

## Alternative Agro-food Movement in Contemporary Japan

Mima Nishiyama\*, Aya Hirata Kimura\*\*

### Abstract

This paper analyzed the emergence, transformation, and prospects of local food movements in Japan. From a historical perspective of alternative agriculture movements, *Chisan-chisho* is the first movement to promote the idea of "local food". The most dominant *Chisan-chisho* movement in Japan is government-led movement, focusing on the MAFF organized consumer education programs concerning local food. But the goal of this project is largely to widen Japan's domestic food market. We argue that this narrow goal has limited the achievements of local movements to issues of local food safety and security.

We realize that there is an older, more discussed, local food movement in the U.S. than in Japan. U.S. researchers and activists tend to consider the concept of local as resisting trends toward globalization. They argue that the flourishing of multi-national companies threatens democracy and social justice. Therefore, they recognize that certain activities at the local level are important tools for promoting social change. Furthermore, in the U.S. they recognize that local food movements are the entry point for resolving other social problems such as environmental issues, social justice, democracy and so on.

We suggest that they need to recognize their food issues as a structural problem in order to reformulate the *Chisan-chisho* movement in Japan. They also need to understand that the concepts of "food" and "local" are tools to gain entry to issues of social justice and democratic decision making. We expect that all *Chisan-chisho* participants' interests will expand from food to environment and social change, just as movements in the U.S. have experienced.

### 1. Introduction

Since the 1990's, the context surrounding food in Japan has changed drastically. Multi-national companies have become increasingly dominant over the domestic food system. At the same time, domestic agricultural ability of production has decreased. Consumers' anxieties about food security and safety have grown significantly as well.

Integrating the concept of "local" into agricultural policy and practice has emerged as one way to relieve the anxieties about food. The government regards "local food" as a tool to link farmers and consumers. At

the same time, local food movements with an emphasis on communication between farmers and consumers have emerged. These increasingly popular movements are termed "*Chisan-chisho*". *Chisan-chisho* is literally translated as "to produce locally, to consume locally." Since the middle 1990's, numerous *Chisan-chisho* movements have sprouted all over Japan [21].

This paper has three goals. First, we outline the background and emergence of the local food movement in Japan, focusing on the history of the alternative agriculture movement from the perspective of farmer-consumer relationships. Second, we identify the characteristics of the *Chisan-chisho* movement as a new alternative movement in Japan. We analyze and

---

\*Chiba University

\*\*University of Wisconsin-Madison

compare government-led *Chisan-chisho* movements with those led by citizens' groups, highlighting in particular their orientation, goals and ways of thinking about the "locality". Finally, we identify the problems and possibilities of the *Chisan-chisho* movement with reference to issues of local food movements in the United States.

## 2. The transition of the relationship between farmers (agriculture) and consumers (food)

Beginning around 2000, local food movements, called "*Chisan-chisho*", expanded all over Japan. We have some kinds of alternative agricultural movements like *Teikei*<sup>1)</sup> after modernization in Japan. But *Chisan-chisho* is a different kind of movement from other alternative movements. The characteristic of *Chisan-chisho* is that they try to encourage food movement within their locality. Farmers and consumers who live in the same locality participate in this kind of movement. In this section, we examine why the concept of locality emerged in *Chisan-chisho* movement while also discussing the transition of the distance between farmers (agriculture) and consumers (food).

Prior to Japan's economic modernization, agricultural production and food consumption were locally based. Most farmers produced the majority of their own food and sold their remaining products to consumers within their locality. Nakajima says that local production and consumption limited people's food choices and impacted the type of farming in their locality [16].

After World War II, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries (the MAFF) adopted a policy of modernizing Japanese agriculture to keep pace with industrialization. During this period, many people believed that the localism of the Japanese food system prevented the modernization of agriculture. Additionally, they viewed the ability of consumers to buy food from outside the locality or country, such as strawberries from Tochigi prefecture and wine from France, as symbols of food system modernization and wealth. The new agricultural policies led to a distancing between Japanese farmers and consumers. The policy of agricultural modernization also led to negative health and environmental consequences. For example, chemical fertilizers and pesticides polluted soils and waterways.

The health of farmers was also negatively impacted. Many suffered from an increased incidence of disease related to chemical exposure. In the following paragraphs, we analyze the activities which demonstrate that they were eager not to widen the distance between agriculture (production area) and food (consumption area), because most of them thought that to widen the distance between them would have a negative influence on their food life.

After the 1960's, an alternative agriculture movement developed in Japan to counter the negative effects of agricultural modernization. Initially, the movement was comprised of farm women who were concerned about the negative consequences of economic modernization on rural life [19]. During the modernization period, many farm household members had to seek off-farm jobs to supplement their incomes. As a consequence, many farmers limited their production and stopped growing vegetables for household consumption. Farm women, with support from government extension agents or farmer co-operatives, tried to recover their household self-sufficiency and improve the health of their families. They began to grow vegetables on family plots for their own household's consumption [17]. The movement was limited, however, as the farm women did not attempt to communicate with consumers nor with other farm women outside of their communities.

