*. Historians have shown that the proletarian movement became a springboard for the emergence of ultra-nationalist tendencies from the early 1930s.[131] Akamatsu Katsumaro's establishment of the Japan State Socialist Party (Nihon Kokka Shakaitō) in 1932 is a case in point. Shimonaka Yasaburō followed suit, betraying the original ideals of the Jichikai.[132]

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[127] Shibuya Teisuke, *Daichi ni kizamu* (Carving the earth) (Tokyo, 1974), p. 38.
[128] Ishikawa, 'Nōson ni okeru jissai undō' (Real activism in farming villages), *Nōmin* (1st Oct. 1931), p. 30.
[129] Ishikawa, 'Nōson ni okeru jissai undō', *Nōmin*, (1st Oct. 1931), p. 30.
[130] Ishikawa, 'Nōson ni okeru jissai undō', *Nōmin*, (1st Oct. 1931), p. 31.
[131] Maruyama Masao, *Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics* (London, 1963), p. 31.
[132] Shimonaka formed the Shin Nihon Kokumin Dōmei (New Japan Nationalist Federation). His ideas were in line with the nationalist inclinations of Akamatsu. See Large, Stephen, *Organized Workers and Socialist Politics in Interwar Japan* (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 156-7.

His support of state-oriented *nōhonshugi* highlights the difficulty of 'standing independently on the earth' in 1930s Japan.

THE APPEAL OF POPULAR AGRARIANISM

By the early 1930s, a series of heterogeneous factors fused into the ideological current of *nōhonshugi*, or popular agrarianism. These include the prominence of ideas of return to the soil and the valorization of agrarian practices, an acute economic downturn in the countryside, the government's inability to address rural tensions and a growing belief in the potential success of radical politics. Because it inspired violent and politically destabilizing events – such as the League of Blood and May 15th incidents[133] - and was coopted by factions of the military, it has attracted scholarly attention for the clues it offered in the analysis of Japan's trajectory to ultra-nationalism and war.[134]

Agrarianism was already a feature of the intellectual life during the late Meiji period. The bureaucracy then encouraged agricultural revitalization in a bid to lift the rural sector from economic and social distress generated by industrialization. The notion examined here looks, however, at the 'popular' aspect of *nōhonshugi*, which marked the early Showa period. More precisely, it considers how the conjunction of forces that exacerbated farmers' discontent and frustration translated in the late 1920s

[133] *Ketsumeidan jiken*/血盟団事件 and 5.15 *jiken*/5.15 事件 respectively, which led to assassinations of high-ranking politicians and bureaucrats and attempted coup in 1932.
[134] See for example Havens, *Farm and Nation*.

and 1930s into a separate intellectual phenomenon supported by rural masses and activists and destined to have significant political consequences.

In this context, what the study of Ishikawa's project of autonomous farmers' councils essentially illustrates is the continuity of concerns between the era of heightened tenancy disputes in the early 1920s and the rhetoric of promotion of agrarian values in the name of national essence ten years later. Defection by personalities such as Shibuya, Nakanishi and Shimonaka emphasizes that the platform of the Jichikai could no longer channel the growing resentment at the urban-rural discrepancy, as had been hoped. Lured by the promises of a strong organizational apparatus, these men ended up rejecting the Jichikai's core principle of independence and self-management.

Economic distress remained a crucial preoccupation throughout the decade under consideration. It culminated with the Shōwa 'panic' (昭和恐慌) of 1930-1, a repercussion of the financial crash of 1929. The depression hit the farming sector hard and the sudden reliance on radicalized politics in some way mirrors the gravity of the economic downturn. Starting with silk, prices of agricultural products slumped dramatically, to a greater extent than industrial ones, while also recovering more slowly.[135] Rice prices for instance more than halved between 1925 and 1931 in the country as a whole.[136] The destruction of crops by bad weather was an additional worry during those years, and the regions of Tōhoku and Hokkaidō suffered particularly badly from the crises. Tōhoku was marked by repeated famines between 1930 and 1934, a period which still weighs heavily in the region's collective memory.

By then, Ishikawa had settled full time in Chitose, where, through the publication of *Dinamikku*, he was upholding a voice for freedom in the midst of rising

[135] Francks, *Rural Economic Development in Japan,* p. 201.
[136] Bank of Japan, *Hundred Years Statistics of the Japanese Economy* (Tokyo, 1966), p. 109.

limitations imposed on liberties. He was wary of any form of indoctrination, convinced that 'to advocate one's own ethics to others from a standpoint of power constitutes a first step toward authoritarianism'.[137]

Yet, at about the same time, Shimonaka Yasaburō, with whom he had worked closely and who had openly valued his opinions only a few years earlier,[138] seemed to repudiate their shared ideals. As one of his biographers puts it, 'this great liberalist of the 1920s became a champion of Japanese fascism and military aggression in the 1930s.'[139] In May 1932, Shimonaka sets up the New Japan National League (Shin Nihon Kokumin Dōmei), inspired by the ideas of National Socialism of Kita Ikki and radical agrarianism of Gondō Seikyō.[140] During the war, he becomes a director of Japan's Pan-Asian Alliance (Dai Nippon Kōa Dōmei), thereby directly supporting his government's expansionist plans into Asia. Purged by the American Occupation in 1948, he resumes his activities in 1951 as publisher and peace campaigner.

Born into a poor farming and pottery-making household, Shimonaka had been denied full schooling as a youth because of the early death of his father. Passionate about education, he founded the Nihon Kyōin Kumiai Keimeikai, Japan's first teachers' union in 1919. The union's pamphlets paid particular attention to rural issues and to the need for an international outlook on education. He is remembered as a forward-looking and progressive mind on the subject.[141] Indeed, he worked as a pivotal figure in the formulation and implementation of the Jichikai's educational

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[137] Ishikawa Sanshirō, 'Kaikogonen' (The past five years), *Dinamikku* (1st Oct. 1934), in *Kojinshi*, p.245.
[138] Shimonaka Yasaburō, 'Ishikawa sanshirōshi no [hishinkaron to jinsei] o yomu' (Reading Mr. Ishikawa Sanshirō's 'non-evolutionary theory and human life'), in Komatsu (ed), *Shimonaka saburō rōdō undō ronshū* (Shimonaka Saburō's collected essays on the labour movement) (Tokyo, 1995), pp. 256-7.
[139] Nakano Akira, 'Shimonaka Yasaburō' in Duke (ed), *Ten Great Educators of Modern Japan* (Tokyo, 1989), p. 183.
[140] Nishimura, *Nihon ekolojizumu,* p. 134.
[141] Nakano, 'Shimonaka'.

objectives. Like Ishikawa, Shimonaka believed that both intellectual training and manual labour should form part of a child's learning habits.[142]

Shimonaka was one amongst many who changed ideological course during the pre-war decade. But his close association with Ishikawa for a while underlines the complexity and blurry contours of ideological distinctions. In conventional terms, this period highlights the conflation between leftwing and rightwing extremism. The rhetoric of rescuing the people (*kyūmin*/救民) easily transmuted into heightened nationalism, which in this case aimed at restoring dignity to a beleaguered rural class. Likewise, the denunciation of imperialism fostered a vocabulary of pan-Asian leadership.

Confronted by the mounting importance of popular agrarianism, Ishikawa could not remain silent. He conveys his fears about the link between nationalism and agrarian issues on repeated occasions. In February 1932, he directly critiques Shimonaka's involvement in the United Village League (Sonchiha Dōmei/村治派同盟) on account of its ideological reliance on strong state power.[143] A short-lived and little examined organization, the League gathered such names as Gondō Seikyō, Tachibana Kōzaburō, Ōkawa Shūmei (1886-1957), Katō Kazuo, Mushanokōji Saneatsu and Shimonaka amongst others, all figures committed to the prioritization and glorification of agriculture during the period.[144] Three months later, Ishikawa analyzes fascist trends in Japan and draws similarities between Shimonaka's political

[142] Nishimura, *Nihon ekolojizumu,* p. 138.
[143] Ishikawa Sanshirō, 'Kokka shakaishugi' (National socialism), *Dinamikku* (1st Feb. 1932), p. 123.
[144] Katakura Wajin (or Kazuto), 'Shōwa nōhonshugi to chūgoku" (Shōwa agrarianism and China), *Nōrin Keizai* (31 Jan. 2002), p. 7.

views and Mussolini's Black Shirts.[145] The mutual respect the two men held for each other turns to bitter ideological strife.

Though initially taken by the ideas of some *nōhonshugisha*,[146] by the early 1930s, Ishikawa feels that the rising tide of the movement threatens the integrity of his own conception of *domin seikatsu*. In September 1932, *Dinamikku*'s front page states in detail the differences between the two strands of thought.[147] Its author sees agrarianism as siding with rulers and exploiters in order to affirm the primacy of agriculture, reminding his readers that, on the contrary, the destiny of the *domin* is to rise against oppression. He insists on the specificity of his socio-political model, which envisages the creation of a multi-sectorial network of production and exchange with agriculture as a basis, but not overly dominant. For him, *nōhonshugi* belongs to the lineage of utopian socialism of a hundred years earlier. It is a top-down approach that neglects the project of emancipation of the lower peasant class entirely.[148]

Ishikawa found a precious ally in the person of Nobushima Eiichi (1902-1969), a younger labour activist who had been a fervent disciple of Ōsugi Sakae until his death. Although he was a keen proponent of syndicalism, he also focused on rural problems, participating in the Jichikai movement in the mid 1920s when not serving prison terms.[149] Like Ōsugi, he was an eager Esperantist, as well as being competent in French and German. After the Jichikai's dissolution, he remained in the orbit of

[145] Ishikawa, 'Nihon fassho no shōrai' (The future of Japanese fascism), *Dinamikku* (1st May 1932), in *Kojinshi*, p. 133.
[146] In 1927, he collaborates on a volume with Gondō Seikyō. See Tsurumi Shunsuke, 'Hōhō toshite no anakizumu' (Anarchism as method) in *Tsurumi shunsuke shū* (Collected works) (Tokyo, 1991), vol. 9, p. 41.
[147] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 3, p. 96.
[148] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 3, pp. 96-100.
[149] He sends a letter from prison to Ishikawa discussing syndicalism and Soviet politics. *Ishikawa Sanshirō Papers* (Honjō), Correspondence, N. 504, Nobushima to Ishikawa (22 Dec. 1925 - likely).

his older friend, contributing articles to the periodical *Nōmin* (Peasants), an offshoot of the *Nōmin Jichi,* originally concerned with cultural issues.[150]

In *Nōmin*, Nobushima first offers a systematic critique of Bolshevism and the atmosphere of surveillance and deception that reigns in Russia, alleging that this renders impossible any peasant liberation.[151] He also denounces the paradoxes of the electoral campaign of the Japanese Farmers' Union.[152] But his contribution to the debate on popular agrarianism lies in a pamphlet of 1932, which has until now received virtually no attention. Entitled *Museifushugi to nōhonshugi* (Anarchism and agrarianism), the privately printed sixty-page text takes the *nōhonshugi*'s ideas apart, branding them immature (幼稚) and shallow.[153]

The critique consists of exposing the views of five contemporary proponents of agrarianism for the misconceptions and dangers they carry. To Okamoto Rikichi (1885-1963) and his theory of 'natural scientific observation' (*shizen kagakuteki kansatsu*), Nobushima answers that anarchists value agriculture as much as *nōhonshugisha*, but they don't identify it with the human race.[154] That eighty percent of men should be made to cultivate the soil in perpetuity seems to him an untenable prescription, since he believes that industry should form an integral part of human activities. To Yamakawa Tokirō,[155] who ten years later would strongly support pan-Asianism, he attributes a false appreciation of the economic situation of peasants. In his opinion, Yamakawa's theory of 'revolutionary peasant class' (*nōmin kakumei*

[150] Published from Oct. 1928 to Sept. 1933, with contributions from Eto Tekirei, Ishikawa Sanshirō and Yanagita Kunio amongst others.
[151] Nobushima Eiichi, '"Gasu masuku" wo miru' (Watching 'Gas mask'), *Nōmin* (Mar. 1930), pp. 10-3.
[152] Nobushima Eiichi, 'Nōmin undo to seitō to no kankei' (The relationship between the farmers' movement and political parties), *Nōmin* (Apr. 1930), pp. 16-20.
[153] Nobushima Eiichi, *Nōhonshugi to museifushugi* (Agrarianism and anarchism) (Tokyo, 1932), foreword.
[154] Nobushima, *Nōhonshugi to museifushugi,* p. 22.
[155] Dates of birth and death have not been found.

kaikyūron) minimizes the capitalist exploitation of which peasants are victims and therefore the need for an ad hoc liberation strategy.[156]

Similarly, Nobushima rejects the views on which Katō Kazuo elaborates in 'Foundation of agrarian thought' (*Nōhon shisō no kontei*) for his totalitarian perspective on the role of agriculture. Indeed, men have skillfully developed agriculture to sustain their daily life, but it represents one method amongst others – and not a superior one as Katō alleges. After all, the Eskimos do not cultivate the soil.[157] Nobushima also denounces Inuta Shigeru (1891-1957) for his misconception of anarchism in his 'Agrarian self-governance' (*Nōhon jichishugi*). He suggests that *nōhonshugisha* too readily ignore the non-authoritarian approach that distinguishes anarchism from their own creed. Also, that Inuta simplifies what self-reliance means for a farmer.[158]

Finally, Nobushima equally doubts the approach of Tachibana Kōzaburō whose notion of 'state as a family' (*kazoku kokka*) and emperor-centered agrarian ideology (*shashoku taitō*/社稷体統) appear too abstract as this neglects the self-awakening of the subjugated classes.[159] Moreover, the depiction of Western individualism as opposed to Eastern collectivism represents a crude cliché, which omits the cases of Rome and Greece for instance in the development of 'virtuous government' (*ōdō*/王道).[160]

Reading this long diatribe, it is hard not to link some of its contents to Ishikawa's own writings on the subject. References to the past civilizations of Rome

[156] Nobushima, *Nōhonshugi to museifushugi*, p. 51.
[157] Nobushima, *Nōhonshugi to museifushugi,* pp. 56-7.
[158] Nobushima, *Nōhonshugi to museifushugi,* pp. 45-8.
[159] Nobushima, *Nōhonshugi to museifushugi,* p. 30.
[160] Nobushima, *Nōhonshugi to museifushugi*, pp. 26-8.

and Greece, and at one point the mention of Paul Reclus,[161] suggest he may have collaborated with or at least influenced Nobushima in writing the pamphlet. The emphasis on industry and agriculture as complementary human activities also recall Ishikawa's 1933 clarification of the definition of *domin seikatsu*. In any case, both men were in agreement and at pains to differentiate their anarchist conceptions from popular agrarianism. Again, the need to extract his vision from the stranglehold of increasing ideological fanaticism is pressing, and molds the contours of *domin seikatsu*. The conviction expressed in *Dinamikku* that one should not invoke the name of the emperor in politics adds to the dispute, drawing a clear line between the two strands of thought.[162]

The above is only a partial examination of the feud between *nōhonshugisha* and their opponents. I believe, however, that its significance can be assessed on two counts. First, the debate makes plain that interest in the rural situation had by then evolved from one of empathy loaded with emotional references to a more abstract ideological exchange. The discourse of rural distress and misery of peasants squeezed by greedy capitalists morphs by the early 1930s into one that evaluates the place of agriculture in an ideal socio-political organization and asserts the unacceptability of authoritarian schemes. The 'emotional community' concerned with rural issues, to which Ishikawa belonged during the late Meiji socialist period, has disintegrated. The community is now mostly ideological.

Historians have expounded on the surge of culturalism that characterized intellectual life at the turn of the 1930s. Efforts to singularize Japan and the East, and to explore the theoretical basis sustaining this singularity preoccupied philosophers

[161] Nobushima, *Nōhonshugi to museifushugi,* p. 31.
[162] 'Tennō seiji no dokuten' (The monopoly of emperor politics), *Dinamikku* (1st June 1932), in *Kojinshi*, p. 138. Article unsigned but attributable to Ishikawa.

and a range of other thinkers. Representatives of this trend include Watsuji Tetsurō (1889-1960), Kuki Shūzō (1888-1941), Kita Ikki (18883-1937), Yanagita Kunio (1875-1962), and the abovementioned agrarian thinkers.[163] Despite their differences, they supported the emergence of an ideological discourse increasingly detached from the realities of the everyday. For most agrarian thinkers, for instance, the attention to the rural world translated into a conception of its people as an embodiment of a common essence linked to the sacredness of the imperial institution. The notion of *kokutai*, or national polity, became indissociable from their understanding of the place of farming in Japan, if not Asia.

I suggest here that Ishikawa's abandonment of an emotional rhetoric in favour of a more ideological position represents an attempt to counter-argue with the agrarianists in their own terms. These terms are apparent in the theoretical treatise on *domin seikatsu* he publishes in 1933 (*Kinsei domin tetsugaku*) as it is clear in the text he pens together with Nobushima Eiichi. In the general climate of abstract theorization which typifies the intellectual landscape of the era, an appeal for empathy with the plight of the peasantry falls on deaf ears. What saves Ishikawa from a slide into the nationalist discourse that pervades around him is that *domin seikatsu* demands a constant engagement with the natural world, or at least with the raw forces of production.[164] It was an engagement he was personally prepared to fulfill.

