特集「中心と周縁：択取に抗う環境・自然（アルザスシンポジウム収録）」
1930年代の石橋湛山の農業政策論

著者 鈴村 裕輔
出版者 法政大学国際日本学研究所
掲載誌名 国際日本学研究
掲載頁面 14
年 2017-01-31
URL http://doi.org/10.15002/00021290
Ishibashi Tanzan’s Arguments on the Agricultural Policy in the 1920s

Suzumura Yusuke

1. Introduction

Ishibashi Tanzan (1884-1973), who criticised Japan’s expansionism and protectionism based on economic liberalism and international cooperation in the economic magazine the Tōyō Keizai Shimpō, is well known by his rational and systematic recommendations to Japan’s course from the 1910s to the 1930s. When we examine a relationship between Ishibashi, who discussed mainly political and economic issues, and nature, we can mention his arguments concerning on the reconstruction of Japanese agriculture in the 1920s. In these discussions, Ishibashi advocates to utilise human ability to overcome Japan’s handicap, being poor in natural resources thorough solving problems such as a tenancy dispute, the price of rice, education, local autonomy, and an administrative reform. In this meaning Ishibashi takes a position to accept an effective usage of natural resources by developing an ability of a human. However, if we pay our attention to the fact that the fundamental policy of Japan of the 1920s was, as is well known, to support and promote heavy industries, we could consider that Ishibashi’s argument made a counterproposal to the national policy. In this paper, we examine the actual relationship between a journalist and nature focusing on Ishibashi Tanzan’s arguments.
2. Framework of Ishibashi’s “Small Japan” Policy

After the First World War, Japan became a member of the ‘Four Major Powers’ or ‘Five Major Powers’ under the Versailles- Washington System, and in fact Japan was a member of the Council of the League of Nations. In that time, Japan had to cooperate with other nations in fields of disarmament or international security. But at the same time, some people or authorities, especially the army intended to expand Japanese overseas territories.

There are not a few people who see pre-war Japan engaged in a struggle between democracy or disarmament and dictatorship or military expansion, the latter represented by either the army or ‘fascism’. However, nationalism and internationalism are not necessarily mutually exclusive antonyms. Because, depending on the way the terms are interpreted, a nationalist may very well be able to favour cooperation with other nations in an international order that may provide equal and fair chances to all nations. Ishibashi Tanzan (1884-1973), a self-learned economist and became the prime minister of Japan in 1956, was one of the few Japanese who represented this alternative, wishing to enhance Japan’s national interest within a wider international order. Ishibashi dared to compare the state to an enterprise, an organisation with rational goals that needed to be run in a rational manner (1).

Ishibashi’s “small Japan” policy is a theory for peaceful development based on economic rationalism. It opposes militaristic autocracy and the “big Japan” policy or Pan-Asianism as a foreign policy leading to expansionism. Ishibashi limited the sovereign territory of Japan to Hokkaidō, Honshū, Shikoku, and Kyūshū (2). The reason why Ishibashi advocates the “small Japan” policy and defends the need for international cooperation, especially a partnership with the USA, is based on his thought that following an internationalist policy is advantageous for the pursuit of Japan’s national interests, and finally will permit Japan to become a world leader. In fact, Ishibashi looks for a way how to find roles for Japan to “act in a liberalised world economy” and as “the
leader of the Orient” and combine these roles. For example, in editorials of the Tōyo Keizai Shimpō like ‘Issai wo Sutsuruno Kakugo’ (Preparation to Abandon Everything, 23rd July 1921) or ‘Dainihon-shugi no Genso’ (Illusion of the Big Japan Policy, 30th July, 8th and 13th August 1920), Ishibashi points out that abandoning the foreign expansion policy important for Japan, arguing on the basis of statistical data. In these arguments, Ishibashi repeatedly stresses that “abandoning colonies will elevate Japanese position in the international society”. As is well known, during the 19th century and the early 20th century the great powers rule the world, and the size of their territorial possessions has become an index of their national power. Especially in Japan this had led to expounding reasons such as the need for strengthening national defence against the great powers, protecting its markets, pointing at the country’s small land area compared to its population, or the lack of natural resources. Many people claim that penetrating China is necessary to solve these problems and only this policy will open the doors to Japan’s future. Ishibashi considers, however, such opinions based on wishful thinking. He compares the total trade of Korea, Taiwan, and Kwantung Leased Territory under Japanese authority with Japan’s trade with the USA, India, and the British Empire, and reckons that the total amount of the latter is 2.7 times higher than that of the former. Thus he maintains that what is indispensable to the economic independence of Japan is not the trade with Korea, Taiwan, and Kwantung Leased Territory, but trade with the USA, India, and the British Empire.