In the 1970's, the *Teikei* movement emerged. The movement, initiated by *Yuukinougyou-Kenkyukai* (the organic farming research group) in 1971, focused on localizing the Japanese food system and promoting organic agriculture. The movement began in response to the negative impacts of agricultural modernization, such as long-distance commodity chains and unsustainable farming practices embodied in overuse of pesticides and chemical products. The policy of *Yuukinougyou-Kenkyukai* focused on the concept of locality, which means it emphasized self-reliance of the food system and economic revitalization, conservation of natural resources and culture in their locality.

While most of their efforts centered on developing a sustainable farming system, they also advocated community-wide development that conserved local resources and focused on sustainable practices. The *Teikei* movement was successful at increasing support

for organic agriculture, but failed to localize the food system. Urban areas provided ready markets for organic food, while rural areas were not receptive to organic products. Hence, most organic farmers sold their food in the cities, outside of their localities. The *Teikei* movement was successful in connecting organic farmers with consumers, assisting with harvesting and other farm chores.

In the 1980's, the *Sanchoku*<sup>2)</sup> movement, led by consumers' co-operatives, supermarkets and farmers' co-operatives, emerged. Most *Teikei* movements conducted by small groups of farmers in rural area and consumers in urban area. But in the *Sanchoku* movement, some organic farmer organizations link up with some consumers' organizations. There were two reasons; one is to respond to the increasing demand for organic food. The other reason is that some farmers' co-operatives therefore are small or periphery production areas away from main policy. They needed to seek their identity and to add another values in their production, for example, organic food or sustainable food. With the expansion of *Sanchoku*, the number of organic farmers and organic consumers increased in Japan. But unlike the *Teikei* movement, the personal connection between farmers and consumers was not emphasized. While *Teikei* continued during this time, the number of *Sanchoku* participants who are farmers and consumers out-numbered *Teikei* participants. The number of *Teikei* participants decreased because many of its former leaders who were consumers moved on to new jobs after their children started school. *Sanchoku* was thus able to surpass *Teikei*. Because *Sanchoku* made it easier for consumers to participate, and *Sanchoku* did not require consumers to work on organic farms like *Teikei*. The role of the consumer was simply to buy organic products. In the 1980's, however, for the first time the government acknowledged the negative impact of industrial agriculture, they introduced the concept of sustainable agriculture. But the main focus of government's agriculture policy remained on industrialization.

In the 1990's, many farmers' markets emerged throughout Japan. Farmers' markets influenced family farms in Japan in two major ways. Farm women, prior to the 1990s, did not have many opportunities to earn their own income independently of their family farm.

Compared to women in other industries, the ability of farm women to act independently was very limited. The farmers' markets created new and significant opportunities for farm women to earn their own income and take control of economic and social aspects of their lives. For example, a group of farm women started the farm women's market at the national wide department store. Most members of this group were also members of a "*Seikatsu-Kaizen group*" (the government extension group for the improvement of farm household life). This is the same kind of group that worked in the 1960's to improve farm women's self-sufficiency.

The farm women's markets also influenced production practices on family farms. Prior to the emergence of farmers' markets, most farms produced for the wholesale market, which required large volumes of one or two crops. For those farmers that began selling at the farmers' markets, they increased the diversity of crops they produced to meet consumer's demands [18].

The farmers' markets also influenced consumers. After the emergence of the farmers' markets, consumers came to better understand what local food was or what food was in season in their locality. This led them to recognize the freshness and tastiness of local foods, just like the farmers who produced the local foods. We can therefore say that the achievement of the farmers' markets helped the *Chisan-chisho* movement's later expansion. Because of the farmers' markets, it is easy for consumers to understand the word "*Chisan-chisho*" (to produce locally and to consume locally). However, the farmers' markets served a relatively small portion of Japanese consumers. In the 1990's, Japan globalized its food system, importing food from all over the world. The globalization of the food system arguably led to a decrease in food safety. For example, in 1993, underproduction of Japanese rice threatened rice shortages in the country. Additionally, several food imports were found to be contaminated with high levels of chemicals. Many Japanese consumers turned to organic food to avoid the food contamination problems of the conventional food system. After these incidents, organic farmers expanded their markets by participating in wholesale markets. With market expansion, more organic farmers' associations developed [16].