Second, Ishikawa's resistance to the *nōhonshugisha* shows that popular agrarianism was a contested set of ideas right at the time of its emergence. This nuances its conventional appreciation by scholarship as a monolithic ideology that helped to fix Japan on a dark course to militarism and war. Political scientist Maruyama Masao (1914-1996) set the trend with the publication in 1947 of *Nihon*

[163] Harootunian and Najita, 'Japanese Revolt Against the West'.
[164] See more on this in chapter 5.

fashizumu no shisō to undō (Thought and activism of Japanese fascism), conveying an essentially negative view of pre-war agrarianism. Subsequent historical studies have struggled to depart from that framework. The study of the Nōmin Jichikai offers a more complex picture, which, in spite of some conceptual blurriness, highlights not only a positive side to agrarian thought, but one that actively challenged the growing authoritarianism of the period.

THE LEGACY OF THE NŌMIN JICHIKAI

It would be easy to dismiss the impact of the Nōmin Jichikai on account of its short life. It provided, however, a forum of expression in many parts of the country, nourished by aspirations of dignity, freedom and self-reliance amongst farmers and their allies. As such, it left traces that outlasted the association's formal existence. These can be found in intellectual movements as well as individual lives, and contributed altogether to the persistence of an idea and its implementation throughout the tumultuous period leading to the war and beyond. As Ishikawa recalls, the shock of Bolshevism and the reactionary forces of nationalism and militarism shattered our hopes of immediate success, but the seeds planted by the Jichikai flourished nevertheless in the spirit that animated later labour organizations.[165]

The publication of *Nōmin,* dedicated to the promotion of proletarian culture with a rural focus, is one example of the Jichikai's influence. Launched in 1928, it lasted until November 1933. Several of its contributors had connections with the

[165] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 8, pp. 443-4.

Nōmin Jichikai. The understanding of peasantry as a locus of worthwhile culture and values rather than simply the source of taxes used to pump up city life held them together. An engaged interpretation of the journal's objectives also meant that it devoted part of its content to ideological debates, hence the diverging views it harboured for instance on popular agrarianism. Ultimately, it did not entirely resist the ultranationalist currents sweeping the intelligentsia at the time, as the radicalization of thinkers such as Katō Kazuo and Tachibana Kōzaburō amply demonstrates.[166]

Nevertheless, *Nōmin* constantly sought to consider farming activities in a larger perspective, projecting the Jichikai's philosophical stance to a wider audience. Its pages discuss Tolstoian thought on several occasions. They include contributions by Ishikawa on Elisée Reclus and by renowned folklorist Yanagita Kunio (1875-1962) on his travels throughout the country.[167] Eto Tekirei considers the meaning of 'returning to the soil', admitting his occasional doubts about living off farming.[168] Despite its contradictions, *Nōmin* represents a good case study of the intellectual tensions and context which guided agrarian thought during the period.

Amongst the various liberation struggles that marked the 'Taishō Democracy', the problem of *Burakumin* discrimination likewise attracted the energy of proletarian movements. Although a law of 1871 had given equal legal status to this group of outcasts, in reality many prejudices remained entrenched in the country's social and

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[166] Stephen Vlastos shows how Tachibana's vision relied on Confucian principles of hierarchy and was intrinsically conservative. Though he shared with Ishikawa the willingness to promote rural culture and self-management, he also saw in the rural village a basis for the expansion of national strength. Vlastos, 'Agrarianism Without Tradition: the Radical Critique of Pre-War Japanese Modernity', in Vlastos (ed), *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan* (Berkeley, 1998), pp. 92-4.

[167] Ishikawa Sanshirō, 'Erize.rukuryu ryakuden' (Short biography of Elisée Reclus), '*Nōmin* (1st Oct. 1927), pp. 21-3; Yanagita Kunio, 'Shimoyodan (Conversation on a frostry night), *Nōmin* (1st Mar. 1928), pp. 5-7.

[168] Eto Tekirei, 'Saigo no mono e no jikaku' (Awareness of the last thing), *Nōmin* (1st Jan. 1928), pp. 10-3.

economic customs. The Zenkoku Suiheisha (National Levellers' Association), established in March 1922, aimed at defending the rights of the *burakumin*. The familiar anarchist-Bolshevik rift over the ideal degree of centralization and allegiance to political parties infiltrated it quickly.[169] The disagreement led in November 1926 to the founding of the Zenkoku Suiheisha Kaihō Dōmei (National Levellers' Liberation League), which supported anarchist views.

A close association between the League and the Nōmin Jichikai contributed to widen the perspective on the notion of liberation. The Jichikai became an additional outlet for the voice of the *burakumin*, one that disentangled itself from Bolshevik and other political rigidities. My argument here is that such Jichikai's involvement with the *burakumin* movement reflects the widening of anarchist ideals to various spheres of social life during the period. Specifically, it expressed the willingness to touch each and everyone regardless of their status and without recourse to elitist politics or strict partisanship.

A leaflet created by activists in Saitama Prefecture suggests for instance that tenant farmers, labourers and *burakumin* are fighting the same battle. It states that contempt, discrimination and exploitation are social evils.[170] The emphasis here is once again on self-reliance, especially the necessity to educate oneself in order to escape oppression. Otherwise stated, it urges the avoidance of cultural intermediaries, which embody a top-down process capable of becoming the source of harmful hierarchical divisions. As the text further claims: 'if we are ignorant about the

[169] Neary, *Political Protest*, pp. 125-7.
[170] 'Suihei rōdō kosaku sandai mondai daienzetsukai' (Major speech about the three big issues of buraku, labour and farm-tenancy), (*Shibuya Teisuke Papers* (Fujimi), N. 382.

exercise of our rights, we invite persecution by ourselves' (権利の行使を誤れば、自ら迫害を招くのだ！).[171]

As explored in detail by Ōi Takao, the link was particularly intense in Nagano prefecture, a region more receptive to political engagement due to a relatively high level of literacy within farming communities.[172] He shows that at the height of the Jichikai's presence in the area, the scope of *buraku* activism shifted from a simple policy of denouncement (糾弾) of discriminatory practices to one which included the promotion of social and educational measures. The meeting held in February 1927 to celebrate the fourth anniversary of the Nagano prefecture Suiheisha chapter, concluded that:

> The association has entered a new phase, whereby it seeks not only to abolish discrimination, but also to confront rural deterioration in line with these slogans: "the peasants' happiness into their own hands", "the liberation of tenants into their own hands", "the liberation of *Burakumin* through their own actions".[173]

The common front between the League and the Jichikai thus called for a rejection of both parliamentary tactics and dialectical materialism in favour of autonomy and general principles of humaneness (人道主義).[174] The reinforcement of claims of equality between the *buraku* liberation and farmers' movements represented a mutual process. As some scholars have argued, to some extent this laid the groundwork for the development of the later democratic thought and practice in Japan,

[171] 'Suihei rōdō kosaku', *Shibuya Teisuke Papers* (Fujimi), N. 382.
[172] Ōi, *Nōmin jichi undōshi*, pp. 42-55.
[173] Ōi, *Nōmin jichi undōshi*, p. 54.
[174] Ōi, *Nōmin jichi undōshi*, p. 55.

even if these were brutally interrupted during the Second World War and preceding decade.[175]

The fact that one of the Jichikai's founders originally hailed from Nagano Prefecture made the area particularly receptive to its ideas. Born in a farming household of Kitamimaki, a village nestled at an altitude of twelve hundred meters in the Nagano mountains, Takeuchi Kunie played a pivotal role in disseminating the Jichikai'*s* scheme in his region. Early on, the writings of Eto Tekirei, but also Ishikawa, left a deep impression on Takeuchi and his friends.[176] In August 1925, they set up the Tsuchi o shitau mono no kai *(*Association of yearning for the earth), a group determined to enhance rural culture and to which Ishikawa and his then partner and journalist, Mochizuki Yuriko (1900-2001), provided guidance.[177] Soon, the association merged with the Jichikai, which resulted in a mutual reinforcement of their activities in the region.

In early January 1927, in the midst of a severe winter and financial crisis, the Jichikai ran a three-day course for about a hundred local farmers in the village of Kitamimaki. Ishikawa, his friend Ōnishi and Shibuya Teisuke were amongst the lecturers. But police intervention interrupted the proceedings on several occasions, once allegedly when Ishikawa declared that if peasants' living conditions went on like this, Japan would eventually perish.[178] The government undoubtedly feared the unrest that the diffusion of autonomous farmers' councils could generate. And this diffusion seemed rapid, with more than a dozen branches registered in Nagano prefecture alone within two years of activity.[179] According to local records, the

[175] Neary, *Political Protest*, p. 224.
[176] Ōi, *Nōmin jichi undōshi*, pp. 74-5, 82.
[177] Ōi, *Nōmin jichi undōshi*, p. 91.
[178] Minamisaku nōmin undōshi kankōkai (ed), *Minamisaku nōmin undōshi* (The history of rural activism in Minamisaku) (Minamisaku, 1983), p. 65.
[179] Ōi, *Nōmin jichi undō*, p. 189.

Jichikai was instrumental in introducing a rationale for rural activism in the area of Minamisaku in Nagano Prefecture in 1927.[180] In that sense, Ishikawa and his friends had a pioneering impact.

In May 1927, in a concerted action the Nagano chapter of the Jichikai pleaded for relief for farmers after a particularly damaging season. Unusually severe frost and a consequent decrease in the number of silkworms had hit farming households hard. A campaign that extended to the entire prefecture thanks to the Jichikai network requested the exemption of tax and rent payment, as well as a moratorium on the payment of expenses normally covered out of revenues from mulberry fields.[181] The wording of the campaign stressed the harsh situation - one of life and death - faced by farming communities. It also suggested that the government should step in to compensate farmers for their losses,[182] a demand that possibly contradicted the philosophy of autonomy put forward by the Jichikai.

Still, in the memory of those who lived through that period, the contribution of Ishikawa to local empowerment and self-respect remained invaluable. In the early 1950s, Koyama Yozō, a self-employed farmer from Kitamimaki, who had closely followed intellectual developments in his community at the time, wrote the following to Ishikawa:

> I usually don't write such letters, but I can't erase this from my mind. Ishikawa sensei's thought, your attitude to life had an absolute influence on my own life. From the time twenty five years ago when I started in a house of Mimakihara until now, despite at times the sadness of mediocrity and some deviations (from this path), I kept to farming (百姓をやり通し), while explaining to my children about you in simple terms. For that, I thank you from the bottom of my heart.[183]

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[180] Minamisaku kankōkai (ed), *Minamisaku nōmin undōshi*, p. 60.
[181] Minamisaku kankōkai (ed), *Minamisaku nōmin undōshi*, pp. 73-4.
[182] Minamisaku kankōkai (ed), *Minamisaku nōmin undōshi*, p. 75.
[183] *Ishikawa Sanshirō Papers* (Honjō), Correspondence, N. 263, Koyama to Ishikawa (date unclear).

The most enduring legacy of the network of autonomous farmers' councils thus rests in the minds of those who adopted its core idea of farming with a spirit of independence and self-reliance. As explained in the next chapter, this attitude held increasing significance as Japan sank further into authoritarianism at home and aggressive tactics of expansion abroad. Then, the notion of self-sufficiency (*jikyū jisoku*) would also gain in importance, as it helped to create a space not only outside capitalist control, but also free from ideological pressure.

The phenomenon of mass conversions (*tenkō*) of leftwing activists to the cause of National Socialism or simply to the *kokutai* before or during the war singularizes the Japanese experience. The scale and manner on which the conversions occurred, along with the role of the government in encouraging them, differentiate the country's historical development from similar ideological recantations in Western Europe.[184] Although *tenkō* were more prominent from the Marxist ranks due to their collective nature, few amongst leftwing activists resisted the tide. Shimonaka Yasaburō's turn towards National Socialism illustrates this well.

But even Nobushima Eiichi, who sided with Ishikawa when others were defecting, appeared to have reversed his stance, then left activism altogether.[185] His engagement with Ōsugi Sakae, then Ishikawa, had always focused on the theoretical aspects of activism. His campaigning in favour of the peasantry did not include a concrete return to the soil. In other words, Nobushima had no other attachment to the rural issue than an intellectual one. But Ishikawa's choice of pursuing *domin seikatsu*

[184] On mass conversions, see Hoston, Germaine, 'Tenkō: Marxism and the National Question in Pre-War Japan', *Polity* (1983) 16-1, pp. 96-118; Steinhoff, Patricia, *Tenkō: Integration and Societal Ideology in Pre-War Japan* (New York, 1991).
[185] Interview with Kawakami Tamio in *Tōyō Keizai* (2010), at http://www.toyokeizai.net/115-anniversary/series/kawakami4-3.html.

on an individual level allowed him to keep himself apart from the *tenkō* tendency.[186] By 'standing on the earth', he also remained true to his convictions, incarnating a spirit of democracy and freedom at a time of escalating jingoism and repression.

CONCLUSION

On his return from Europe in 1920, Ishikawa laid the blueprint for *domin seikatsu*, a model of socio-political organization which emphasized a close association to the land and cooperative human relations. It represented his vision of 'democracy' and fuelled the progressive debates of the period. The experience of the First World War had taught him that the creation of a boundary between man and nature transforms life into 'falsehood and illusion', irremediably resulting in civilizational distress. He thus implemented *domin seikatsu* at an individual level by engaging in farming activities. He also participated in the establishment of the Nōmin Jichikai, a nationwide network of autonomous farmers' councils.

Both his personal choice of cultivating the land and involvement in rural politics reflect general intellectual trends of the decade, namely a 'Tolstoian' belief in the value of physical agricultural work and an increasing reliance on class-consciousness and unionism in the countryside. Ishikawa's singularity, however, lies in the non-violent and non-authoritarian revolutionary outlook that animated his thought. Expressed by the metaphors of sowing seeds of freedom and ploughing deep into minds, he encouraged social transformation through actions of daily life. The

[186] Tsurumi Shunsuke emphasizes this point in 'Furikaete' (Looking back), in *Gendai nihon shisōshi* (Japan's modern thinkers) (Tokyo, 1991), pp. 182-3.

principles of *domin seikatsu* sought to thwart relations of hierarchy and oppression while offering a template for self-reliant living. Considered within the theoretical framework suggested by Henri Lefebvre, *domin seikatsu* means creating a space that contests the dominant relations of production by implementing a new mode of everyday practices.

The breadth of ideas that support Ishikawa's views likewise sets him apart from many of his contemporaries of the leftwing movement. If French syndicalism and the federalism of Elisée Reclus constituted inspirations, so did traditional Japanese agrarian thought and Chinese conceptions of a peaceful village community. Most remarkably, the persistence with which Ishikawa maintained his convictions in a context of conflicting ideological currents shaped his anarchism. In between an ever more dogmatic Bolshevik discourse on the one hand and mounting ultranationalist tendencies on the other, he stood firm on his rejection of authoritarian schemes as potential rescuers of the peasantry.

Because of this tense intellectual context, Ishikawa redefined and qualified his views on several occasions between 1920 and the early 1930s. In spite of some ambiguity, for example in his negative appraisal of urban culture, he stayed clear of the *kokutai* glorifying philosophy of popular agrarianism. But over the years, it is also the tone of his and others' rhetoric that changed. The 'emotional community' that earlier expressed outrage at rural misery gradually gave way to a group of men focused on the formulation of ideological discourses about the place of peasants and agriculture in the country's political and economic model.

Ultimately, the pressure of recanting one's convictions affected many of those who had surrounded Ishikawa during their shared decade of activism. By then, however, he was firmly 'standing on the earth', more than ever before unwilling to

disconnect from nature and the lessons it offered. He foresaw the dangers of such disconnection, and the rise of Japanese militarism in the 1930s and brutal years of overseas aggression and domestic repression that followed vindicated his view.

CHAPTER 5: THE ECOLOGY OF EVERYDAY LIFE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the ecological thought embodied in Ishikawa's vision as it found its clearest expressions during the decade leading to the Second World War. I argue that its fundamental tenet, that is, the recognition of the interconnectedness of all organisms and phenomena on earth, is what enables human communities to 'stand on the earth'. I show how this thought fits for Ishikawa into a larger philosophical framework that stresses non-linear temporality, the understanding of nature as a source of ethical knowledge, and the positive value of agricultural work. I also contend that everyday revolutionary practices were central to his ecological critique and gave it special meaning in the context of Japan's mounting nationalism and expansionary strategy.

I have illustrated in previous stages of this dissertation how Ishikawa's anarchism is premised on the fundamental preference given to bonds of solidarity and cooperative ethics over competition as a mode of participation in the world. His engagement with the predicament of struggling farmers in the early 1900s identified the agrarian world as a primary locus of such cooperative practices in the human realm (chapter 2). I have highlighted the dangers he saw in the modern emphasis on the separation between man and nature, and his resulting willingness to ignore artificial dualisms in order to 'break boundaries' (chapter 3). I have also examined the importance he assigned to the revolutionary aspirations of everyday life as

expressed in his conception of *domin seikatsu* and concrete engagement with the agrarian world (chapter 4).

The present chapter builds on these findings while supplying the final element needed for an overall appreciation of Ishikawa's anarchist thought and practice. The conception of nature as an infinite web of interconnectedness with no central axis or directing principle is crucial to the strand of anarchism he advocated. Ishikawa stresses the notion of symbiosis or ecological dependency, rather than competition, in the natural world. This becomes a relational mode that offers a template for the management of human affairs, with biological relationships supplying the basis for the creation of a viable socio-political model. In this sense, the natural and the social are always linked. One key implication is that cooperation – as observed in nature – can be a human choice, an expression of freedom that ensures survival. This conception of symbiosis also represents an essential departure from the human-centred view of the world that served to justify amongst other things the era's ideology of racial hierarchy.