Added to this, Ishibashi also claims that the commercial or industrial importance of the Chinese mainland to Japan is low: in particular, trade with China due to Japan’s interventionism is only one third of Japan’s trade with the USA, and that iron or coal imports from China are lower than that from the USA or the British Empire. Ishibashi refutes the main arguments of advocates of the Big Japan Policy. He also points out that the call for “overseas territories as necessary to the national defence” are nonsensical. He claims that overseas territories do not contribute to Japan’s national defence, but that keeping
territories in foreign areas bring with them the need to make prepare for policies of invasion. He also argues that an idea such as “colonies for the solution of the population issue” is abased notion, because the growth of population in Japan from 1905 to 1918 is about 9.5 million, but the total figure of overseas emigration to Japanese colonies in the same period is only about 0.8 million, and that overseas territories have no potential for solving the population issue\(^4\). Putting up these arguments Ishibashi makes it clear that changing Japan’s colonial policy is good for pursuing tangible interests, and adds intangible advantages in international politics brought by this change\(^5\)(\(^6\)).

3. Ishibashi’s Advocacy for Free and International Economic Activities

Ishibashi justifies international economic activities and emphasises Japanese penetration in the Chinese market by the same reason. That is to say, they contribute to the national interests of Japan.

*By having the powers open their colonies to [free] trade and other [similar] methods, we create a world where it is possible to conduct a more liberal trade. Here [we face the choice] whether to advance with a policy that improves our national destiny, or whether we stubbornly advocate the monopolisation [literally, monopoly-ism] of the Far East [by Japan]…. The essence of the judgement lies in the question which choice is beneficial to our country. I don’t hesitate to give an answer. Of course, I opt for the first [alternative]. But this definitely does not mean abandoning [the acquisition of] benefits for Japan in the Far East. It is merely the relinquishment of monopolisation [literally, monopoly]. The Far East will be opened up equally to the people of the [whole] world. And moreover, the whole world will also be opened up equally to all the peoples. The stage of our activities will expand in a manner fair to the whole world…. If, on the contrary, we take the monopolisation of the Far East as our broad policy, perhaps our country can*
obtain the benefits [to be had] in the Far East on a large scale. But, the world will be closed to us. Even if not absolutely closed, all kinds of obstacles will be added. However, although speaking of benefits in the Far East, it is doubtful whether we can indeed secure them well. This may be observed [in the case of the] most recent relations between China and Japan. Or else, there may be those who feel apprehensive whether the powers will indeed, in accordance with my demands, open up trade with their colonies and their sincerity in adjusting import and export [rules]. Never has any country given such a promise. However, all countries in the world have suffered under the present lack of liberal trade, and there is nobody who does not feel panic in the face of the accompanying international insecurity. The repeatedly issued statements by American government leaders...are, in other words, a cry of distress showing their anguish. But they are waiting whether there is anybody acting as a pioneer in breaking the present deadlock and providing a clue. If our country in such a situation takes as its policy the opening up [of all barriers] I firmly believe that we can certainly get the world moving under our leadership. Looking back, the international policy of our country has so far never gone beyond following in the footsteps of Europe and America, and aping them. After all, something like the 'Monopolisation of the Far East' is nothing else. But the time has already come when Japan, too, may abandon its stingy stance, and may embrace a grand vision and assume global leadership. Then, for the first time, there will be bright future for our national destiny. (7)

We have to pay attention to the logical coherence in his arguments. The Small Japan Policy is the product of such a rational thinking. During the 15 years’ war Japan conducted after the Manchurian Incident (1931), Ishibashi accepts the contemporary reality, but when he criticises the Great East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere or the holy war, the Pacific War, he uses abstract and complex logical arguments (8). Such attitudes represent Ishibashi’s pragmatic behaviour. He does not cling to superficial rhetoric behind the pursuit of Japan’s national interests, and grasps their underlying nature. From such a point of view, we can resume
Ishibashi’s arguments as follows. Ishibashi pointed out how important it was for Japan to give up its overseas expansionist policy, and provided a statistical basis for his claim. In these editorials Ishibashi mentioned two difficulties inherent in the “Big Japan policy”: first, such idea was a mere phantasm and second, those who advocate this idea were blinded by shortsighted ambitions and therefore did not know how to realise long term ambitions or true national interests. Even if, Ishibashi said, it were desirable for a great power to have a large territory, it was impossible for Japan now to imitate the territorial expansionism of the great powers. Such being the case it would rather be a wise strategy for Japan to have the great powers set free those territories, and for Japan to take the first step in this direction.