In the late 1990s, *Chisan-chisho*, a new alternative agriculture movement, emerged. The movement's primary goal is to change the food system to produce and distribute food locally through cooperation between farmers and consumers in the same locality. Another goal is to educate consumers and promote food safety, agricultural preservation, and environmental stewardship. The movement is primarily concerned with localizing the Japanese food system. This *Chisan-chisho* movement is not related to the *Teikei* or *Sanchoku* movements. Many *Chisan-chisho* movements are led by local governments. Government has significantly contributed to the expansion of this movement. The number of participants is quite large when compared with the *Teikei* and *Sanchoku* movements. And another new characteristic is that the *Chisan-chisho* movement has been realized in localities. Farmers and consumers who live in the same locality are taking part in the *Chisan-chisho* movement. But unlike the *Teikei* movement, participants do not have the philosophy of consciously resolving particular problems. The government-led *Chisan-chisho* is attempting to eliminate consumers' fears about food security and safety. Due to these fears, the *Chisan-chisho* movement's goals became quite limited and narrow. In the following section, we will analyze the *Chisan-chisho* movement in more detail.

### 3. Emergence of the localization movement in the U.S.

Japanese alternative agriculture movements have a history of almost 40 years. But the local food movement, *Chisan-chisho*, has emerged in only about the last 5 years. In contrast, the U.S. local food movement began about 10 years earlier than that in Japan. There are many issues about the local food movement in the U.S. That is to say, in Japan, people understand "local" in terms of geographic area. They don't tend to consider the anti-globalism aspect of "local". But in the U.S., people think that "local" is a tool to realize democracy or social justice in the face of globalization. In this section, we introduce these issues in the U.S. focusing on the potential of local food movements and discuss the importance of these movements.

In the 1980's, activists with the U.S. alternative agri-

culture movement began discussing the importance of food localization. However, it was not until the 1990's that many activists within the movement actively began to promote the localization of food systems. Alternative farming movements, for instance, valued the local connection, because they were seen as important in terms of food self-sufficiency [14]. Many argued that food localization could reverse the negative trends associated with global food commodity chains, such as increased pesticide pollution, low farm gate prices and increased food contamination. Family farm preservation groups also emerged and began to conceptualize their activities in terms of reconnecting farmers with local markets. For instance, Hinrichs [9] considers the roots of Iowa's food localization movement to be Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) and farmers' markets started in the 1980s. Anti-hunger advocates also began talking about re-localizing the food system as a means of addressing food insecurity.

#### (1) Why local ?

Why do alternative agriculture and food system activists emphasize the importance of the locality ?

We point out five distinct reasons and address them one-by-one.

First, locally-based agro-food initiatives are seen as countermovements to the globalized and corporate-controlled agro-food system [6] [15] [20]. Buttel [3] suggests that CSAs and farmers' markets are the most common ways in which consumers resist the globalized agrofood system. Allen [1] similarly sees the emphasis on locality as "a form of resistance" to the ever-expanding power of transnational corporations in the production, processing and retailing of food.

Second, strengthening of the local economy is cited by various organizations as the reason to "go local". For instance, the Food Routes Network states that local is good, because "You'll strengthen your local economy—Buying local food keeps your dollars circulating in your community. Getting to know the farmers who grow your food builds relationships based on understanding and trust" [5].

Third, advocates of localizing the food system also point out the environmental benefits. The average food product travels thousands of miles, thereby increasing our reliance on polluting fossil fuels. Food localization

reverses this trend.

Fourth, locality is seen as being characterized by more social embeddedness, or moral economy. Close social networks, trust, and face-to-face relations bolster locally-based food production and consumption. Improved safety is seen as stemming from the fact that we can now identify the producers' face because of its proximity, rather than any changes in production methods or structural changes in agribusiness marketing. That is, safety and locality is linked through the perceived social embeddedness and face-to-face relations.

Fifth, in contrast to the lack of control and accountability in the globalized agrofood system, a locally-based food system is seen as more amenable to improved access of people to shape how food is produced and consumed. In this sense, locality is seen as inherently connected to more self-determination and control [1]. Food localization is also promoted as a means of increasing self-sufficiency. Shortening the distance of food travels from farm to table lessens the vulnerabilities of the food system. As we have seen, the meaning of locality, in the 1990s and in the 2000s, has moved toward emphasizing democratic decision making and social justice in the U.S.

## (2) "Food is the entry point"

Local food movements have a diverse set of goals. But many movements seem to share the fact that they entered their movement focusing on food issues—for example, issues such as food safety or security—and then expanded to more dynamic issues, such as environmental issues or social change movements and so on.