It is no coincidence that the rhetoric of centre-less interdependency was at the forefront of Ishikawa's preoccupations at the time. It directly confronted and answered the hardening of linear and hierarchical conceptions of politics witnessed within both the left and the right during the late 1920s and 1930s. By then a Marxist vocabulary was permeating the social sphere. The Soviet crackdown on artists and the intelligentsia of 1928-32 also suggested that strong-hand tactics and top-down control increasingly dictated the Bolshevik agenda.[1] Likewise, the discourse on Pan-Asianism was prevailing in domestic intellectual circles, providing justification for

[1] See Hoston, Germaine, *Marxism and the Crisis of Development in Pre-War Japan* (Princeton, 1986); Wilson, Sandra, 'The Comintern and the Japanese Communist Party', in Rees and Thorpe (eds), *International Communism and the Communist International, 1919-43* (Manchester, 1998).

Japan to assume an aggressive leadership role in the region.[2] Ishikawa's urgency to promote his vision represented an attempt to counter-act these trends, as difficult as it was in the face of the strengthening of censorship and growing acceptance by the masses.

Scholarship has shown how much late nineteenth-century European anarchism relied on scientific knowledge in order to support its theoretical premises. The example of Peter Kropotkin remains the best known.[3] Similarly, from the early 1900s up to the 1930s, Japanese radicals became keen to redefine and reinterpret modern scientific paradigms in the context of the larger anarchist 'cultural revolution' of the period.[4] Ishikawa's focus on relations of interdependency that characterize life's phenomena was part and parcel of the same intellectual trend. His thought is distinctive, however, for several reasons.

As this chapter makes clear, Ishikawa's vehement opposition to historicist conceptions of human development resulted in his radical rejection of Darwin's theory of evolution – at least under the terms according to which he understood it. The counter-arguments he offered, equally derived from modern science, give pre-eminence to the notion of constancy as a physical and spiritual background for all change. The alternative temporality he favoured stresses the importance of lived experience in the 'here and now' – what I call 'rootedness' - as opposed to the inevitability of linear progress through time. The idea of rootedness underscores the value of immediate human experiences which all exist, in his words, 'in the time of

[2] Hotta, Eri, *Pan-Asianism and Japan's War, 1931-1945* (Basingstoke, 2007).
[3] See for example Cahm, Caroline, *Kropotkin and the Rise of Revolutionary Anarchism, 1872-1886* (Cambridge, 1989); Kinna, Ruth, 'Anarchist Organization: Kropotkin's Scientific Theory' (Oxford Univ. Ph.D. Thesis, 1991); Woodcock, George, *Anarchism: a History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements* (2nd ed) (Toronto, 2009).
[4] Konishi, Sho, *Anarchist Modernity: Cooperatism and Japanese-Russian Intellectual Relations in Modern Japan* (Boston, 2013).

vast nature'. But this temporality simultaneously creates the potential for relations of symbiosis amongst the multifarious phenomena of the universe.

The originality of Ishikawa's intellectual approach also stems from his close familiarity with the geographical writings of Elisée Reclus. The period under consideration corresponds to a deepening of his grasp of, and interest in, Reclusian ideas. By the late 1920s, he had retreated from concrete involvement in the peasant liberation movement. In addition to focusing on his own historical research, he concentrated on the diffusion of Reclus's work in the form of translations, commentaries, study groups and other means. In this respect, the journal *Dinamikku* he published between 1929 and 1934 acted as a key channel for the dissemination and cross-pollination of thought and praxis.

I show here that Ishikawa's affinity with the ideas of the French geographer contributed to the articulation of his own vision. Reclus envisaged geographical knowledge as a tool to understand historical developments through the appraisal of humans' constant interaction with their natural surroundings. In fact, his work constitutes a voluminous ode to the multiple relations of symbiosis and cooperation that take place on the wide expanse of the earth across the ages.

By his own account, Ishikawa's acquaintance with Reclusian thought gave his own writings a 'geographical turn'. It crystallized his concern with environmental factors and natural phenomena when addressing human historical changes.[5] Both science and geography bolstered anarchist claims of fostering social transformation on the basis of an objective and verifiable corpus of knowledge, quite distinct from abstracted idealism.

Thus, Reclusian geography has two important roles in this chapter. First, Ishikawa's references to Reclus should be understood as a validation of his long-

[5] Ishikawa Sanshirō, *Ishikawa sanshirō senshū* (Selected works) (Tokyo, 1978), vol. 6, p. 2.

standing preoccupation with man's place in his environment. The geographical outlook he adopted reflects an attempt to correct both the Marxist and liberal emphasis on linear development – and concomitant neglect of the spatial dimension. Second, the attention paid to Reclusian geography brings out the significance of transnational links in the process of formulating as well as implementing an ecological critique. My contention is that Ishikawa saw in the diffusion of the French geographer's work a confirmation of the universal aspirations of this critique. The circulation of Reclusian ideas via Ishikawa in Japan and, as we shall see, China linked East and West in the actualization of anarchist social thought with a specific ecological slant. Indeed, the very existence of such transnational connections was an affirmation of a different temporality and sense of rootedness.

Only a constant engagement with the natural environment – as exemplified by, but not limited to, physical agricultural work – guarantees man his rightful place in the web of connectedness that governs life. Ishikawa's friendship with a group of poet-farmers of Hokkaido illustrates this point. I show here how their emblematic evocation of Elisée Reclus underscored their commitment to anarchist ecological thought, which enabled them to express their sense of indebtedness to the natural world and rejection of racial hierarchies. At the same time, I interpret their choice of an everyday life based on cooperation with nature as a form of resistance politics which acted against Japan's rising authoritarian and imperialist impulses. Ishikawa and his friends contested the dominant mapping of space of the period - one premised on capitalist economic development and colonial expansion. Their alternative understanding and use of the spatial environment was a form of appropriation as expressed in the theory of Henri Lefebvre.

Ishikawa's environmental activism with Tanaka Shōzō in 1906 represented a clear-cut opposition to the harmful disruptions of 'natural flows'. But the maturing of

his ecological thought happened more than twenty years later. By then, a diversity of experiences and inquiries into new ideas had enriched his intellectual landscape. He had refined his own philosophy of the *domin*, an individual he conceived as empowered with the possibilities of ecological living. He had also established a circle of 'kindred spirits', both in Japan and abroad, who shared in his reconsideration of scientific and historical paradigms. The variegated process of articulation of what can be referred to as Ishikawa's 'anarchist ecology' and its concrete embodiments during the pre-war period are thus the themes of the present chapter.

CONTESTING MODERN TIME

In 1925, Ishikawa published a weighty volume entitled *Non-Evolutionary Theory and Human Life*.[6] Its four hundred pages assembled the strongly critical views he had long held about evolutionary theory, especially in its distorted popularized form, and its pervasive social implications. Affirming that 'higher status, lower status, perfection, imperfection, these classifications are human inventions', he lambasted the belief in civilizational hierarchy and linear progress that defined his era.[7] The book appears not only as a critique of the notion of historical inevitability. With its promotion of *domin seikatsu*, it is also a manifesto for enhanced awareness of everyday lived experience.[8]

[6] Ishikawa Sanshirō, *Hishinkaron to jinsei* (非進化論と人生) (Tokyo, 1925).
[7] Ishikawa, *Hishinkaron to jinsei,* p. 6.
[8] Ishikawa published a revised and more elaborated version entitled *Rekishi tetsugaku joron* (Introduction to the philosophy of history) in 1933.

The conception of time, as evolutionary, linear and inevitably leading to a better future permeated social consciousness after the Meiji Restoration. Celebrated intellectuals such as Katō Hiroyuki (1836-1916) and Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835-1901) readily endorsed it. Using an ascending ladder of modernity as a measure, it suggested a hierarchy between countries on the basis of their material advancement and resemblance (or dissimilarity) to a Western model of civilizational development. This in turn encouraged seeing the state as the primary unit of reference with regard to historical change, a notion that shaped Japan's domestic and foreign policy. As we know, bar a few exceptions, this conceptualization has also long governed the historiography of East Asia, and is still criticized for the deformative and value-laden framework of understanding it provides.[9]

Scholars have theorized how the process of modernization influences man's perception of time, compounding and justifying the sense of linearity it projects. Thus, in Reinhart Koselleck's terms, modern temporality imposes a 'horizon of expectation' – a future outline which increasingly distinguishes itself from the space of experience characteristic of the pre-modern era.[10] It is accompanied by a growing desire to demarcate between a past, present and future. These are set on a single timeline, yet described as distinct entities. During the course of modernity, experience and expectation - in other words, everyday life and social process - become increasingly divergent. One consequence is that historical understanding weakens in relation to everyday life. What this means is that, in the condition of modernity, 'inexorable movement forward in time makes more complex and difficult

[9] See for example Duara, Prasenjit, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* (Chicago, 1995); Lim, Jie-Hyun, 'Historicizing the World in North-East Asia', in Northrop (ed), *A Companion to World History* (Chichester, 2012).
[10] Kosseleck, Reinhart, *Futures Past: on the Semantics of Historical Time* (transl Keith Tribe) (Cambridge, 1985), p. 273. See also Tanaka, Stefan, *New Times in Modern Japan* (Princeton, 2004), p. 7.

the qualitative assessment of change and continuity within the context of everyday life.'[11]

Likewise, in his re-interpretation of Marx's *Das Kapital,* Moishe Postone focuses on the demands put on labour in terms of increased productivity and surplus-value. The dynamic of capitalism renders inevitable the distinction between what he refers to as abstract (or 'clock') time, and concrete or historical time.[12] The latter is specific to capitalist societies, where hours of labour become denser, or accelerated, where there is an emphasis on speed and efficiency. In this kind of time, there is no sense of direct interaction with our everyday lives, contrary to abstract time, which regulates our movements.[13] The alienating effect of capitalism lies in historical time, which develops as a totalizing dynamic that controls people. In other words, propelled by efficient and accelerated time, history seems to unfold independently of man's action, and thus undermines human agency as a factor of change.

The spread of both Marxism and Darwinism reinforced this new mode of comprehending the world. Confronted by new routines and the radically changed mind-set of their contemporaries, intellectuals in Japan and elsewhere chose a variety of discursive means to analyze or contest it. Such critiques emerged more noticeably after Japan's victory in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, an event which supported the notion that the country was fully engaged on the path of linear progress. In *Hibunmeiron* (Theory of un-civilization/非文明論), a series of essays published between 1900 and 1905, thinker Taoka Reiun (1870-1912) denounces the

[11] Pickering, Michael, 'Experience as Horizon: Koselleck, Expectation and Historical Time', *Cultural Studies* (2004) 18- 2/3, p. 286.
[12] Postone, Moishe, *Time, Labour and Social Domination: a Reinterpretation of Marx's Critical Theory* (Cambridge, 1993); see also Murthy, Viren, 'Reconfiguring Historical Time: Moishe Postone's Interpretation of Marx' in Nakajima (ed), *History and Heteronomy* (Tokyo, 2009), pp. 9-31.
[13] Murthy, 'Reconfiguring Historical Time', p.22; for different conceptions of time and globalization, see also Ogle, Vanessa, 'Whose Time is it? The Pluralization of Time and the Global Condition, 1870s-1940s', *The American Historical Review* (2013) 118-5, pp. 1376-1402.

overreliance of modern society on rationality and efficiency as an 'inversion of progress'.[14]

Ishikawa's own musings about linear historical development began on the occasion of the Russo-Japanese War, a conflict that provided ample evidence for him of the competitive folly of nations-states vying for higher status in the international sphere. How he discussed Darwinism, however, provides a revealing gauge of his assessment of modern temporality. Evolutionary theory made its way to Japan from the late 1870s, passing through a variety of channels in various instalments. The diversity of its readings matched the wide range of political, scientific, religious and other ideological ends for which it was used.[15] But that its interpretation found more relevance in the social than in the natural sciences is well known. The conflation between Darwinian concepts and Spencer's ideas of social evolution dominated the understanding of the topic.[16] Even from a scientific point of view, there was a stronger emphasis on the notions of struggle for survival and natural selection than on those of the origin of man and random mutation as the mechanism of evolutionary change.[17]

The majority of late Meiji socialists, some of whom were soon to profess anarchism, attempted to reconcile their political creed with the new scientific ideas. They largely accepted the biological basis for Darwin's findings, but tended to put

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[14] Loftus, Ronald, 'The Inversion of Progress: Taoka Reiun's "hibunmeiron"', *Monumenta Nipponica* (1985) 40-2. Viren Murthy has also shown how the Sino-Japanese War marked a philosophical turn that examined the dialectic between abstract time and evolutionary history. See 'Ontological Optimism, Cosmological Confusion, and Unstable Evolution: Tan Sitong's Renxue and Zhang Taiyan's Response', in Murthy and Schneider (eds), *The Challenge of Linear Time: Nationhood and the Politics of History in East Asia* (Leiden and Boston, 2014), pp. 49-82.

[15] Godart, Clinton, 'Darwin in Japan: Evolutionary Theory and Japan's Modernity, 1820-1970' (Univ. of Chicago Ph. D. thesis, 2009), p. 8.

[16] Spencer received the approbation of a full Japanese translation years before Darwin. See Adeney-Thomas, Julia, *Reconfiguring Modernity: Concepts of Nature in Japanese Political Ideology* (Berkeley, 2001), p. 104.

[17] Shimao Eikō, 'Darwinism in Japan: 1877-1927', *Annals of Science* (1981) 38-1, p. 97.

equal emphasis on Kropotkin's notion of mutual aid as a balancing factor to that of 'struggle for existence' – more readily conceived as 'survival of the fittest' - when it came to human interactions.[18] Ōsugi Sakae's interest in the biological mechanisms of altruism fitted for instance in this overall acceptance of the validity of Darwinism, revealing an understanding of the English naturalist's theory that was ahead of its times.[19]

Ishikawa, for his part, disputed Darwin's scientific discoveries en bloc. Like Ōsugi, he favoured explanations for cooperation and interdependency in the natural world, but he could not hide his dislike of the slide into social Darwinism that dominated intellectual circles. As he laments in 1923, 'the principles of struggle for existence, natural selection and survival of the fittest have become a dogma with some kind of religious authority that rules public feelings in the world.'[20] This view had already led him to express doubts about Darwin's theory of evolution in 1907. By the mid-1920s, however, he had rejected its scientific tenets. By going this far, he stands clearly apart from other anarchists of his era.

But it is my contention that his strong stance against Darwinism represents above all a warning about the dangers of modern temporality. When he criticizes evolutionary theory, what he has in mind is primarily a rejection of the notion of a pursuit of progress for its own sake, the robot-like adherence of his compatriots to a historicist conception of time and social change to the detriment of lived experience, or rootedness. As he observes, 'people of the world are marching blindly forward, forward; they are not marching toward any goal. Just marching itself has become the

[18] Godart, 'Darwin in Japan', pp. 248-290; Ozawa Kazunori, 'Ishikawa sanshirō no hanshinkaron' (On the anti-evolutionism of Ishikawa Sanshirō), *Kōchi Daigaku Gakujutsu Kenkyū Hōkoku* (1994) 43, pp. 165-172.
[19] Konishi, *Anarchist Modernity*, pp. 317-9.
[20] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 2, p. 319.

goal'.[21] *Shinpo* (progress/進歩) is the first word of the treatise he publishes in 1925, one that for him is emblematic of the trappings of the new mentality that has come to inhabit the collective consciousness.[22]

In the popular imagination, anarchism is often associated with violent acts designed to catalyze the destruction of the existing order and the authority of modern temporality. The bomb attack on the Greenwich observatory featured in *The secret agent*, Joseph Conrad's 1907's novel, is symbolically attributed to an anarchist. As one of the story's protagonists explains: 'the whole world has heard of Greenwich'.[23] In his critique of the evolutionary dogma, however, Ishikawa takes a different route, as he reconfigures historical change through an emphasis on competing notions of duration and time perception. In doing so, he seeks to reclaim individual agency and ethics from the constraining framework of mechanical progress.

CONSTANCY AND AGENCY

Though Ishikawa's assessment of the negative impact of evolutionary theory essentially refers to the social sphere, he makes a full frontal attack on his scientific credentials. To bolster his argument, he feels compelled to offer a scientifically based counter-thesis. By putting forward various competing theories, at times he appears to be merely riding the wave of anti-Darwinian thought, the so-called 'eclipse of

[21] Ishikawa, *Hishinkaron to jinsei*, p. 8.
[22] Interestingly, the words 'progress' (*shinpo*) and 'evolution' (*shinka*) in Japanese both start with the same character of *shin* (進) meaning 'advance', suggesting a conceptual link which does not exist in English and that Ishikawa rejects.
[23] Conrad, Joseph, *The Secret Agent: a Simple Tale* (London, 1907), p.23. Also in Kern, Stephen, *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880-1918* (Cambridge, 1983), p. 16.

Darwinism' of the turn of the century.[24] Moreover, his long stay in France, where the tradition of Lamarckism tended to overshadow Darwinian thought, likely influenced him.[25] His choice of opposing scientific theses is nonetheless illuminating. I focus here on one of them, showing how his crucial concern with the perception of time underscores his anarchist philosophy.