4. Ishibashi’s Arguments on the Agricultural Policy

Based on an argument concerning the “small Japan Policy”, we can examine Ishibashi’s policy for agriculture. Ishibashi published a book entitled *Atarashii Nögyöseisaku no Teishō* (Proposal for the New Agricultural Policy) in 1927 (9). In this book Ishibashi discussed reason of Japan’s scarcity of food or poverty not lacking in natural resources but lacking of efforts. A way of enhancing the national power of Japan, as Ishibashi mentioned, was not expanding large territories or being rich in natural resources but knowledge and technique utilising limited natural resources. When Ishibashi suggested utilising human resources, he mentioned Adam Smith’s argument in *The Wealth of Nations*: wealth of nations depends on the wealth of people or workers and wealth of nations depends on a land condition, a weather condition and width of territory. In his argument, Ishibashi pointed out that labour should be one and only resource without reservation: only through efficient application and operation of human resources, Japan might overcome adverse conditions like lack of natural recourses and food shortage.

As we mentioned, Ishibashi’s “small Japan” policy is composed of
international cooperation, economic liberalism, and releasing Japan’s overseas territories. By the “small Japan” policy, Ishibashi represents the side of Japan that emphasises economic growth as a means of modernisation and he attempted an escape from the zero-sum thinking that emphasises on competition among nations at that time. When we examine a relationship between Ishibashi’s agricultural policy and his “small Japan” policy, following viewpoints are clear: clearing trade deficits, not to reduce scale but to modernise and diversify Japanese agriculture. It means not to share a limited pie but to expand scale of the pie. Not to expand overseas territories is an important point of the “small Japan” policy and it would be said that Japan has to expand utilisation of human resources after releasing overseas territories. In addition an agricultural policy based on the “small Japan” policy has concrete plans. To abolish agricultural protect policy by the government, to conduct consolidation of farmland and production rationalization, to shift from a rice-centred cultivation to an agricultural diversification (ex. fruit cultivation, livestock farming), and to carry out administrative reform both in the central and local government are such plans for the future of Japan’s agriculture.

5. Conclusion

In the argument on the agricultural policy, Ishibashi often points out that decline of agriculture is not a result of the tendency or outcome of Japanese society, but lack of a general policy for agriculture. Ishibashi also advocates that practicing concrete measures will revive Japanese agriculture. But on Ishibashi’s approach based from utilisation of human resources, there is no intention to a relationship between human and nature. It might be one of remarkable characteristics of Ishibashi’s opinion, if, for example, we compare it with that of Miyazawa Kenji who tried to promote agricultural improvement with deep ties of human and nature. Actual situation of Japanese agriculture in the 1930s could not be improved fundamentally and rural districts should be in a positon
of underdeveloping or the undeveloped. We have to wait for more decades when the Japan’s agricultural policy changed totally, after the farmland reform in 1947. And Ishibashi was the Minister of Finance of the 1st Yoshida Cabinet and served to realise this reformation.

Notes
(1) Suzumura, Y. (2010). Ishibashi Tanzan no Gõriteki-shiko to Kokueki toshiteno Shõnihonshugi (Rational Thinking and “small Japan policy” as National Interests in Ishibashi Tanzan), in International Japanese Studies, 8: 105-122.
(8) Masdua, 119-142.

Acknowledgement
This paper is a part of results of Japan Society for the Promotion of Science: Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research entitled “Information Dissemination Overseas by the Private Sector in Pre-War Japan: In the Case of “The Oriental Economist”” (Project number: 15K16987, Investigator: Yusuke Suzumura).
経済専門雑誌『東洋経済新報』に掲げた石橋湛山（1884-1973）は、1910年代から1930年代にかけて経済的自由主義と国際協調主義に基づき、日本の針路について論理的、体系的な提言をしたことで知られる。ところでおおらか政治的、経済的な議論を行ってきた石橋湛山と自然との関わりに焦点を当てるととき、われわれは1920年代の農業政策に関する議論を挙げることができる。石橋は小作争議問題や米問題をはじめとして、教育および地方自治・行政改革問題などの諸問題の解決を通じて、自然資源の不足という日本が負っている不利な条件を克服すべく人間の能力を活かすことを中心とした方策を定めるように提唱している。この点から、石橋は人間の能力の発展によって自然資源を有効に活用する立場にいることがあるのである。