Food is a good entry point for social injustice, as Lappe [12] argues in her epoch-making book, "Diet for a Small Planet". Kloppenburg et al [10] echo this by arguing that food is a good starting point for promoting social change, because of the "centrality of food in our lives and its capacity to connect us materially and spiritually to each other and to the earth." Welsh and MacRae [22] agree that because "few other systems touch people's daily lives in such an intimate way and thereby provide such a strong motivation and opportunity for citizenship", food insecurity reveals social injustices in a profound way. Food is a "microcosm of

wider social realities" [11]. Allen et al [2] agrees that food is just an entry point. She sees that food is "a salient issue for everyone", but has the potential to lead to "a politicization that develops into an engagement of other areas of civic life and political issues". Hassanein [8] argues that food is a "pragmatic" avenue which can transform the dominant agro-food system. "And, within the universe of social and environmental action, food issues, which have come to represent a significant opportunity to construct a new type of environmental and social agenda have also become the place where the local meets the global" [7]. "Food system outcomes—the winners and losers due to the changes in the production and consumption of food—can in turn represent key indicators about the overall state of society and environment" [7].

The Community Food Security Coalition summarizes this larger focus by noting that "small, local, sustainable farms are a building block of any democratic and just food system. This sustainable agriculture perspective has an environmental focus, a rural economic focus, and a labor focus" and "community food security is about sustainable agriculture." [4]. A similar sentiment is shared by Local Harvest which states that "The Buy Local movement is quickly taking us beyond the promise of environmental responsibility that the organic movement delivered to us, and awakening the U.S. to the importance of community, variety, humane treatment of farm animals, and social and environmental responsibility in regards to our food economy" [13].

From the study of local food movement issues in the U.S, we realize that more emphasis is placed on the aspects of anti-globalism and democracy as food citizens in the U.S. There are some critical issues for local food movements, regardless of class, gender, racial concerns, and so on. Even though these issues are correct, they emphasize a structural perspective, and thus look for social change from establishment local food systems or participation of citizens in that process. This is a wider and deeper point of view than most Japanese movements hold. The reason for this difference lies in how the term "local" is defined. U.S. local food movements have developed a more nuanced understanding of "local" in our view. The meaning of locality has come to emphasize democratic decision making and social jus-

tice in the U.S. On the other hand, particularly in the many *Chisan-chisho* movements, “local” is interpreted as signifying geographic/ physical scale. Japanese movements tend not to consider the democratic decision making and social justice in their country. In Japan, accordingly, people pay more attention to food safety or food culture than in the U.S. The reason why they have begun to emphasize the concept of locality is that they need to uncover the characteristics of their locality through their local food activities. They tend to overlook the need for social change, even though they really have many problems within the food system. We point out that they should consider what they locally regard as important: not only for food safety but also for sustainable local development.

#### 4. The Alternative Agriculture Movement in Contemporary Japan

In the last few years, the number of *Chisan-chisho* projects has increased considerably. Many of these new projects are led by the local governments or the MAFF. Not all *Chisan-chisho* projects are government sponsored. Since the mid-1990's, citizen groups have organized their own *Chisan-chisho* projects. However, the goals and resources available for citizen-led *Chisan-chisho* projects are different than those for government sponsored projects. In the following section, we discuss the MAFF involvement in the *Chisan-chisho* movement, and we also present two case studies of *Chisan-chisho* movements.

##### (1) The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries' involvement in the *Chisan-chisho* movement

In 1999, for the first time in nearly forty years, the MAFF revamped Japan's agricultural policies. In only three short years, however, they needed to change their policy again in large part because of the current social conditions of food. During the last three years, BSE (otherwise known as Mad Cow Disease) contaminated meat produced in Japan was found, and many cases of disguised food labeling were publicly disclosed. Other issues such as the chemical contamination of food imported from abroad were also disclosed. Therefore, many people in Japan have serious anxiety about food. In 2002, in response to these food scandals, the

MAFF created “*shoku-to-nou-no-saisei-plan*”, a plan to revitalize Japan's agriculture and food system. The term “*Chisan-chisho*” was officially incorporated into Japanese agricultural policy for the first time.

These are two main reasons why the government officially adopted *Chisan-chisho* in 2002. First, the MAFF wanted to increase domestic food consumption. Second, they needed to address consumers' fears about food safety. The role of *Chisan-chisho*, and its emphasis on local food, is to promote consumers' confidence in the food system. One goal is to increase the domestic agriculture market. To realize this goal, the MAFF also advance strategies for consumer education. This is the most important policy of the new agriculture law instituted in 1999. The other goal is to establish a food system that provides safe food and promotes consumers' confidence. This is the main goal of the “*shoku-to-nou-no-saisei-plan*” (plan for revitalization for agriculture and food system). In accordance with this policy, the MAFF focused much of their attention on consumers at first. From this, it is clear how important the MAFF thinks this policy, designed to gain consumers' confidence, is. In policy terms, the role of *Chisan-chisho* is to increase consumer confidence while providing fresh local food and a larger domestic market.