In an attempt to oppose the notion of inevitable change over time, Ishikawa claims that he finds more relevance in the laws of constancy developed by French biologist and physiologist René Quinton (1866-1925). Celebrated by his contemporaries as the 'French Darwin', the scientist's fame followed the rigorous observations and deductions he made about the temperature of animals and the chemical composition of cellular liquid in their organisms. Rather than emphasizing transformation as the result of adaptation to the external environment as Darwin's theory of evolution posits, Quinton looked at criteria that remained constant *in spite* of a changing environment.

By this he had in mind the preservation for optimal life functions by each animal species of certain conditions - temperature, saline concentration and plasma composition - when confronted with the gradual cooling of the earth and other external variations over time. Quinton claimed for example that animals which appeared early on earth – such as reptiles - were more likely to have a lower body temperature than those which appeared at a later stage, like mammals. He surmised that new species had emerged with a calorific capacity that allowed them to withstand cooler external conditions. He also established a chronological table of the appearance of new species on earth and their corresponding rising body temperatures.

[24] Bowler, Peter, *The Eclipse of Darwinism: Anti-Darwinian Evolution Theories in the Decades around 1900* (Baltimore, 1983).
[25] Bowler, *The Eclipse of Darwinism*, pp. 107-117.

Quinton's research additionally focused on seawater properties and its similarities with plasma composition. Besides medical applications, his findings resulted in the three laws of thermal, marine and osmotic constancy. In the voluminous compilation he published in 1904, he adds in his concluding paragraphs a Law of General Constancy, which encapsulates his theories. It reads that 'confronted with the modifications of all kinds that can affect its various habitats throughout the ages, animal life, which appeared as a cell in specific physical and chemical conditions, tends to maintain these original conditions for a high cellular functioning throughout the zoological series.' For the French biologist, modern science had wilfully ignored the fact that life could do no more that preserve its conditions of origin.[26]

Not all of Quinton's scientific discoveries stood the test of time. Later commentators also found that his conception of constancy could be reconciled with Darwinism.[27] Whilst Ishikawa cites other theories that wholly or partly pretended to disprove Darwin, such as Theodor Eimer (1843-1898)'s orthogenesis, Elie Metchnikoff (1844-1916)'s views on human nature or Hugo De Vries (1848-1935)'s mutation theory, he repeatedly returns to Quinton's work.[28] The Frenchman's allegation that the higher body temperature of birds signals their appearance on earth at a later stage than that of the human race offered a strong argument in Ishikawa's favour. As he notes, 'if this explanation is correct, it demolishes the theory according to which superior creatures appeared after inferior ones. Or it means that birds are

[26] Quinton, René, *L'eau de mer milieu organique* (Seawater as organic milieu) (Paris, 1904), pp.451-2.
[27] Labouret, Pascal, *Transfusions sanguines: c'est inutile* (Blood transfusions: it's useless) (2011), p. 5, accessed 7 Oct. 2014, http://www.chirosystem.com/FPDF/transfusions.pdf.
[28] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū,* vol. 2, pp. 321-2, 338-9, 355-7, 383-4.

superior to humans, which therefore undermines the latter's self-conceit about their own superiority.'[29]

Through Quinton, Ishikawa denounces the value-freighted rhetoric of his contemporaries, which assesses the world in terms of perfection and imperfection. He deplores the 'vanity of mankind', who placed itself at the apex of all creation, and gave apes the highest status in the animal world because they are closest to humans.[30] But his strongest condemnation relates to temporal hierarchy, or the notion that the passage of time will automatically bring about perfection. It is nonsense, he maintains, to place Rome above Greece and Greece above Babylon merely because of chronology.[31] As he sees it, the practices of cooperation observed by Kropotkin amongst living organisms suggest that present day humans have regressed rather than progressed compared to animals.[32]

The emphasis on Quinton's work is particularly relevant because the very language of constancy it uses has a familiar Buddhist resonance that rejects the new temporal perception derived from the prevailing scientific outlook. Ishikawa translates the French word '*constance'* with the Japanese equivalent 恒定/kōjō when referring to natural properties, a word of Buddhist origin but common in scientific language. More often, however, he refers to constancy as *jōjū* (常住). Though the term has entered standard Japanese, it originally draws from Buddhist thought, especially Zen and *satori* practice. It signifies the quality of that which is without appearance or disappearance, what is unwavering and persists indefinitely, implying the opposition to a chain of cause and effect that govern phenomena.[33] Whether consciously or not, Ishikawa provides with *jōjū* a spiritual equivalent of Quinton's

[29] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, pp. 321-2.
[30] Ishikawa, *Hishinkaron to jinsei*, p. 7
[31] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol.2, p. 431; Ishikawa, *Hishinkaron to jinsei,* pp. 9-10.
[32] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 8, pp.200-201.
[33] *Bukkyōgaku jiten* (Dictionary of Buddhist studies) (Tokyo, 1995), p. 265.

law of constancy. After elaborating on Quinton's theory, he describes it as 'the law that regulates human life and, once recognized, the background against which phenomena of rise and decline occur'.[34]

We are not far here from the aforementioned distinction between abstract and historical time, one that Ishikawa appreciates in all its implications. Returning from a trip to visit pollution victims in the village of Yanaka in the summer of 1906, he finds himself hiring a rickshaw in order to catch the last train to Tokyo. But he reflects that, after all, 'the speed generated by human power accomplishes little against the time of vast nature.'[35] The notion that humankind is but a flicker in time, no more than a bubble floating in the immense flux of nature, is a recurrent theme in his writings. It is clearly articulated from his early essay *Kyomu no reikō* (Chaotic Spirituality) and can be related to Buddhist conceptions.[36] The first chapter of his philosophical summation of 1933 is premised on the same notion that the history of mankind is like a flash of light and cannot escape from the repeated cycle of birth and death.[37]

Thus, when he advocates a *Return to primitive life* (Genshi seikatsu no kaifuku/原始生活の回復), as in a 1927 pamphlet, he refers to a 'golden past' precisely because it lacks the capitalist sense of time. It is a space of experience in the 'here and now' that stands aside from the process of acceleration – the runaway dynamic related to the production of surplus-value[38] – and hence avoids its alienating effect. As Ishikawa notes, 'it is not a question of transposing as such the life conditions of our ancestors to today's world'. What he pretends to restore, however, is a perception of time stripped from a 'horizon of expectation' and directly anchored

[34] Ishikawa *Chosakushū*, vol.2, p. 384.
[35] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū,* vol. 1, p. 405.
[36] Ishikawa Sanshirō, 'Kyomu no reikō' (Chaotic spirituality) in Tsurumi (ed), *Ishikawa sanshirōshū - kindai nihon shisō taikei* (Collected works of Ishikawa Sanshirō – Compendium of modern Japanese thought), N. 16 (Tokyo, 1976), p. 6.
[37] Ishikawa, 'Rekishi tetsugaku joron', *Ishikawa sanshirōshū,* p. 115.
[38] Murthy, 'Reconfiguring Historical Time', p. 23.

in the immediacy of the natural environment. In other words, it is a sense of rootedness. Together with Edward Carpenter, he defines it as *shizenga* (自然我), a consciousness of nature, which is only possible if one acknowledges a law of constancy. [39]

The reference to artifacts from the Sumerian early dynastic period of *c.* 2500 BC supplies a powerful image in support of Ishikawa's rationale. He relates how representations of the King Ur-Nina of the ancient dynasty of Lagash portray the ruler not as a man with a golden crown officiating above his people, but as a humble labourer tilling the land and engaged in ordinary daily activities amongst them.[40] For Ishikawa, that Ur-Nina was willing to be seen as an equal to his subjects proves his contention: some ancient societies provide the best example of non-hierarchical relations, and thus freedom, because they do not pretend to break the man-nature boundary while they breathe meaning into the practices of daily life.

Ishikawa's rejection of Darwinism in favour of Quinton's theory of constancy has thus at least two important consequences. First, it allows him to stress man's affinity for freedom and therefore individual agency in the shaping of social change. When human communities opt for solidarity and cooperation, they actualize this freedom. Second, a denial of modern time consciousness automatically directs the focus towards immediate experience. Ishikawa's philosophy privileges rootedness, which is to space what constancy is to time. This in turn highlights the possibilities as well as constraints of space for the deployment of this freedom. As he explains, from a temporal angle, one must look at the plurality and diversity of historical causes; from a spatial perspective, one must understand 'the movement that is born out of the

[39] Ishikawa, *Genshi seikatsu no kaifuku* (The restoration of primitive life) (Tokyo, 1927), p. 24. Although the text is included in Ishikawa's collected works, the last few pages, from which this citation is extracted, are only included in the original pamphlet.
[40] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 2, pp. 372-3, 431.

reciprocal stimuli limitlessly created by a vast and complex web of relations of solidarity.'[41]

The insistence on this spatial dimension in the understanding of human developments sets Ishikawa's vision against the predominantly historicist ideologies of his times. It allows him to relate the evolution of humankind to the constant, dynamic and mutually transforming interaction with the land. From there, he considers change in terms of symbiosis and networks of alliances amongst a multiplicity of living organisms rather than a linear process of domination and control on the path of inevitable progress. This outlook represents a corrective, a different angle of analysis, but one that I see as having enormous bearing on the overall coherence of his ideas, including his vision of *domin seikatsu*, and his standing in the intellectual landscape of pre-war Japan.

His conception of man as just a 'flicker in time' is the starting point of his reflection. Not only does it suggest that rootedness - or awareness of the 'here and now' – supplies essential meaning to human existence. It also calls for a cosmological perspective in the appraisal of man's place in his environment. This larger interrogation, which attempts to address the totality of phenomena across time and space, represents one of Ishikawa's long-lasting preoccupations. He had early on shared such questioning with Edward Carpenter, whose notion of 'cosmic consciousness' struck a chord with his own views.[42] His reading of Reclusian geography, however, offered further ammunition to an understanding of human destiny disengaged from deterministic assumptions.

[41] Ishikawa, 'Rekishi tetsugaku joron', *Ishikawa sanshiroshū*, p. 144.
[42] See chapter 3.

ENGAGEMENT WITH ANARCHIST GEOGRAPHY

My contention is that Ishikawa saw in the work of Elisée Reclus the articulating principle of his own cosmological vision, one premised on the ephemeral nature of human existence in the infinite universe. As he explains, the French geographer 'writes about the history of limited and transient human beings living in our temporally and spatially unlimited world.'[43] Ishikawa's deepening affinity with geographical investigation over the years gave significance to the alternative temporality he favoured. It became a medium for the unlocking of his critique of modern time perception. But it particularly matters that the type of geography practiced by Reclus, which I outline below, was of anarchist inspiration and therefore in marked contrast with the prevailing geographical dogma of the period.

Ishikawa's engagement with Reclusian ideas coincides with the flowering of academic geography in Japan, a discipline largely dedicated by then to the reinforcement of the country's nationalist ethos.[44] From early on, geographical thought had developed to cultivate this ethos. The publication in 1894 of *Nihon fukeiron* (The Japanese landscape), by Shiga Shigetaka (1863-1927), famously extolled the uniqueness of the Japanese archipelago.[45] Reclusian thought, however, proposed an entirely different view of geography that emphasized free and spontaneous development against the authority of arbitrary territorial limitations, and respect for freedom. From Ishikawa's viewpoint, it allowed the 'de-singularization' of Japan, while espousing the principles of non-hierarchy. It paid attention to vaster processes of change in time and space, simultaneously underscoring the need for a deeper human relationship to the earth.

[43] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū,* vol. 8, p. 523.
[44] Takeuchi Keiichi, *Modern Japanese Geography: an Intellectual History* (Tokyo, 2000), pp. 86-7.
[45] Takeuchi, *Modern Japanese Geography,* p. 9.

The combination of Reclus's radical political convictions with a solid scientific expertise likens him to his friend Peter Kropotkin. Both men were active and prominent figures of the late nineteenth-century European anarchist movement. Both were also accomplished, internationally recognized geographers. Reclus bequeathed to posterity a phenomenal literary production, his political and geographical thought totaling tens of thousands of pages in books, pamphlets, articles, correspondence and other material. Yet, his reputation never quite matched that of Kropotkin. The relative neglect of Reclus by academia, where, apart from sporadic interest, he has rarely been given more than a perfunctory accolade, is therefore intriguing.[46] If anything, the present exploration of transnational links suggests that he had greater influence over time and in more subtle ways than previously assumed.

The Frenchman reached adulthood at the start of the second half of the nineteenth century. His anarchism developed thus in an era that was characterized, broadly speaking, by rising demands on the part of the working class and major upheavals in scientific knowledge. Discarding the Protestant creed that brought him up, he soon became a fiercely anti-authoritarian thinker and supporter of workers' rights, joining the International Workingmen's Association (IWA) shortly after its inception in 1864. His participation in the Paris Commune of 1871 established his position as a militant anarchist, but also forced him into exile in Switzerland for ten years.[47] By then, he had entirely rejected parliamentary politics and, siding with Mikhail Bakunin (1814-1876), was openly opposed to Marx's stance on state

[46] In the English-speaking scholarship about anarchism, Reclus is the subject of one monograph. See Fleming, Marie, *The Geography of Freedom* (Montreal, 1988 [1979]), but otherwise is only afforded a short chapter – see Marshall, Peter, *Demanding the Impossible: a History of Anarchism* (London, 2008), or a few mentions: Miller, David, *Anarchism* (London, 1984); Schmidt, Michael, and van der Walt, Lucien, *Black Flame: the Revolutionary Class Politics of Anarchism and Syndicalism* (Plymouth, 2009); Woodcock, *Anarchism*. David Harvey mentions him on a few occasions, for example in *Cosmopolitanism and the Geographies of Freedom* (New York, 2009); see also Knowles, Rob, *Political Economy from Below: Economic Thought in Communitarian Anarchism, 1840-1914* (New York, 2004).
[47] Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible*, p. 340.

socialism, formulating instead the idea of a free association of human forces that would supersede the state.[48] Reclus's sojourn in Switzerland was the occasion to befriend Kropotkin and elaborate further and more visibly on anarchist theory. Recent scholarship examines the Swiss period to underscore the strong impact exerted by Reclus on Kropotkin's ideas, and the possible preeminence of the former as a theoretician of anarchism.[49]

Reclus expressed his ideas in several texts of obvious political intent, such as the most comprehensive *L'évolution, la révolution et l'idéal anarchique (*Evolution, revolution, and the anarchist ideal).[50] Ishikawa was aware of these political ideas before his own flight into exile in 1913. He had authored a *History of the Western Social Movement* in 1912 mentioning the contribution of the French anarchist.[51] During his stay with Paul's family in Europe, he familiarized himself with Reclus's geographical works, which he also used, amongst other methods, to learn the French language.[52] Reflecting on *L'homme et la terre* (Man and the earth), a six volume series considered as the summation of Reclusian thought that appeared posthumously between 1905 and 1908, he observed afterwards that 'I finally grasped with a clarity that I hadn't thought possible, the kind of place I occupied in the mass of human beings floating in time and space, and I came to feel I could see all human and natural phenomena.'[53]

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[48] Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible*, p. 342.
[49] Ward, Dana, 'Alchemy in Clarens: Kropotkin and Reclus, 1877-1881' in Jun and Wahl (eds), *New Perspectives on Anarchism*.
[50]The first edition dates from 1880. See Pelletier, Philippe, *Géographie et anarchie*: *Reclus, Kropotkine, Metchnikoff* (Editions du Monde Libertaire, 2013), p.62.
[51] *Seiyō shakai undōshi,* declared against public order.
[52] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū,* vol. 8, p. 20; Reclus's major geographical writings include the nineteen volumes of the *Nouvelle géographie universelle* (New universal geography), published in Paris between 1876 and 1894, and the six volumes of *L'homme et la terre*, published in Paris between 1905 and 1908.
[53] Ishikawa Sanshirō, 'Chijinron nitsuite (About Man and the Earth), *Dinamikku* (Apr. 1930), *Kojinshi* (self-published leaflet)*,* reprint edition (Tokyo, 1974), p. 32.