To implement this agricultural policy, the MAFF allocated money to local governments for the creation of *Chisan-chisho* projects. Through such projects, the government educated consumers and promoted domestic food markets. However, the government's concept of *Chisan-chisho* was quite narrow. It did not address socio-economic or environmental issues as they relate to agriculture. Originally, *Chisan-chisho* had a very profound meaning. It incorporated “*Shindo-fuji*”, which means that people cannot separate the body from the land. However the *Shindo-fuji* concept was not incorporated into the government's concept of *Chisan-chisho*. The atmosphere of the word “*chisan-chisho*” gives consumers' confidence in local food, because local food is fresh, and they can see the field in which it is grown and meet the people that produced it.

Local governments promote *Chisan-chisho* as a method to establish a safe, fresh, confident food system in their locality. Their activities include school lunch

programs which use local food, events to advertise local food and agriculture, farmers' markets, seminars for consumers, local food systems, and so on. There is no practice of linking up organic farming with movements or certification systems of local food in the *Chisan-chisho* movement. We point out the contradiction surrounding *Chisan-chisho* between the national and local levels. In the following paragraphs, we analyze two case studies; One is government-led *Chisan-chisho*, the other citizen-led. We discuss the differences between them in terms of goals, and then analyze the characteristics of the Japanese local food movement.

(2) **Case study: The Iwate Prefecture's *Chisan-Chisaho* Project<sup>3)</sup>**

Iwate Prefecture in northern Japan launched its *Chisan-chisho* program in June 2001. To develop the local food program, the prefecture's government coordinated with several sectors of the prefecture's food industry, including farmers, distributors, processors, traders and consumers. The goals of the *Chisan-chisho* program included increasing the local food market for farmers, thereby changing the local food system so that consumers in Iwate could once again have access to fresh local food. The Iwate prefecture's government was also interested in reconnecting farmers and consumers in order to promote the value of living in the prefecture.

To increase local consumption among the people of Iwate prefecture, the government developed four main programs. Among them was the promotion of "Local Food of Iwate Days". The government designated the fourth Friday, Saturday and Sunday of every month as "local food days" in the prefecture. They encouraged all households to eat local food on those days. To promote this, they asked all supermarkets in the prefecture to set aside space for selling local food on that day. Additionally, the government worked with local restaurants to develop special menus for those days. Second program focused on increasing local food consumption in the schools. The government also promoted local food purchasing in the food manufacturing sector. Finally, the government recommended instituting and disseminating the indicators for a good food system.

The expansion of Iwate's school lunch program was

initially the most challenging of the four programs, but in recent years it has proved to be the most successful. Conflicting government bureaucracies delayed implementation of the local food program for the schools. The Department of Agricultural marketing was responsible for increasing local food procurement for school lunches. However, officials within the Department of Education, which has traditionally overseen the school lunch program, did not support the Department of Agricultural marketing program. Finally, after several months of delay, the Department of Education allowed the *Chisan-chisho* program to go forward. A new competitive bidding system was created for school food procurement, which required that food purchased come from local sources as often as possible. By 2002, local food accounted for 47.6 percent of total food procurement for the school district, which represented a 17.6 percent increase from 1999.

The Iwate prefecture held a national forum on *Chisan-chisho* in 2002 with financial support from the MAFF. After the success of the forum, people recognized Iwate prefecture as the most advanced *Chisan-chisho* movement led by a prefecture government in Japan. And residents of Iwate became conscious of the importance of this movement. Furthermore, the *Chisan-chisho* movement in Iwate received a lot of attention after BSE and some food scandals were exposed. Soon after, consumers and distributors also started seriously turning to local food as an alternative food source.

The school lunch program influenced many people in the prefecture including parents, community members, farmers, and traders. For example, they started growing vegetables in vacant lots for the school lunch program. Additionally, the school lunch program was the impetus for the creation of a new association of food traders and distributors interested in providing local food. Some farmers' co-operatives created a niche of providing local food for school lunches. Now all school lunch programs in Iwate prefecture provide a "local salmon menu" every November 11<sup>th</sup>. This demonstrates how the *Chisan-chisho* movement has penetrated the entire prefecture. To promote this day, the governor of Iwate ate with students on this day to publicize *Chisan-chisho*. People involved in school lunch programs, parents and community residents—including farmers—paid attention not only to local food but also

to the seasonal foods in the area, the way of cooking, local and traditional cuisine, and the nutritional value of local food. They began to educate consumers about these aspects of local food, an initiative now mimicked by the government of Japan.

The prefecture's government began discussions about shifting the management of the *Chisan-chisho* programs from government to local citizen groups in 2003. There are already examples of this happening. Some local NGO's are managing restaurants and farmers' markets to provide local food. The prefecture's government has deemed the *Chisan-chisho* projects nearing success at the end of their first stage. They need to use their funds for other projects. Therefore, they are attempting to transfer the management of the projects to citizens' groups.