Indeed, it would be reductive to study Reclus's political views without investigating his geographical writings too. By far more voluminous, these give extensive expression to his anarchist outlook on the world. Not only do they offer a particular understanding of the interaction between human communities and the earth, but also suggest a means of action to promote less hierarchical and more equal human relations.[54] His geography thus represented an essential vehicle for the transmission of political thought. The increasing focus over the years on man's relationship with his environment, with its social implications and potential for change, translated into what he called a 'social' geography.[55]

The distinctiveness of his thought emerged in the context of the advances in human geography achieved by scientific circles from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. These examined the influence of a specific physical environment on human activity and development. Together with such contemporaries as American George Perkins Marsh (1801-1882), Reclus was, however, equally concerned with the reverse impact of human activity on the earth, and how a dynamic two-way interaction, in a historical perspective, should be a focus of study.[56]

Even someone unfamiliar with Reclus's anarchist beliefs can easily pick up from *Man and the Earth* the basic principles he held on socio-political organization. First, he accords a large role to human freedom and ability to choose. His investigation of the historical process of human development stresses man's constant modification of his natural surroundings, which in turns exert an influence on him, and so on in a continuous pattern.[57] In other words, Reclus locates man as one active

[54] Dunbar, Gary, *Elisée Reclus, Historian of Nature* (Hamden, 1978).
[55] Dunbar, *Elisée Reclus, Historian of Nature,* p. 64.
[56] Olwig, Kenneth, 'Historical Geography and the Society/Nature "Problematic": the Perspective of J.F. Schouw, G.P. Marsh and E. Reclus', *Journal of Historical Geography*, (1980) 6, pp. 29-45.
[57] Pelletier, *Géographie et anarchie*, p. 109.

agent in the infinite and ever-changing complexity of his environment. As he clearly states at the beginning of the first volume, man's sovereign freedom constitutes one of the three laws identifiable in human sciences, together with class struggle and the search for equilibrium.[58]

This approach to nature in terms of relations and interactions sets Reclusian thought apart from the crude geographical determinism that characterized his era and served to justify the ideas of a hierarchy of races and related geopolitical strategy. Though Reclus acknowledges the important factor of man's 'milieu' in his development, he also sees it as relative. In theoretical terms, this rejection of pure geographical determinism goes together with the aversion of anarchists for Marx's materialist conception of history, perceived as inflexible for its emphasis on the inevitability of historical development.[59]

Ishikawa's own emphasis on a sequence of progress *and* regress to account for historical development reflects his reliance on Reclus's geographical work to validate his point. The French geographer referred to the ideas of *corsi* and *ricorsi* – recurring cycles, or historical ebb and flow – developed by pre-modern Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico (1668-1744). Unlike Ishikawa, Reclus did not dismiss Darwinism. He also held an optimistic belief in the global convergence of values in the very long run, which suggested that European civilization would ultimately leave its mark on the planet. But he was dismissive too of any notion of a universal law of development and preferred to see the history of the earth and its inhabitants as a succession of contrasting and distinct periods, each affected by a multiplicity of both internal and

[58] Reclus, Elisée, *L'homme et la terre (*Man and the earth) (6 vols, Paris, 1905-8), vol. 1, p. IV.
[59] For more on the anarchism-versus-Marxism debate, see Miller, *Anarchism*.

external factors.[60]

For Reclus, the understanding of change according to rhythms, what he calls the 'rhythmic alternation of events', these rhythms themselves continuously mingling and overlapping, then fusing into larger waves, suggests a level of complexity and indetermination that no concept of linearity can capture.[61] Likewise, he talks more readily of 'progresses' in terms of welcome technological advances or knowledge acquisition than absolute 'progress' in its singular form. Ishikawa expresses his agreement with these ideas on many occasions, most clearly with his denunciation of 'progress for its own sake'. But what he has in mind is Japan's modern trajectory, which has produced the Ashio Copper Mine ecological disaster and where Bolshevism competes with the idea of survival of the fittest as the dominant creed of the times.

Reclus's distinctive notion of what geographical practice ought to be also deserves mention. He believed that a continuous investigation of the world and its inhabitants was necessary in order to heighten awareness of man-made antagonisms and prejudices. Geography had to play a moral role, as a science that must study the earth as well as offer suggestions on how to spread its resources in an equitable manner.[62] This view of geography as a means to improve and liberate the human condition in its global aspirations - its 'revolutionary' capacity to modify power relations – was at odds with the utilitarian imperial geography advanced for example by Halford MacKinder (1861-1947), for whom geography was in the first instance a tool to aid statecraft, an instrument for managing and mapping the Empire.[63]

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[60] Reclus, *L'homme et la terre*, vol. 6, p. 502.
[61] Reclus, *L'homme et la terre*, vol. 6, p. 526.
[62] Dunbar, Gary, 'Elisée Reclus, Geographer and Anarchist', *Antipode* (1978) 10-11/3-1, p. 19.
[63] Kearns, Gerry, 'Geography, Geopolitics and Empire', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* (2010) 35-2, pp. 187-203.

Reclus's strong stance against racism and colonialism bucked the trends of the times. Despite some ambiguity, the denunciation of colonial practices and lack of deference for local populations was a recurrent concern from his early work onwards.[64] This represented as much an expression of his increasingly firm anarchist convictions as of his extensive knowledge of, and respect for, different peoples and cultures, much of which he carefully recorded in *Man and the Earth*.

A second message runs powerfully through *Man and the Earth*, that of man's interdependence with, and indebtedness to, the natural environment. From the first pages of the above-mentioned book, Reclus warns, like Ishikawa, of the arrogance of humans who too easily see themselves at the apex of the natural world.[65] He reminds readers that man is not above nature. He is an intrinsic part of it. This concern also corresponds more closely to what scholars see as a Japanese traditional view of nature, where *shizen* (自然) is not thought as the physical environment *per se* subject to human domination, but stands for 'what is spontaneous and/or the primary way of existence of things'.[66] This affinity between Japanese indigenous traditions and the geographer's stance was evident from the outset. In Reclusian logic, humanity and the earth have a common and indivisible history which is governed by bonds of mutual dependence.

The same logic implies that a careful observation of this dynamic of mutuality provides lessons for life in society. As the author points out, some animal species, such as bees, ants, beavers or prairie dogs, offer the example of a social life which may not be inferior to the chaos against which humans struggle constantly.[67] This

[64] Ferretti, Federico, '"They Have the Right to Throw Us Out": Elisée Reclus's *New Universal Geography*', *Antipode* (2013) 45-5, pp. 1337-55; Pelletier, *Géographie et anarchie*.
[65] Reclus, *L'homme et la terre*, vol. 1, p. 13.
[66] Takeuchi, *Modern Japanese Geography*, p. 209. I elaborate on this point further on in this chapter.
[67] Reclus, *L'homme et la terre*, vol. 1, p. 13.

reflects a consideration for the mechanisms of self-management that operate in nature so as to replicate them in society, and of which Reclus was a leading proponent.[68] Ishikawa adhered to this understanding, and his engagement with it illustrates his participation in the competing scientific and cultural framework so crucial amongst anarchists of the period. The recognition that, through science, reality can be explained, and that the chief characteristic of human beings is their position in a natural order, gives an objective basis to anarchism, thereby providing it with a non-utopian rooting in the physical world. [69]

As I explore in the following pages, this notion coalesced amongst like-minded thinkers in Japan in the 1920s and early 1930s, Ishikawa playing a crucial role in its diffusion. His self-published journal *Dinamikku* had a rallying function for the 'emotional community' he nurtured, whose members were attracted by the principles of symbiosis and interdependency at work in the natural world.

INSECTS, BIRDS AND COOPERATION

By 1930, Ishikawa had finished translating the first volume of *Man and the Earth.* He had set up Kyōgakusha, a small publishing outfit and while putting out *Dinamikku*, he was also running a monthly study group on the life and thought of Elisée Reclus. The first meeting was held on 15 March 1930, in commemoration of the hundredth anniversary of the birth of the anarchist-geographer, and gathered twenty-eight

[68] Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible*, p. 341.
[69] Fleming, *The Geography of Freedom*, p. 121.

attendees.[70] Amongst those particularly impressed with the initiative was Nakanishi Godō (1895-1984), a poet, entomologist and renowned ornithologist who expressed his fondness for the natural world through a prolific literary production spanning more than sixty years. Established in Chitose for a while like Ishikawa, Nakanishi also contributed poems and reflections to his friend's periodical.

The two men had similar reservations about the new scientific and social dogmas of their times. In a short poem, Nakanishi urges his fellow humans to seek freedom by breaking the illusory fences of knowledge and reconnecting with each other.[71] By all accounts, he was an unconventional scientist. In 1925, he had retired for a solitary life in natural surroundings, shunning material comforts, living off a raw food diet and immersing himself in the observation of insects and birds. His interest in the morphology and habitat of smaller creatures, from bees and praying mantises to snakes, owls and magpies, grew obsessively. He domesticated common bird species, which lived freely in his garden and accompanied him on walks.[72]

His multiple observations resulted in a 1932 book entitled *Mushi, tori to seikatsu suru* (Living with insects and birds). The venture endeared him further to Ishikawa, who in a long review praises the adoration displayed by Nakanishi for all living organisms and the unfolding poetic drama of vast nature that he conveys to his readers.[73] Intriguingly, Ishikawa sees in his friend a reincarnation of Jean-Henri Fabre (1823-1915), the French entomologist and author of *Souvenirs entomologiques* (Entomological memories), translated into Japanese as *Konchūki* (昆虫記). He notes that Fabre's reputation in his days as a non-academic scientist (変則的な科学者)

[70] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 7, p. 412.
[71] Nakanishi Godō, 'Saku no achira e' (The other side of the fence), *Dinamikku* (Oct. 1931), *Kojinshi*, p. 104.
[72] Nakanishi Godō Tsuisō Bunshū Kankōkai (ed), *Godō tsuioku* (Godō reminiscences) (Tokyo, 1990), pp. 473-9.
[73] Ishikawa Sanshirō, 'Mushi, tori to seikatsu suru' (Living with insects and birds), *Dinamikku* (Sept. 1932), *Kojinshi*, p. 152.

applies to Nakanishi, who expresses similar feelings towards the natural world, although in an even more poetic fashion.[74]

The comparison with Fabre is telling. The *Konchūki* has long aroused fascination in Japan, not least amongst early twentieth-century anarchists. Ōsugi Sakae, as well as Shiina Sonoji, himself a contributor to *Dinamikku,* were amongst its early translators.[75] The text's popularity in Japan is said to exceed that in France, with school textbooks mentioning its author and accomplishments.[76] In any case, although the scientific value of Fabre's entomological studies has been widely recognized, its appeal often stems from what one can extrapolate about human social organization. Literary giants such as Romain Rolland (1866-1944), Maurice Maeterlinck (1862-1949) and Henri Bergson (1859-1941) admired Fabre for the metaphorical quality of his work and found in it inspiration for their own writing on social and political matters.

Ishikawa's interest in the French entomologist was evident too, as the latter provided yet another argument in favour of his non-Darwinian views. Fabre's careful examination of the instinct of bees made him conclude that 'this faculty is perfect of its kind from the outset, otherwise the insect would have no posterity. Time adds nothing to it and takes nothing from it.'[77] For Ishikawa, the notion of an immutable instinct is eloquent enough. Moreover, he wonders whether there would be ground to link it to Quinton's rule of constancy (*jōjū*) that he outlined earlier.[78]

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[74] Ishikawa, 'Mushi, tori to seikatsu suru*', Dinamikku* (Sept. 1932), p. 152.
[75] The popularity of the text in its Japanese translation crossed to China and fueled literary imagination too. See Peng Hsiao-yen, 'A Traveling Text: *Souvenirs entomologiques*, Japanese Anarchism, and Shanghai Neo-Sensationism', *NTU Studies in Language and Literature* (2007) 17, pp. 1-42.
[76] Ōgushi Ryōichi, *Nihon no seitaigaku: imanishi kinji to sono shūhen* (Japan's ecology: Imanishi Kinji and his milieu) (Tokyo, 1992), pp. 61-68.
[77] Fabre, Jean-Henri, *Souvenirs entomologiques,* compiled and translated as 'Bramble-Bees and Others' by Alexander Teixeira de Mattos, chapt. VI (1915) http://www.e-fabre.com/en/virtual_library/bramble-bees/chap06.htm
[78] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū,* vol. 2, p. 384.

The extreme complexity and superior organizational features that reign in the insect world have similarly appealed to anarchists, and Fabre's careful entomological analysis was for them a well-known source of reflection and conjectures.[79] As Ishikawa sees it, insects rely on self-sufficiency and mutual cooperation at a level of sophistication and development rarely matched by humans. Indeed, he writes that 'when observing the collective behaviour of bees and ants, one realizes that these so-called inferior animals have a fine order and spirit operating among themselves'.[80] This conception, which is shared by Nakanishi, echoes Elisée Reclus's reflections on the harmonious complexity of the animal world. It collapses the idea of an ascending ladder of perfection with humans at the top.[81]

The richness of Fabre's entomological descriptions is at times mesmerizing, while his colourful style makes his work greatly accessible. It is no exaggeration to suggest that Nakanishi followed in his steps as the 'Fabre of Japan'. Amongst his various achievements, the Japanese scientist went on to establish in 1934 the Japanese Wild Birds Society (Nihon Yachō Kyōkai) for the promotion of bird watching and ornithological studies. On the occasion, he coined the pronunciation of the compound 野鳥 as *yachō* instead of *nodori*, a usage which persists nowadays. He is further known for his efforts as a precursor of the environmental movement after the war, having contributed to the prohibition of the net hunting of birds and the regulation of other practices damaging to wildlife. He led an indefatigable campaign against industrial damage, a concern he expresses for example in 'Environmental pollution,

[79] On the role of anarchists in the diffusion of Fabre's works, see particularly Konishi, *Anarchist Modernity*, pp. 318-26.
[80] Konishi, *Anarchist Modernity*, p. 322.
[81] Ishikawa is well aware, however, that cruelty is also a feature of the animal world, describing for example the war he observes amongst ant colonies while in France. See *Chosakushū*, vol. 2, p. 424.

nature and ethics'. There, he points to men's blindness to their own actions, which distorts the natural order (*kuruidashita shizen*/狂い出した自然).[82]

The affinity between Nakanishi and Ishikawa went beyond purely scientific matters. In a letter sent to the latter on the eve of overseas travel in the winter of 1933, Nakanishi refers to his work as *kaihō no kagaku* (science of liberation), a likely reference to Ishikawa's own *kaihō no rikigaku (*dynamic of liberation*)*, and the affirmation of a necessary connection between the natural and the social. In fact, he mentions how he owes Ishikawa a breakthrough in the understanding of the morphology of dragonflies. The complex, non-linear pattern of veins that run through the wings reminds him of his friend's vision of ideal social organization as a network of free interlocking entities – what Ishikawa calls *fukushiki mōjōtai* (複式網状体 /system of interrelated networks).[83]

In both cases, the pattern of organization holds no centre, no axial principle but relies on a net-like assemblage of 'cells' that relate to each other in a non-symmetrical, seemingly random fashion. Yet, an internal order is at work. Ishikawa develops his anarchism on this very basis, that social organization should mirror nature's laws (*shizen hōsoku*/自然法則). Thus, his vision starts with 'the infinite variety of phenomena in the limitless universe', encompassing all human, biological and cosmological entities in universal connectedness. Nature is a functioning anarchy in the literal sense of the term, a self-governing network of separate entities, requiring no central authority to control and organize it. When humans forget to follow nature, they lose their sense of freedom and the result is inequality and oppression.

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[82] Nakanishi Godō, 'Kōgai to shizen to rinri' (Environmental pollution, nature and ethics) in Ui (ed), *Yanakamura kara minamata. sanrizuka e* (From Yanaka to Minamata and Sanrizuka) (Tokyo, 1991), pp. 204-21.
[83] Nakanishi Godō, 'Ishikawasan o omiokuri suru' (Seeing off Ishikawa-san), *Dinamikku* (Dec. 1933), *Kojinshi*, p. 210.

The notion of centre-less organization is in itself not difficult to conceptualize. It relies on the negation of a system of convergence into one point, which therefore holds more importance, and ultimately control. Instead, the mental image of such organization suggests a mosaic of intertwined alliances in a constantly changing pattern and non-hierarchical order. One can call it rhizomatic, as Robert Stolz does, referring more specifically to post-modern philosophers Deleuze and Guattari's theory of knowledge.[84] But closer at hand, and certainly familiar to Ishikawa, are also Buddhist cosmological representations, particularly that of the *Kegonkyō* (Avatamsaka sutra) that 'expounds the limitless interconnection of all things'.[85] Thus, what I see here is the shift from religion to science – entomology – in order to legitimate knowledge.

Ishikawa would come back repeatedly to this vision, most clearly in a 1930 text entitled 'Lectures on anarchism' (*museifushugi kōza*), where he outlines the four fundamentals of his thought and contrasts it to Marxist socialism. First, social change relies on spiritual as much as economic and political transformation. Second, in contradistinction to dialectical materialism, anarchism sees historical development as having a static principle as its basis (or constancy). Third, it follows nature's centre-less pattern of interconnectedness. Fourth, human freedom depends on abiding by these natural laws.[86]

This view of nature as supplying a template for the management of human affairs is very similar to what figures such as Reclus and Kropotkin suggested in the context of the nineteenth-century European anarchist movement. But the link to East

[84] Stolz, Robert, *Bad Water: Nature, Pollution and Politics in Japan*, 1870-1950 (Durham, 2014), pp. 120, 147; see also Stolz, 'So You Have Converged – Now What? The Convergence of Critique', *Japanese Studies* (2014) 34-3, p. 317, 9.
[85] Senda Minoru, 'Japan's Traditional View of Nature', in Buttimer and Wallin (eds), *Nature and Identity in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Boston, 1999), p. 58; I also thank John LoBreglio for this precision.
[86] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū,* vol. 5, pp. 387-8.