On the other hand, the prefecture's government has advanced projects to provide education about food programs for schools in metropolitan areas of Tokyo. They are proud of their food education program, which they have practiced for many years. They want to expand the program to other metropolitan areas which lack agriculture. They seek to create the bonds with urban consumer areas to widen the market for their food. They try to advertise their food by offering not only local food but having farmers disseminate information as part of their food education program.

### (3) Case study: The Citizen-led *Chisan-chisho* Movement

Citizens began to initiate *Chisan-chisho* movements in the mid-1990s. But prior to government involvement in its promotion in 2002, the *Chisan-chisho* movement remained small and under-resourced. The original *Chisan-chisho* citizen leaders promoted a different concept of *Chisan-chisho* than that which was later adopted by the government. While the government focused primarily on increasing local markets through *Chisan-chisho*, the earlier citizen efforts had a different agenda. They were concerned with the establishment of a local food system for the economic health of farmers, food quality and environmental conservation in their locality. In this section, we analyze the activity of "*Chisan-chisho wo susumeru kai*" (The Club for Eating Locally), the first *Chisan-chisho* movement. In Japan, there are other citizen-led *Chisan-chisho* movements:

for example, "*Inaka-kurabu*" (The Rural Area Club), "*Shindo-fuji Iwate*" (Body comes from land), "*Shoku-to-nou-no kakehashi kurabu*" (The association to bridge food and agriculture), and "*Jimoto no shoku to nou wo taisetunisuru kai*" (The association to preserve local food and agriculture). Most of these movements were established at the middle to the end of the 1990's. They all considered the circumstances surrounding local food. For example, to consider the situation of farmers' economics (*Inaka kurabu*), "Why is local food the best for our health?" (*Shindo-fuji Iwate*), "What is the sense of locality?" (*Shindo-fuji Iwate, Jimoto no syoku to nou wo taisetunisuru kai*). We will now analyze the case of "*Chisan-chisho wo susumeru kai*" in detail. Based on our comparison, we realize that these groups have different goals.

#### 1) *Chisan-chisho wo susumeru kai*" (The Club for Eating Locally)<sup>4)</sup>

The Club for Eating Locally began in 1996 in Akita prefecture, next to Iwate prefecture. The founding members of the club were interested in promoting local food consumption as an alternative to the globalized food system. At first, President T wanted to organize a research group for establishing local distribution and promoting *Chisan-chisho*. His interest was not in food safety like most *Chisan-chisho* movements, but rather in the identity of the locality and the negative influences of economic globalization. Next, he sought a new distribution system to promote rural life that is independent from the negative influences of economic globalization such as destruction of the environment, disintegration of local companies, disadvantages of local value and so on. He identified the lack of networks between farmers and consumers as a problem in his locality. There were many farmers who practiced organic farming and a variety of safe food farming in the area. Most of them sold their production to consumers outside of their locality, usually in urban areas in Japan. On the other hand, he heard complaints from consumers who were suffering from a lack of safe local food. And there were no consumer co-operatives that practiced *Sanchoku* in the area.

At first, he sent letters to almost thirty people who seemed to be interested in this movement. They were farmers (including organic farmers), owners of breweries, manufacturers, and so on. Almost all people

agreed with the goals of the movement. They established the club in June 1996. In fact, after they started considering the local food system, they realized they didn't always know everything about local food or about each other's activities. They recognized the need to conceptualize what exactly local food is. President T defined the characteristics of their activity at the individual, personal level. He suggested that members should start thinking about what they do about *Chisan-chisho* in their own daily lives. So, the membership of this club was open only to individuals, not to members as representatives of any organization. Now, the number of members has grown to about one hundred and fifty people.

They started learning how to raise local organic crops, how to make tofu, the difference in taste of organic soybeans from conventional soybeans (or fresh vs. packaged tofu), the characteristics of the traditional farm household's life, and so on. The club's other activities include a potluck party using local food and a travel to Korea to learn about Korean *Chisan-chisho* movements. The reason why they participate in these activities is to learn about local food for themselves and to try to comprehend the vastness of the subject. But so far, they have no idea how to widen their activities outside of their existing members. But, as President T said, it is necessary for each member to discuss their opinion about *Chisan-chisho* in the club. They complained that they had no other clubs or networks like their club in their community. Since all members in this club have their own opinion about *Chisan-chisho*, they can learn from each other and discover new lessons from their experiences. President T said, "*Chisan-chisho* is the sense of life; it is too hard to realize without practicing it oneself". Seven years after being established, their greatest achievement is that they created a club in which they are confident in each other and learn from each other's opinion.

To approach their next goal, they need to reorganize the structure of their club. They have a plan to become a non-profit organization (NPO) next year, because their present organizational structure limits their activity both in terms of finance and human resources. So far, the club has relied completely on volunteers to publish newsletters and complete administrative work. After restarting as an NPO, their next

objective is to create a network which includes all NPOs in their locality. Furthermore, they want to make *Chisan-chisho* not only about food, but also about clothes and residences. And they want to show all people in their locality the principle of the value of sustainable life.

## 5. Criticism

The major goal for government-led *Chisan-chisho* projects is to widen the distribution markets for domestic food products. Many consumers understand simply that local food is safe and that *Chisan-chisho* is good for the environment. This is a very shallow understanding of the concept of *Chisan-chisho*. The original concept of *Chisan-chisho* is that people can realize a sustainable livelihood by eating and producing many goods needed in our daily lives locally. It is not only the concept of eating well, but also of living well. As President T said, in contemporary Japan, we can recognize the concept of *Chisan-chisho* only in terms of our food life. After modernization, we lost many values associated with traditional or sustainable food life. But, we still have a sensibility for the taste and freshness of food, and we still have a food culture in each locality. So, President T states that we can start considering local food in the *Chisan-chisho* movement. Actually, the main goal of citizen-led *Chisan-chisho* is to encourage local distribution to realize the richness of local life. Most citizen-led *Chisan-chisho* movements tend to value the original meaning of *Chisan-chisho* more precisely. But according to our analysis so far, they have not yet been able to reform or produce new local food systems. After the establishment of the club, their activities have only helped them to understand the concept of *Chisan-chisho* more exactly.

Many participants—especially of government-led *Chisan-chisho* movements—understand that local food is safe and that practicing *Chisan-chisho* is good for the environment. But this assumption may be unwarranted. For example, many *Chisan-chisho* projects didn't prepare any certification system for local food or establish organic farming practices. Most local foods were probably produced by conventional farming. So, they cannot show evidence of food safety and environmental friendliness [21]. We point out the reason why

consumers face this complicated situation: In the 1990's, consumers lost the confidence of food security due to the experience of underproduction of domestic rice and imported food contamination. In the 2000's consumers lost confidence in food safety because many food scandals (BSE, disguised food labels and chemical contamination) arose. In response to these problems, *Chisan-chisho* emerged. Most people sought a solution to food problems in terms of both security and safety in the *Chisan-chisho* movement.

So far, these two types of *Chisan-chisho* movements—government-led and citizen-led—have no connection, largely because their initial goals are quite different. But after the accumulation of *Chisan-chisho* movements, many participants may start considering issues from food and then on local food culture, and history and identity of locality. We expect that their areas of interest will expand from food to environment and social change, like movements in the U.S. To create a sustainable society we need to value livelihood, *Chisan-chisho*. So, we point out to all participants the need to discuss structural issues through the practice of *Chisan-chisho* movements. They should discuss the achievements in food localization from the point of view of democracy or the self-reliance of the local area. Therefore, these two types of movements need to link to each other or need to establish networks outside of their own movements.

## 6. Summary

This paper analyzed the emergence, transformation, and prospects of local food movements in Japan. From a historical perspective of alternative agriculture movements, *Chisan-chisho* is the first movement to promote the idea of “local food”. The most dominant *Chisan-chisho* movement in Japan is government-led movement, focusing on the MAFF organized consumer education programs concerning local food. But the goal of this project is largely to widen Japan's domestic food market. We argue that this narrow goal has limited the achievements of local movements to issues of local food safety and security. Under this kind of project, it is difficult for participants—farmers and consumers—to have common motives to join the movement. Farmers are eager to widen domestic markets,

while consumers are interested in local food safety and security. Therefore, especially in government-led *Chisan-chisho* started activities, participants tend to have a narrower understanding as to the concept of “local food”. They don't expect “local food” movements to lead to an ecologically sustainable, socially equitable and economically viable future.

In government-led *Chisan-chisho* movements, we point out two contradictions. The first contradiction is between national and prefectural governments. The national government thought *Chisan-chisho* projects should widen domestic markets and educate consumers. But many prefecture governments saw *Chisan-chisho* as a way to construct a safe and steady local food system. Second, many consumers came to believe that local food is inherently safe and that *Chisan-chisho* is good for the environment. In practice, there is no linkage between *Chisan-chisho* and organic farming, certification systems or environmental conservation. It shows that the government-led *Chisan-chisho* has expanded in a shallow way. The causality between locality and safety is not necessarily evident. Safety and locality are linked through perceived social embeddedness and face-to-face relations. On the other hand, citizen-led *Chisan-chisho* movements have tended to approach their understanding of local food in a more holistic manner. Their area of interest has expanded from food life to sustainable livelihood to the values of local life. They seem to be able to recognize and address more structural problems through the practice of citizen-led *Chisan-chisho*.