Asian traditions is evident too. As outlined in my second chapter, Ishikawa's familiarity with the philosophy and activism of Tanaka Shōzō made him well aware of the dangers of thwarting or ignoring the natural order. He expresses this in his own terms in the 1908 essay *Chaotic spirituality,* which he wrote before reading Reclus.[87] Likewise, the European anarchist vision easily resonated with a strand in Tokugawa discourse that sees nature as the primary source of knowledge. Radical thinkers such as Andō Shōeki (1703-1762) and Miura Baien (1723-1789) are seen as its representatives, as well as previously mentioned agrarian reformer Ninomiya Sontoku (1787-1856) who reiterated this equivalence of nature with knowledge.[88]

On another occasion, Ishikawa invokes the Chinese poet Bai Juyi (772-846), who praises the peacefulness of the ideal village of Chu-ch'en.[89] In an early ninth-century text, the poet tells of innocence lost because of the pursuit of knowledge and status, while purity remains within the isolated village community. Awareness of the ways of nature keeps the human mind free. Obsession with rules and etiquette enchains it.[90] Ishikawa likens this to the famous Taoist saying that warns of man's infatuation with 'wisdom' (智慧).[91]

Although one must take into account the various nuances in concepts of nature, there is a common understanding of an infinite life process in the limitless universe in which man is merely one of the myriad phenomena. Like Ninomiya Sontoku, Ishikawa refers to the Buddhist concept of transmigration or reincarnation

[87] See chapter 3.
[88] Tetsuo Najita, *Ordinary Economies in Japan: a Historical Perspective, 1750-1950* (Berkeley, 2009), especially pp. 111-4, 224-5.
[89] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 5, p. 379.
[90] 'Chu-ch'en Village', in Waley, Arthur, *Translations from the Chinese* (New York, 1919), pp. 157-159. The name of the village is here transcribed according to the Wade-Giles system, as in the original translation.
[91] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 5, p. 380.

(*rinne*/輪廻) to give this nature/knowledge equivalence a wider significance. As he explains:

> In Buddhism, there is the word 'reincarnation'. It means that humans and animals are born and reborn as each other. ... The relationships between all objects, humans, and the natural world are all one same thing. In reality, each organism's relationship with another belongs to a net of reciprocal links based on solidarity. Even the smallest life cannot be maintained without being a part of this net of solidarity of the limitless universe.[92]

In describing the complexity and changing character of the human-nature relationship from feudal times to the modern period, Tessa Morris-Suzuki recognizes the weight in pre-industrial Japan of Taoist, Buddhist and Shinto concepts of an all-encompassing nature. Though each of these three religions addresses the issue differently, they make common reference to the absence of a defining barrier between the human self and its surrounding environment or to a nature imbued with a divine spirit.[93] My point here is that Ishikawa's engagement with Reclusian thought corresponds in some measure to a re-exploration of a spectrum of East Asian traditions. And by sharing the former with other concerned intellectuals in Japan, he participated not so much in a simple transfer of knowledge as a re-actualization of these familiar conceptions.

Nakanishi Godō, who shared these convictions, deserves attention for another reason. He was the editor of the magazine '*Anima: yasei kara no koe*' (Anima: voices from the wild), the first issue published in April 1973. Interestingly, the co-editor was Imanishi Kinji (1902-1992), a popular scientist in Japan, also notorious for his refutation of Darwin's principle of natural selection as the motor of change. Originally a biologist, Imanishi did notable entomological research on mayfly larvae and pioneer work in primatology, but he is especially known as the author of *The*

[92] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 5, pp. 392-3.
[93] Morris-Suzuki, Tessa, 'Environmental Problems and Perceptions in Early Industrial Japan', in Elvin and Liu (eds), *Sediments of Time: Environment and Society in Chinese History* (Cambridge, 1998).

World of Living Things (seibutsu no sekai/生物の世界), his first book, published in 1941, which gives deep insights into his 'natural philosophy'. Rather than change premised on competition amongst individuals, he sees the primacy of the species – the group – as a more important factor of evolution. His theory of habitat segregation (*sumiwake*/住み分け) is based on a principle of co-existence. It describes the propensity for different species to adapt to the environment in a non-competitive way by selecting on their own accord, through mutual identification, a particular habitat.[94]

On scientific grounds, Imanishi's claim to counter Darwin's evolutionary theory seems unfounded.[95] In the context of this dissertation, it is relevant, however, that the Japanese scientist saw nature first and foremost as an interconnected world – as he explains, 'not matter, but a living thing … within which we, along with all the other myriad creatures, have always been nourished.'[96] He stresses interdependence and collective behavior, a holistic functioning of the natural world as a harmonious whole with each species having a complementary role in the ecosystem of which man too is an integral part.[97] It is an understanding that Reclus would have endorsed, and one with which Ishikawa, Nakanishi and Fabre amongst others, and even Darwin, concurred.

Although Imanishi himself promoted the view of a split between Western and Eastern views of nature in terms of a 'competition' versus 'co-existence' debate, this was a simplification. The key point is the conscious emphasis on interconnectedness as a natural fact of life and humans' necessary participation in this web of dependency. From Tanaka Shōzō's conception of *doku and nagare* (poison and flow), Ishikawa's

[94] Halstead, Beverly, 'Anti-Darwinian Theory in Japan', *Nature* (1985) 317-17, pp. 587-9; see also Asquith, Pamela, *A Japanese View of Nature* (London, 2002), pp. xxix-xlii.
[95] Halstead, 'Anti-Darwinian Theory', p. 588.
[96] In Asquith, *A Japanese View*, p. 21.
[97] McGrew, William and Matsuzawa, Tetsuro, ' Kinji Imanishi and 60 Years of Japanese Primatology', *Current biology* (2008) 18-14, p. 590.

vision of a *fukushikimōjō soshiki* (net of interlocking entities), to Nakanishi's environmental campaigning and Imanishi's notion of *sumiwake* (habitat segregation), one can identify a common philosophical thread, a mode of thought concerned with man's place in an infinite, centre-less and multifarious nature.

I suggest that Ishikawa acted as a vital conduit in this 'ecological lineage'. He belonged to an intra and inter-generational community of Japanese intellectuals who espoused environmental awareness and cooperative ethics. Ishikawa's role as a guardian of ecological consciousness in modern Japan is significant precisely because he used foreign intellectual trends to support his thought and activism. For him, the affirmation of man's indebtedness to the natural environment was of universal aspiration and at the heart of his project to liberate human agency. The evocation of Reclusian thought acted as an articulating axis in this project.

I argue further that its most enduring impact lay chiefly in the spirit that animated Ishikawa's activism rather than strictly in ideological utterances. The figure of Elisée Reclus, a man of both science and politics, inspired Japan's anarchist activism during the 1920s and beyond, sometimes as an emblem of resistance, often as a model of thought. *Man and the Earth*, with its holistic view on human destiny and concern for the man-nature interaction spurred specific everyday practices. Crucially, Reclus's name encouraged the making of connections and friendships across borders, in other words the making of an 'emotional community'. In that sense, the journal *Dinamikku* had a bonding function amongst like-minded thinkers located in Japan and overseas. As the following pages demonstrate, tracing further the sinews of these connections in the early 1930s brings Hokkaido, a seemingly isolated rural region of the Far East, into the history of global intellectual developments.

READING ELISEE RECLUS IN 1930S' HOKKAIDO

In January 1933, the eighth issue of a mimeographed handwritten poetry magazine called *Hokui Gojūdo* (北緯五十度), appeared near Kushiro, a port city located in the far eastern part of Hokkaido. The first poem, 'Yoru' (Evening), by Watanabe Shigeru, includes the following lines:

> The clock sharply strikes two,
> Its echo softly fades
> The open volume of Elisée Reclus's *Man and the Earth* tells of the origins of humanity,
> But just now I can't concentrate,
> My sick father sleeps, gasping for breath,
> And sweats out his last profuse sweat.[98]

The mention of Elisée Reclus is intriguing. By 1933 he had been dead for more than twenty-five years and was semi-forgotten in official geographical circles. Only by tracing Ishikawa's ties of friendship and activism do we understand how Reclus's name reached a group of poets scraping a living in a remote and unforgiving part of the Far East. But why would an anti-conformist French geographer fire the imaginations of struggling settlers in a territory intended as a model for modern farming techniques and the central government's expansionist policy? In other words, what is the specific power of a text such as *Man and the Earth* that offers multiple meanings at both the local and global levels?

Letters printed here and there in the original issues of *Dinamikku* hold a clue. Taken separately, they attest to the interest triggered by Ishikawa's ideas amongst a number of unconventional personalities. Pieced together like a jigsaw, however, they reveal a set of common aspirations toward an alternative way of life, in the context of which Hokkaido acts as a site of encounters and dissension. Indeed, Japan's northern

[98] Watanabe Shigeru, 'Yoru', *Hokui Gojūdo* (Fifty degrees north latitude) (Kushiro, Jan. 1933), p. 3.

frontier constitutes one of the threads woven into *Dinamikku*'s narrative, as an investigation of *Hokui Gojūdo* (hereafter *Hokui*) makes clear.

The first issue of this thin and roughly made periodical came out in January 1930. Its initiator was the young poet Sarashina Genzō (1904-1985), a native of Teshikagachō, near Kushiro, and who would become after the war a respected scholar of Ainu communities, the indigenous population of Hokkaido. Watanabe Shigeru[99] and Igari Mitsunao (1898-1938), both keen observers of rural life and its people, supported him in his task. *Hokui*'s ambition was to transmit a 'message from the north' to all corners of the country. During its five years of existence, it succeeded in reaching a nationwide, albeit limited readership thanks to the distinctiveness of the literary project and the energy of its editors.[100]

Ishikawa knew Sarashina from the time of the Nōmin Jichikai. In his memoirs, he remembers the poet as a crucial participant in the development of farmers' councils in Hokkaido.[101] Evidently, both men shared a concern for the plight of peasants and the beleaguered status of the countryside. For Sarashina and his friends, the *Hokui* project was the occasion for a tribute to the natural world. More importantly, it provided a platform for the voiceless farming communities of the north. As much as Hokkaido represented an experimental ground for the country's colonial and modernization ambitions, cyclical and structural troubles weighed heavily on its rural population, particularly in the early 1930s.

The abovementioned poem makes clear that in those years life for small-scale farmers was harsh, often punishing. It is tuberculosis that is slowly killing the author's father. Heavy taxes and land fees make paying health bills difficult. The

[99] Dates of birth and death have not been found.
[100] Torii Shōzō, '[Hokui gojūdo] ikō – dansō (Beyond Hokui Gojūdo: fragmentary thoughts), in Hokkaidō Bugakukan (ed) *[Hokui gojūdo] no shijintachi* (The poets of Hokui Gojūdo) (Sapporo, 2000), p. 15.
[101] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 8, p. 444.

palpable sense of misery exuded by the text reflects the prevailing atmosphere of the time. The financial crisis of 1927, followed by worldwide depression after the crash of 1929, had hit the farming sector with full strength. In 1931, prices of agricultural products fell into a downward spiral while general prices kept rising. Urban workers made redundant by the crisis returned to their hometown, thus inflating the rural population. In some cases, acute poverty led farming households to sell their daughters into prostitution.[102] Moreover, the destruction of crops by bad weather was a constant worry during those years, while numerous disputes between tenant farmers and landowners further compounded the instability.[103]

Igari, who became Sarashina's close friend, had moved to Hokkaido from Fukushima prefecture in 1925. He settled in the village of Shitakara, near Teshikagachō, with the intention of working the land as a farmer. His agricultural project would ultimately fail six years later, but not without inspiring some well received poetry.[104] *Ijūmin* (The settlers), a collection he published in 1929, chronicles his impressions of life close to the land. It does not skim over the hardships involved in making a living in Hokkaido's severe conditions. Both Igari and Sarashina, however, were engaged in more than a purely literary account of the farming experience. They belonged to a nationwide network of poets of anarchist inclination, with Takamura Kōtaro (1883-1956), Kusano Shimpei (1903-1988) and Ozaki Kihachi (1892-1974) amongst the better known members.

In other words, the magazine *Hokui* saw itself as a poetic movement in its own right aimed at building a new social order predicated on mutual aid and liberation

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[102] Hirahara Kazuyoshi, 'Shishi no naka no [Hokui gojūdo]' (Hokui gojūdo in poetry's historical context), in *[Hokui gojūdo] no shijintachi*, p.31.
[103] See Hane, Mikiso, *Peasants, Rebels and Outcastes: the Underside of Modern Japan* (New York, 1982), pp. 108-11.
[104] Satō Hisaya, *Igari mitsunao to [Ijūmin]* (Igari Mitsunao and 'The settlers') (Iwaki, 1972), p. 142.

from state's control.[105] Imbued with a sense of 'humaneness' from the north, the thrust of its poems matched Ishikawa's lifelong socio-political preoccupations. Sarashina and Igari's contributions to *Dinamikku* underscore this shared interest.[106] The echoes they offer from Hokkaido mention physical agricultural work, looming poverty and support for Ishikawa's efforts. Nakanishi Godō and Ozaki Kihachi, two men captivated by the study of the natural world but based in Tokyo, also contributed to both *Dinamikku* and *Hokui*, stressing the intimate connection between the two publications and thereby the link between the country's capital and its northern frontier. Nakanishi, who twice visited Hokkaido in later years, discussed with Sarashina the place of birds in Ainu life and myths.[107]

The wording of the poem *'*Yoru*'* suggests that Reclus's *Man and the Earth* constituted familiar reading for its author. Watanabe talks of a book that rests open for repeated consultations while the geographer's name seems to need no explanation to the poem's expected readership. Ishikawa's close ties with *Hokui'*s poets make this assumption valid. It is his translation of *Man and the Earth* that circulated amongst his friends. I argue here that Reclus's text provided them with an inspiring source of reflection on human destiny and responsibility in the context of Hokkaido's modernization project. As geographical thought, it was stripped of obvious references to the radical elements of anarchism, such as anarchist communism and revolutionary tactics. As such, it escaped the radar of official censorship. But in its suggestion of a different connection between man and the natural environment, and its strong message of human brotherhood, it became the object of quiet study as well as changes in the practices of daily life.

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[105] Satō, *Igari mitsunao to [Ijūmin],* pp.123-4.
[106] See for example *Dinamikku* (1 Aug. 1930), *Kojinshi*, p. 50; (1 May 1931), p. 86; (1 Oct. 1933), p. 203.
[107] Takahagi Itaru, 'Hokkaido to nakanishi godō no koto nado' (About Hokkaido and Nakanishi Godō), *Kakkō* (カッコウ) (Jan. 2008), at http://homepage3.nifty.com/sapporo-wbsj/essay/essay0801.html.

Man and the Earth is a classic example of a 'travelling text' that reaches unlikely places and unexpected readers in foreign lands because it is transported through unconventional routes.[108] Unlike a text read for example in the institutional framework of university education, it does not become the object of a canonical interpretation on which readers rely. Through the travelling process, some of its values are lost, others transformed, and new ones added. Its interpretation is left to individual understanding or intellectual exchanges within small groups - who re-appropriate it for their own ends - and depends on the socio-cultural context in which it circulates. A re-transmission through a medium such as poetry or actualization by living practices reinforces and extends its accepted meanings.

The text appears especially potent in view of Hokkaido's status as Japan's first colonial outpost and site of experimentation in modern agricultural techniques. The place of Hokkaido in the history of Japan has attracted the interest of a number of historians. They have traced the transformation of the territory from its pre-modern tributary relations to the mainland into a fully-fledged province of the nation-state in the modern era.[109] The underlying thread in their accounts remains the gradual realization amongst Japan's rulers and ordinary citizens alike of the huge potential offered by the island. But precisely because it was considered as a site of new endeavours, it also held the possibilities for self-realization and subversion.

Reclus's social outlook contrasted with the bias for physical geography adopted by the Meiji administration after the Restoration of 1868, and its emphasis on

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[108] For another example of a 'travelling text' in the East Asian context, see Peng, 'A Traveling Text: *Souvenirs entomologiques*'.

[109] See in particular Howell, David, *Capitalism from Within: Economy, Society, and the State in a Japanese Fishery* (Berkeley, 1995); Mason, Michele, *Dominant Narratives of Colonial Hokkaido and Imperial Japan: Envisioning the Periphery and the Modern Nation-State* (New York, 2012); Morris-Suzuki, Tessa, 'Creating the Frontier: Border, Identity and History in Japan's Far North', *East Asian History* (1994) 7, pp. 1-24; Siddle, Richard, *Race, Resistance and the Ainu of Japan* (London, 1996); Walker, Brett, *The Conquest of Ainu Lands: Ecology and Culture in Japanese Expansion, 1590-1800* (Berkeley, 2001).

producing a chartable and measurable space for the development of a modern nation.[110] The incorporation of Hokkaidō as Japanese territory in 1869 had been the first step in the consolidation of the country as a nation-state and imperialist power. The Meiji project aimed to subdue both the natural environment and its people, the native Ainu population, in the name of modernization.

The grand plan for Hokkaido was the development of the quasi-virgin island into a vast agricultural area that would not only provide food for Japan's growing population but also an experimental terrain for scientific and rationalized, meaning Western, farming techniques. Compared to the impoverished and frequently distressed region of Tohoku in the north of Japan's main island, with its traditional modes of farming and landscape replete with natural obstacles, Hokkaido held the promises of modernity and large scale production. The spread of Western farming methods, in a standardized and homogenous way, characterized the management of the northern frontier and shaped the experience of settlers.

What readers of Reclusian geography questioned was precisely the narrative of progress and modernity that undergirded the development of the island. They countered it with contrasting accounts of farmers stricken by indigence, confronted by uninviting weather conditions and burdened by demands made to settlers by administrative authorities. As we shall see, some of them expressed opposition by adopting daily life practices that ran against the premises of modern statehood. Ambiguously, they did not make explicit mention of the paradox of rejecting relations of power and hierarchy while taking advantage of the benefits offered to settlers by Hokkaido's colonial enterprise. But their quiet dissenting tactics conveyed a spirit of resistance of which Elisée Reclus had become a compelling emblem.

[110] Takeuchi, *Modern Japanese Geography*, p. 87.

THE PRACTICE OF RECLUSIAN GEOGRAPHY

The first volume of *Man and the Earth* abundantly illustrates the French geographer's interest in the history and customs of different peoples over the ages. This approach constitutes the basis for the practice of a 'moral' geography. Undaunted by the racially inclined language of his era, his writings convey a profound respect for primitive cultures. The way the earth's early tribes learned to cope with their environment – from Greenland's Kalaallit people to indigenous tribes along the Orinoco River - occupies much of the book translated by Ishikawa. The 'origins of humanity' mentioned in *Hokui*'s poem give a hint about the book's content.

Sarashina Genzō's involvement with, and profound appreciation of, the culture and way of life of the Ainu corresponded with the Reclusian concern for indigenous peoples. His work with Ainu communities as a primary school teacher in a *kotan* (village) reflected an affinity with Reclus's ideas. Sarashina grew immensely fond of the natives with whom he engaged. He observed and recorded their customs, even adopting for himself some traditional hunting practices. In an insightful cultural history of Hokkaido, Michele Mason notes that an overwhelmingly large body of literature ignores the existence of the Ainu while detailing the hardships of Japanese colonists' lives.[111] Sarashina's work appears as one of the few exceptions to that rule.

In 'Fubuki no kotan' (吹雪の古譚/The snow-stormed village), a 1930 poem, he describes the life of these 'primitive dwellers' (*genchi na jūmindomo*) of the land and the sorry fate that besets them. The tone is compassionate, but lucid at the same time. As he writes, it is not only the snow that makes up their destiny. The blood of a sacrificed bear stains the landscape in red because of ingrained superstitions. Words

[111] Mason, Michele, *Dominant Narratives of Colonial Hokkaido and Imperial Japan,* p. 11.

in Ainu language punctuate the text.[112] The Japanese poet would devote the rest of his life to cataloguing and analyzing Ainu tales, myths, music, customs, and other cultural features that make up their world. The voluminous literary production he generated over the years attests to his dedication. Watanabe Shigeru, his friend from the *Hokui* days, co-edited some of the work.

In the early 1930s, however, Sarashina's resolute engagement with the Ainu population ran counter to the state's homogenization drive. Earmarked for 'assimilation' by Meiji administrators, the Ainu were by then a clear example of denied ethnic identity. A series of measures concurred to eradicate the distinctiveness of their culture. They had been stripped of customary land rights and forcibly removed from the *kotan (*village*).* Forbidden to speak their language, to conduct traditional rituals and customs, and to engage in private hunting and fishing practices, they were 'civilized' by fiat and co-opted as subjects of the Japanese empire.[113] By including Ainu words and traditions in his poems, or adopting the natives' food gathering methods, Sarashina expressed resistance to the official project of imposing order and obedience within the northern territory.

Sarashina's respect for Ainu culture also highlights the power of the convictions of non-hierarchy in the human realm that pervaded the anarchist-inclined community to which he belonged. The stand taken by Ishikawa and his friends contrasted with the ingrained precepts of racial discrimination constantly re-affirmed around them. It had constituted a core ideological principle since the time of the Russo-Japanese War and was once again put to the test in Hokkaido. The

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[112] Sarashina Genzō, *Taneimo* (Seed potatoes) (Kushiro, 1930), p. 9, at http://www.hokkaido.doyu.jp/kushiro/sarashina/00.htm.

[113] Mason, *Dominant Narratives,* pp. 9-11, 68-9. See also Howell, David, 'Ainu Ethnicity and the Boundaries of the Early Modern Japanese State', *Past and Present*, (1994) 142-1, pp. 69-93; Howell, David, 'Making "Useful Citizens" of Ainu Subjects in Early Twentieth-Century Japan', *The Journal of Asian Studies* (2004) 63-1, pp. 5-29; Siddle, Richard, *Race, Resistance and the Ainu of Japan*.

participation of Reclusian thought in reinforcing these convictions is a clear indicator not only of their universal aspiration but also of the role of transnational links and transfer of knowledge in their actualization.

Inevitably, however, Sarashina fell under the surveillance of the state's censors, which led to his dismissal from his job as a teacher in an Ainu school in 1931. As he writes then to Ishikawa, 'I have been sacked on the grounds that I am a dangerous character (*kiken jinbutsu*). I was happy that the forty yen chain tied to my neck finally came undone. But I found very hard the separation from the *kotan* children.' He then announces his plans to move north with his friend Igari and live off land cultivation and livestock breeding.[114] The effort involved during these years of economic crisis proved numbing. It was bringing no money and no relief, and the physical work was just exhausting. But, to him, it was the plight of those who thought alike, that of their *nakama* (仲間) or 'emotional community', which linked him to Ishikawa.[115]

The very existence of a network of similarly inclined individuals – the 'kindred spirits (同志達) mentioned in *Dinamikku* by its editor - gave meaning to the pursuit of an everyday life consciously at odds with the prescriptions of the modern state. As a vital node in this loose network, Ishikawa contributed to keep Reclus's geographical thought alive as an inspiration for a competing mode of participation in the world. Letters in French, English, Japanese and Chinese I discovered in different archival collections show that the group was most active during the decade preceding Japan's de facto invasion of China in 1937. I show here that Ishikawa's personal connection with another farmer-poet, Hasegawa Kōji (1898-1975), further identifies

[114] Sarashina Genzō, 'Hankyō' (Echoes), *Dinamikku* (1 Dec. 1931), *Koshinji*, p. 113.
[115] Sarashina Genzō, 'Hanamuke no kotoba' (Words of farewell), *Dinamikku* (1 Oct. 1933), *Koshinji*, p. 203.

Hokkaido as a privileged site of transnational knowledge exchange and resistance to the homogenization drive of the modern state.

Records indicate that on 11 October 1927, Hasegawa, then living in Tokyo, sent a letter to Joseph Ishill, a Romanian emigrant to New Jersey, independent publisher and one of Reclus's biographers. Hasegawa was in the process of starting a new life, resettling in Japan's northern territory as the Tokyo earthquake of 1923 had wiped out his cabinet-making business. He had a very specific query, writing to his correspondent in English:

> In Japan, we young (converted) farmers are desiring ardently to study the teachings of Elisée Reclus. I should like to know everything about him, but I'm so sorry I can't read French. Please be so kind as to write to me about your book on E. Reclus and others (biographies, translations, studies, etc.) in English or German, if any.'[116]

Ishill duly acknowledged reception of the letter. To Ishikawa, an epistolary friend he knew through Edward Carpenter and with whom he maintained contact over the years, he writes not long after: 'I am glad that my work is of significance (for those by) whom our ideals and ideas are so sincerely interpreted'.[117]

In line with Ishill's hopes, Hasegawa had in mind a specific way of life for his move to Hokkaido, one that fully recognized the bond between man and his natural surroundings and that made scholars later bestow on him the sobriquet of the 'Henry Thoreau of Japan'.[118] Taking advantage of the land grants allocated by the government, he settled with his family in the midst of wilderness and made his living from the soil. He chose a plot of land near the village of Tsurui in the Kushiro area and built a house that was surrounded by marshes and rare wild cranes. He called his

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[116] *Joseph Ishill Papers* (Harvard, Houghton Library), N. 67, Hasegawa to Ishill (11 Oct. 1927).
[117] *Ishikawa Sanshirō Papers* (Honjō), foreign correspondence, N. 24: Ishill to Ishikawa (2 Jan. 1928).
[118] Itō Shigeyuki, Fumio Ōki and Atsuzo Mori, *Kushiro shitsugen no hasegawa kōji: nihon no sorō* (Kushiro marsh's Hasegawa Kōji: the Thoreau of Japan) (Tokyo, 2012).

abode *Chiruwatsunai*, from the Ainu name of the nearby river. Observation of the elegant birds in their natural setting formed part of his project. After a few years, Hasegawa had achieved a completely self-sustaining autonomous lifestyle for himself and his family. Unlike Thoreau, he remained there for the rest of his life. [119]

Despite physical isolation, a situation compounded by the long and harsh winters, Hasegawa remained in touch with a variety of people and the intellectual trends that inspired his project. He welcomed Ishikawa to his farm on more than one occasion, his friend visiting him from Tokyo in the summer of 1933 together with Jacques Reclus, Elisée's grandnephew.[120] An avid reader, Hasegawa was already familiar with the work of William Morris (1834-1896), having written a graduation thesis about the English social activist and author.[121] He accumulated in his library a wide range of foreign books, which included works by sympathetic thinkers such as Walt Whitman (1819-1892), Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), Henry Thoreau (1817-1862) and Edward Carpenter (1844-1929). From Ishikawa, who had worked tirelessly on the translation from the French of *Man and the Earth*, he received a dedicated copy of the book in the summer of 1930.

Interestingly, the only bookmark inserted in this translation rests on a passage related to 'imitation and mutual aid'.[122] There, Reclus criticizes the simplistic understanding of Darwinian thought by those like Thomas Huxley who consider the principle of 'struggle for life' as single-handedly governing evolution. He reminds his readers that Darwin's *Descent of Man* also stresses the existence of an animal and

[119] Itō Shigeyuki, *Kushiro shitsugen no seijin hasegawa kōji* (Hasegawa Kōji, the saint of Kushiro marsh) (Tokyo 2005).
[120] Hasegawa Kōji, 'Hanamuke no kotoba' (Words of farewell), *Dinamikku* (1 Oct. 1933), *Kojinshi*, p. 203; *Ishikawa Sanshirō Papers* (Honjō), foreign correspondence, N. 35, J. Reclus to Ishikawa (15 July 1933). A letter of 19 Feb. 1935 indicates Jacques visited Japan again that year.
[121] The thesis got burned in the earthquake and Hasegawa never graduated. See Itō et al, *Kushiro shitsugen no hasegawa kōji,* p. 62.
[122] Hasegawa's books are kept with the *Kōji Hasegawa Papers*, Tsurui Village Information Centre 'Minakuru', Hokkaido.

human social instinct for mutual aid and sympathy. He also elaborates on one aspect of cooperation, i.e. the ability of living organisms to learn, whether consciously or not, from patterns of behaviour that exist within or outside their own species. Reclus's affirmation that the life of birds has multiple lessons for humans could only stir Hasegawa's interest.[123]

Hasegawa was acquainted with Sarashina and his friends, and stood firm like them against the ideological premises of his era.[124] In the general context of entrenched beliefs in ethnic discrimination, he refused to go along with the prevalent attitude of exploiting Korean workers. He ensured they were paid decent wages when in his care. After Japan's annexation of Korea in 1910, many Koreans toiled in their rulers' country under exploitative conditions. Typically, they were expected to perform farming work without receiving wages, being only guaranteed nourishment for their efforts.[125]

In the spirit of Reclusian philosophy, Hasegawa also recognized man's deep indebtedness to his natural surroundings. Not only did the young farmer resolve to learn from his observation of the cranes' living habits, he was also interested in methods of cultivation and raising livestock that could be more harmoniously integrated into the natural order. He derided the inspection of crops and livestock performed by officials of the Hokkaido Agency, successor of the Kaitakushi, which oversaw the choice of cultures and proportion of livestock to cultivation. In his judgement, official farming rules were ill-suited to his environment, so he planned a switch to his own farming management techniques once the ten-year compulsory

[123] Reclus, *L'homme et la terre*, vol. 1, pp. 132-6.
[124] Itō et. al, *Kushiro shitsugen no hasegawa kōji*, p. 127. Hasegawa never claimed to be an anarchist, but he was certainly in tune with what Nathan Jun calls 'anarchistic ideas'. See 'Rethinking the anarchist canon: history, philosophy and interpretation', *Anarchist Developments in Cultural Studies* (2013) 1, pp. 82-116.
[125] Itō, *Kushiro shitsugen no seijin*, p. 34.

inspection period over.[126] Igari Mitsunao likewise criticizes in *Ijūmin* the emphasis on rigid agricultural and farming rules devised by central authorities that fall foul of nature's demands and put undue pressure on settlers.[127]

As a regular contributor to *Dinamikku*, Hasegawa reports on crop failures due to bad weather and new developments on the farm. Over the years, however, he would reach a level of food self-sufficiency and independence from administrative interference that ultimately became the envy of visitors during the lean years of the war.[128] He also expresses his allegiance to the *nakama* to which Ishikawa devotes so much energy. He remarks that the craze for Marxism sprouts everywhere and that his friend's work is an essential bulwark, a reminder that human destiny rests on mutual cooperation.[129] To Ishikawa, the house nestling in this primitive mountain forest represents realized utopia (*risōkyō*). Indeed, contrary to his original plans to acquire more land over time, Hasegawa appreciated after ten years that the present arrangement was in accord not only with the natural environment but also individual freedom. He was not prepared to compromise it.[130]

On the one hand, these Hokkaido settlers followed the state's lead in making the northern frontier a site of cultivation and self-sufficiency. But I suggest here that the manner of their engagement in farming also expressed over the years a form of civil disobedience. Increasingly, they refused to fit into the schemes created by the nation's modern planners. Without directly confronting the official project, they opposed the imposition a fixed grid of understanding on human experiences, what James Scott calls the legibility of the modern state. The creation of a space that is not

[126] Itō et. al, *Kushiro shitsugen no hasegawa kōji*, pp. 130-131.
[127] Satō, *Igari mitsunao*, p. 132.
[128] Itō et. al, *Kushiro shitsugen no hasegawa kōji,* p. 16.
[129] Hasegawa Kōji, 'Enkin no tomo yori' (From friends far and close), *Dinamikku* (1 Oct. 1930), *Kojinshi,* p. 57.
[130] Itō et al, *Kushiro shitsugen no hasegawa kōji,* p. 63.

controlled by the state is thus in Scott's view akin to an act of desertion.[131] In that sense, Hasegawa, Sarashina and their friends were seditious in stressing autonomy, racial equality and symbiosis with nature.[132] In Ishikawa's terms, they were true *domin.*

But as geopolitical tensions rose and Japan engaged in full-fledged war, self-sufficiency implemented in a concerted way became one of the few possible positive acts of dissent. The refusal to abide by the state's organizational scheme also meant a rejection of Hokkaido as a showcase for the country's colonial project. Likewise it rejected global power politics as the means to achieve a hierarchical arrangement between competing nations. Ishikawa, whose self-published periodical had been censored when he condemned his country's occupation of Manchuria in 1931, knew the futility of open protest. His pursuit of self-sufficiency led him to withdraw entirely from the state-controlled food distribution scheme during the war.[133]

Like Hasegawa, Sarashina and others - and like Tanaka Shōzō long before them - Ishikawa 'claimed' space to implement social transformation through daily life practices. His actions, however, only drew meaning from the existence of a network of supporters. In 1927, the year he settled outside Tokyo to cultivate a piece of land, he wrote: 'I work to live by my own means. But I can't do it alone. I need allies and so we work together in this. This is my social movement'.[134] Together with the Hokkaido settlers, he used tactics of quiet disobedience to mark his dedication to a different model of socio-political organization, one premised on everyday practices.

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[131] Scott, James, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, 1998).
[132] For another example of Hokkaido as the locus of liberation from the state's organizational scheme, see Konishi, Sho, 'Ordinary Farmers Living Anarchist Time: Arishima Cooperative Farm in Hokkaido, 1922-1935', *Modern Asian Studies*, (2013) 47-6, pp. 1845-87.
[133] Ishikawa Sanshirō, *Ishikawa sanshirō shokanshū* (Collected letters of Ishikawa Sanshirō), Karasawa (ed) (Tokyo, 1957), p. 71.
[134] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 3, p. 22.

The harsh realities of farm labour, however, tended in some cases to clash with the idealized conception of a 'return to the land' that could ensure autonomy. In his memoirs, Ishikawa admits to a great deal of failure in his own practical attempts to lead a life fully as a *domin*. But this, he says, does not negate the fundamentals of his thought, of which he can see the influence seeping into the world.[135] Indeed, he was always keen to rally others to his cause. Kimura Sōta (1889-1950), also a contributor to *Dinamikku*, had for a while participated in Mushanokōji's communal experiment in Kyūshū. He settled after the 1923 Tokyo earthquake in what is now Narita in Chiba Prefecture to lead a life of *seikō udoku* (晴耕雨読), or 'cultivation when it shines and study when it rains'. His 1933 book, *Nō ni ikiru* (農に生きる/Living off farming) attracts the praise of Ishikawa who characterizes his friend's venture as 'true *domin seikatsu'*.[136] Kimura himself was less sanguine about his experience, as he weighed against the satisfaction of self-reliance the exhaustion incurred by agricultural labour and the myriad uncertainties about the peasant condition.[137]

Eto Tekirei, another acquaintance from the Nōmin Jichikai period, conveyed similar misgivings about working in the fields.[138] In theoretical terms, he was undoubtedly a member of Ishikawa's *nakama*, extolling the virtues of agricultural labour and supplying with his concept of *kashoku nōjō* (家稷農乗) a spiritual dimension to humans' engagement with the soil. From an intellectual standpoint, he claimed lineage with men such as Andō Shōeki, Tanaka Shōzō, Ninomiya Sontoku and Satō Nobuhiro (1769-1850), whom he praised as Japan's foremost agrarian

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[135] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 8, p. 521.
[136] Ishikawa Sanshirō, 'Shinkansho shōkai' (Introduction to newly published books), *Dinamikku* (1 July 1933), *Kojinshi*, p. 192.
[137] Sakamoto Tetsurō, 'Kindai shōsetsu ni kakareta bōsō – kinō shita bunjin: kimura sōta to tōyamamura' (The Bōsō region in modern novels – A man of letters who returned to the land: Kimura Sōta and Tōyamamura) (1964), at http://mitizane.ll.chiba-u.jp/metadb/up/nichibun/Gobun_05_sakamoto.pdf
[138] See previous chapter.

thinkers. But environmental historian Nishimura Shun-ichi alleges that in practical terms, he delegated much of the manual work he celebrated to his children, imposing on them a hierarchical pressure that the likes of Andō and Tanaka would not have condoned.[139]

THE *DOMIN* AS ECOLOGICAL GUARDIAN

What I want to underscore here is the ultimate relevance of the concept of *domin seikatsu* to an ecological critique. Despite the difficulties of putting it into practice at an individual level, the life of the *domin* – or rootedness – is for Ishikawa the only viable means as a human to fulfil one's destiny on earth, a destiny inescapably linked to the complex web of dependency that makes up the natural world. By confirming the relative standing of man, whose existence is no more than a glimmer in an infinite expanse of time and space, the evocation of Reclusian geography lends credence and universality to this conviction.

But the status of *domin* matters above all because he (or she) incarnates resistance to domination, seeking to reproduce in its place relations of non-hierarchy *towards* and *within* nature, since he/she is an intrinsic part of it. Rootedness is the condition of possibility for cooperation and solidarity, and thus of ecological consciousness. It is what the *domin* chooses in order to replicate *ad infinitum* in the social sphere a continuously changeable network of interlocking alliances and bonds

[139] Nishimura Shun-ichi, *Nihon ekologizumu no keifu* (Japan's ecological lineage) (Tokyo, 1992), pp. 170-5.

of connectedness. Furthermore, as indicated in its name, *domin seikatsu*, or 'democracy' according to Ishikawa's translation, locates resistance and agency in the everyday. Contrary to the negative concept of 'everydayness' proposed by Henri Lefebvre, it sees empowerment in daily life practices.

If Ishikawa rejects the notion of an exploitable material nature, he also avoids imbuing the natural world with an abstract aesthetic or spiritual quality that would separate it from the reality of human life and therefore pave the way for dangerous ideological slides, such as popular agrarianism. Rather, he recognizes an irrevocable bond between man and nature, which supposes a constant and concrete commitment. In other words, ecological awareness stems from the understanding of man as part of an all-encompassing nature, while the ability of man to choose how to relate to nature and to his fellow humans lies in the everyday. This ecology of the everyday underscores the inevitable conflation between the natural and the social.

Where Ishikawa singularizes this conception of anarchist ecology is by asserting that the preservation – or memory - of this form of engagement with the natural world can be found in agricultural work. Even though he specifies that a *domin* is not necessarily a *nōmin* (farmer), the latter holds a privileged position for the appreciation of the essence of human's place in vast nature.[140] Ishikawa also expressly associates *domin seikatsu* with the cyclical return of day and night due to the earth's rotation and of the four seasons due to its revolution.[141] It refers thus to the temporality that regulates agricultural work, the realm of lived experience, which is detached from, even immune to, linear time perception.

[140] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 3, p. 220.
[141] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 2, p. 318.

In this dissertation, I have traced the various expressions of Ishikawa's interest in peasant communities, from his empathy for their class at the turn of the century to his own involvement in farmers' activism and work with the soil during the 1920s. This interest, however, reached a climax during the few years that preceded the Second World War and coincided with his quest to find the true *domin*. For that, he increasingly turned toward China, where his travels took him on two occasions. In August 1927, he made his way to Shanghai to teach at the National Labour University, which had just opened in the city. Historians Ming Chan and Arif Dirlik describe it as a promising educational experiment that combined labour and learning. It aimed at creating a new kind of individual and rested on a radical anarchist social vision, which, despite the university's short lifespan of five years, 'carried far greater weight with contemporaries than it has with historians.'[142]

One must see in Ishikawa's connection to the National Labour University the willingness to explore the meaning of the *domin* further. The manual work offered by the University, whether in farming or factory tasks, sought to associate students as closely as possible with the raw forces of production that sustain daily life. Ishikawa's participation represented a manifesto against man-made dualisms, in this case the separation between physical and mental work, or between nature and culture. Thus, he travelled under a pseudonym in order to escape police surveillance and lectured in Shanghai for a month about the history of the European social movement. Anarchists Yamaga Taiji (1892-1970) and Iwasa Sakutarō (1879-1967) joined him as lecturers on Esperanto and the French Revolution respectively.[143] In his memoirs, Ishikawa observes that his audience grew as days went by.[144] He also remarks on the

[142] Chan, Ming and Dirlik, Arif, *Schools into Fields and Factories* (Durham and London, 1991), p. 2.
[143] Yonehara Ken, 'Furansujin anakisuto no chūgoku nijūgonen' (Twenty-five years of a French anarchist in China), *Handai Hōgaku* (1997) 47-2, p. 272.
[144] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 8, p. 448.

warm reunion with famed anarchist Li Shizeng (1881-1973), himself a close friend of the family of Elisée Reclus and by then an influential thinker within Chinese political circles.[145]

Ishikawa's second sojourn in China, between October 1933 and January 1934, although unplanned, sealed his search for the true *domin*. He had originally intended to return to Europe via China. But once in China, he abruptly decides to remain there in order to devote his time to the study of East Asian history, particularly that of the life of ancient Chinese communities. Accounts he published in the *Asahi* and *Miyako* Newspapers chronicle with dismay the corruption, decadence, entangled politics and growing Japanese military presence of the period. To this pessimistic outlook, however, he juxtaposes the explanatory power of Chinese culture for the understanding of *domin seikatsu*. As he recalls:

> During this short stay of three months, I discovered a world of immense and singular wonder. That is, an unusual social life, which is the repository of true, deeply rooted *domin seikatsu* (democracy) and of which the seeds have remained healthy until now. What appeared like a lightning bolt in front of my eyes was the foundation of Chinese culture, something found in the vast and limitless yellow soil (黄土) as the source of a fertile productivity that has lasted for thousands of years.[146]

From the 1930s onward, he becomes engrossed with the task of researching and analyzing Eastern historical and civilizational developments. In doing so, he keeps at heart the need for a geographical outlook. Accompanied by Jacques Reclus on a 1933 climbing expedition of Mount Tai, one of China's 'Five great mountains' in what is now Shandong province, he muses about methods of riparian works which made mulberry culture successful. For him, Mount Tai stands above the fields and villages that humans' closeness to nature has kept fertile since the country's founding

[145] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 8, p. 449.
[146] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 8, p. 524.

dynasty.[147] Once again, flood control symbolizes the possibilities of a balanced man-nature interaction.

Relating to the myth of *kōdo* (后土), the ancient goddess of the earth, he finds in the common people who worshipped her four thousand years earlier the incarnation of the *domin.* For him, they were able to live unperturbed by hierarchical authority because of their attachment to the land. As he claims, 'what supported the spirit of ancient Chinese peoples (民衆) was not heaven (天) but earth (地).'[148] That is to say, they chose to give allegiance, not to a superior power, but to the soil under their feet. In that sense, the potential for liberation from outside control is primarily located where man tills the land, in other words in agrarian communities.

Ishikawa's interest in East Asian history at a time of rising pan-Asianist discourse in Japanese intellectual circles may appear as his own version of the dominant trend. Though he is aware of this possible critique, his actions nevertheless reveal some ambiguity. While condemning the Japanese interference in Chinese affairs throughout the decade and, later, the war, he also maintains a friendship with Wang Jingwei (1883-1944), the Kuomintang leader who favoured collaboration with Japan, whom he meets a last time in Nanjing in March 1941.[149] That fact alone could stir some questioning about Ishikawa's ideological stance.

The liberation he envisages, however, is one based not on domination but on the creation of bonds of solidarity, the kind he traces with awe in the history of the vast plains of the 'yellow soil'.[150] In that context, the diffusion of Reclusian geography remains an important task. By the mid-1930s, he is considering a partnership with Cultural Life Publishing (文化生活出版社), a Shanghai-based outfit

[147] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 8, p. 514.
[148] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 8, p. 525.
[149] For a recent description of Wang Jingwei's role in the Sino-Japanese conflict, see Mitter, Rana, *China's War with Japan, 1937-1945* (London, 2013).
[150] Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, vol. 3, p. 427-8.

specializing in the translation of foreign books. That the publisher's name includes the compound *seikatsu*, or daily life, indicates how much that very concept lay at the core of anarchist activism at the time.

According to correspondence with Ishikawa, the publisher has planned a twenty-four volume translation of *Man and the Earth*, with a first volume already at the printing stage, but wants to add some information about China and Japan. Li Shizeng is behind the initiative and Ishikawa is asked to render the translation more accessible to a Chinese audience. The letter also mentions the translation into Chinese of Ishikawa's own *History of the Western Social Movement*, requesting a preface by its author.[151] It seems, however, that the heightening of hostilities between the two countries in July 1937, namely the Marco Polo Bridge incident leading to the second Sino-Japanese War, put an end to his contribution to the Chinese edition of *Man and the Earth*.[152]

In 1941, Ishikawa publishes a collection of essays in which he denounces once more his government's irresponsible actions towards its neighbour. He warns that only a study of its people's relationship to their vast natural surroundings over the course of centuries will help solve the present political impasse.[153] What he is offering is an extension of *Man and the Earth* with a new focus on the East. Spending the war years in relative isolation and self-sufficiency living, Ishikawa went even deeper into the theoretical and practical exploration of his mantra, *domin seikatsu* or 'democracy'.

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[151] *Ishikawa Sanshirō Papers* (Honjō), general correspondence, N.577, Wu Chan-shang to Ishikawa (5 Apr. 193?.) The year is unclear, but could be 1933 or 34 because of a reference to Ishikawa's visit to China six years earlier, possibly in 1927.
[152] Ishikawa, Sanshirō 'Shina no chiyūtachi' (My close Chinese friends), *Toki no jigazō* (Time's self-portrait) (Tokyo, 1941), p. 19.
[153] Ishikawa, 'My close Chinese friends', pp. 21-3.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

The chaos and devastation brought by the Pacific War within and outside Japan's borders confirmed Ishikawa's darkest forebodings. His government's geopolitical scheming during World War I had evolved into a reckless and bellicose form of imperialism. Simultaneously, Bolshevism had betrayed all hopes of proletarian emancipation and turned into an authoritarian behemoth. As a form of resistance to what he perceived as the ideological folly of his times, Ishikawa's retreat into self-sufficient living was mostly symbolic. But it was nonetheless a potent symbol, a beacon of steadfastness and ethical consistency against a background of ubiquitous pro-war propaganda, the fickle political allegiances of many contemporaries, and the most basic denial of the 'humaneness' he had been advocating for so many years.

During the war years and beyond, he remained an anchor point for the loose network of kindred spirits, the 'emotional community', he had developed and a guardian of the realm of connectedness to which they all adhered. In a 1941 letter, the writer Murakami Nobuhiko (1909-1981) tells him that, pressured by poverty to sell his books a few years earlier, he had kept on his shelves only some works by Dostoevsky and Ishikawa's account of his years of exile.[1] This is proof at least that the Japanese anarchist's aura of moral fortitude offered comfort in the most testing of times. After the war, Tsukihiji Chūsuke, a companion during the late Meiji

[1] *Ishikawa Sanshirō Papers* (Honjō), Correspondence, N. 645, Murakami to Ishikawa (8 Oct. 1941).

revolutionary struggle, would reaffirm the commonality of this same feeling of humaneness – this time described in terms of *ningensei* (人間性) and *jinkaku* (人格). In his view, Ishikawa was the home grown equivalent of Edward Carpenter, Peter Kropotkin and Elisée Reclus.[2]

There is no doubt that as a dissenting journalist, traveller, activist, connector of people and ideas, and original thinker, Ishikawa left a mark on his contemporaries, especially those searching for an alternative to mainstream politics. This dissertation has shown, moreover, that as a subject of historical inquiry, Ishikawa helps to enhance our understanding of the four decades during which he was a key protagonist in Japan's intellectual landscape. His participation in a range of socio-political causes, from anti-pollution and non-war campaigns to farmers' liberation and gender equality, suggests the existence of a conceptual nexus of seemingly unconnected phenomena. Used as a kind of magnifying glass to observe the unfolding of historical events in the early twentieth century, Ishikawa's individual journey often reveals aspects of his times that historians had previously neglected.

My investigation of radical activism during the late Meiji period illustrates the limits of relying on conventional ideological categories to describe the flow of ideas and events. The historiography of the period has made much of Christian socialism inspired by a Western charitable ethos and directed towards the urban proletariat. To that, I juxtapose Ishikawa's focus on the plight of the peasantry as an equally valid expression of Eastern, Buddhist conceptions of empathy and social change. His attention to rural issues was born out of pragmatism, since it addressed concerns for communities that at the time still accounted for the majority of the population. My

[2] *Ishikawa Sanshirō Papers* (Honjō), Correspondence, N. 424, Tsukihiji to Ishikawa (21 Sep. 1954).

work highlights the fact that the historiography of modern Japan must consider 'socialism for the countryside' in the early 1900s as a relevant dissenting force.

I also uncover a natural linkage between a specific strand of anarchism and agrarian-based thought. The recognition of this linkage should catalyze a re-evaluation of the meaning of *nōhonshugi*, or popular agrarianism. Ishikawa's participation in the farmers' liberation movement in the mid 1920s operated at the junction of conflicting intellectual currents. His model ultimately stood firm against ideological backsliding, giving at the same time a new impetus to the kind of non-violent anarchism he espoused. His ambition of spreading self-reliance and cultural independence amongst farmers was part of a larger vision of socio-political organization, which combined cooperative ethics, de-centralization, respect for freedom and ecological sensitivity.

The transnational dimension I have explored here also nuances historiographical assumptions of a unidirectional transmission of ideas from West to East. My analysis of Ishikawa's literary output has demonstrated the considerable inspiration he found in a range of East-Asian traditions, even if these were sometimes recalibrated in order to blend with Western systems of thought. In doing so, he was representative of the intellectual trends of his times. Furthermore, the extent and persistence of the transnational links he initiated were in themselves constitutive of a realm of convergence, pointing to the universal relevance of the convictions he shared with his friends.

Ishikawa's conception of democracy, *domin seikatsu*, best exemplifies the creative force represented by Japanese anarchism during the early decades of the twentieth century. While being premised on rootedness, it is also borderless in its aspirations. *Domin seikatsu* illustrates the profoundly different scientific and cultural

assumptions that sustained radical thinkers and activists at the time, amongst whom Ishikawa was a leading figure. It is the challenge of 'standing on the earth' with its implications of resistance to authority and man's close connection to the land that fashioned the concept. It was the product of the political and social tensions that characterized Japan during the period. As a model of socio-political organization, it can be counted as an original contribution to the history of ideas and related practices.

Equally important is the environmental consciousness embedded in the model, which makes Ishikawa a seminal contributor in the formulation of a Japanese ecological critique. This is why *domin seikatsu* acquires particular resonance in the present day and cannot be dismissed as the mere utopianism which is often associated with anarchism. Ishikawa's affirmation that a close relationship to the soil rescues humans from being eternal wanderers leads to a serious questioning of man's impact on his environment. The democratic vision of *domin seikatsu* does not reject technology or alterations to nature, but asks how far humans can disconnect from it and act as its uncontested master.

In *We Have Never Been Modern*, Bruno Latour unravels the pretense of modernity, showing that for three hundred years the intellectual foundation of Western society has been relying on a fundamental and misguided man-nature dualism.[3] As he explains, on the one side are free-thinking subjects, endowed with rationality, responsible for their actions, and able to impose their will on nature. It is the world of power, politics, and culture. On the other side are pure objects, unthinking and open to man's manipulation. This is the world of science, natural determinism and mechanical change. It is one of the aspects of the anarchist critique to refute this dichotomy. Instead of man always striving to liberate himself from the

[3] Latour, Bruno, *We Have Never Been Modern* (New York and London, 1993).

actuality of nature, it suggests a multiplicity of human experiences and an acceptance by man of his non-separateness from nature.[4]

Ishikawa's warning of the dangers of disconnecting from the natural world, its cycles and intrinsic balance, bears particular salience in the light of such man-made disaster as the Fukushima nuclear meltdown. In the course of my research I have received generous support from Japanese friends and scholars. They urged me to persevere because they considered that Ishikawa's ideas deserved to be better known in the intellectual history of modern Japan. Most often than not, they referred to Fukushima as a compelling reason for this. Indeed, early twentieth-century Japanese anarchism finds striking echoes in contemporary parlance and in a multiplicity of spheres. From the Gaia hypothesis of James Lovelock and Lyn Margulis and the 'deep ecology' of Arne Naess, to the 'social ecology' of Murray Bookchin and the notion of 'reclaiming commons' advocated by Elinor Ostrom, the analogies are numerous – and extend to citizens' movements such as 'Occupy Wall Street' or 'Reclaim the Streets'. The conclusion is that the meaning of 'democracy' is an on-going debate to which Ishikawa can still make a valid contribution.

[4] Colson, Daniel, *Anarchist Subjectivities and Modern Subjectivity* (1996) at http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/daniel-colson-anarchist-subjectivities-and-modern-subjectivity.

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