We realize that there is an older, more discussed, local food movement in the U.S. than in Japan. U.S. researchers and activists tend to consider the concept of local as resisting trends toward globalization. They argue that the flourishing of multi-national companies threatens democracy and social justice, and therefore, they recognize that certain activities at the local level are important tools for promoting social change. Furthermore, in the U.S. they recognize that local food movements are the entry point for resolving other social problems such as environmental issues, social justice, democracy and so on. The meaning of locality has come to emphasize democratic decision making and social justice in the U.S. In Japan, on the other hand, particularly in the many *Chisan-chisho* movements, “local”

is interpreted as signifying geographic/ physical scale. We come to that most participants in *Chisan-chisho* movements didn't consider democratic decision making and social justice in terms of local movements. U.S. consumers who participate in local food movements become food citizens, but Japanese consumers who participate in *Chisan-chisho* movements act only as consumers worried about food safety.

We suggest that they need to recognize their food issues as a structural problem in order to reformulate the *Chisan-chisho* movement in Japan. They also need to understand that the concepts of "food" and "local" are tools to gain entry to issues of social justice and democratic decision making. We expect that all *Chisan-chisho* participants' interests will expand from food to environment and social change, just as movements in the U.S. have experienced. But we also recognize that in the U.S., local food movements have started simply by focusing on food issues. Both of them should focus their activities towards the same goals of sustainability, social justice and democratic decision making. So, we believe that people need the values of life found in "*chisan-chisho*" to establish a sustainable society.

- 1) *Teikei* is organic agriculture movement started in the 1970's. In *Teikei* movement, farmers and consumers who understood the value of organic farming linked to each other directly. The farmers tried to produce organic food. The consumers supported the producers' life to buy their organic food and to help some works in farmers' field.
- 2) *Sanchoku* is direct marketing between farmers' organizations and consumers' organizations. Many *Sanchoku* in the 1980's linked between farmers' co-operatives and consumers' co-operatives. The development of *Sanchoku* contributed the expansion of organic market and direct marketing then.
- 3) This section was analyzed on the basis of the information that I interviewed the officer C of department of agricultural marketing in Iwate Prefecture on April 2004.
- 4) This section was analyzed on the basis of the information that I interviewed the president T of Akita *Chisan Chisho wo susumeru kai* on April 2004.

## Reference

- [ 1 ] Allen Patricia (1999) "Reweaving the food security safety net: mediating entitlement and entrepreneurship" *Agriculture and human Values* 16: 117-129
- [ 2 ] Allen Patricia, Margaret FitzSimmons, Michael Goodman, Keith Warner (2003) "Shifting plates in the agrifood landscape: the tectonics of alternative agrifood initiatives in California" *Journals of rural Studies* 19: 61-75
- [ 3 ] Buttel Frederic H (2000) The recombinant BGH controversy in the United states: toward a new consumption politics of food ? " *Agriculture and Human values* 17: 5-20
- [ 4 ] Community Food Security Coalition Newsletter Fall 02-Winter 03 <http://www.foodsecurity.org/>
- [ 5 ] Food Route Network <http://www.foodroutes.org/>
- [ 6 ] Goodman David and Michael Redciff (1991) "Introduction." *Refashioning Nature: Food, Ecology, and Culture*. London, New York: Routledge. xi-xviii
- [ 7 ] Gottlieb (2000) *Environmentalism Unbound* 186, 204
- [ 8 ] Hassanein Neva (2003) "Practicing food democracy: a pragmatic politics of transformation." *Journal of rural Studies* 19: 77-86
- [ 9 ] Hinriches Clare (2003) "The practice and politics of food system localization." *Journal of Rural Studies* 19: 33-45.
- [ 10 ] Kloppenburg Jack Jr, John Hendrickson, and G.W. Stevenson (1996) "Coming in to the foodshed." *Agriculture and Human Values* 13: 3 (summer): 33-42.
- [ 11 ] Lang Tim (1999) "Food policy for the 21<sup>st</sup> century: can it be both radical and reasonable." 216-224
- [ 12 ] Lappe Moore (1991) "An entry point" Pp. 7-15 in *Diet for a Small Planet-20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition*. New York, NY: Ballantine.
- [ 13 ] Local Harvest Newsletter Fall 02-Winter 03 <http://www.localharvest.org/>
- [ 14 ] Lockeretz William (1986) "Alternative agriculture" Kenneth A. Dahlberg (ed.), *New Directions for Agricultural Research: Neglected Dimensions and Emerging Alternatives*. Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Allanheld. 291-311
- [ 15 ] McMichael Philip (2000) "The Power of Food" *Agriculture and Human values* 17: 21-33
- [ 16 ] Nakajima Kiichi (1999) "The constitution of the relationship between producers and consumers for ac-

- quiring the system of food safety.” The Structural change of Food System and Agriculture and Fishery. (Japanese) 166-190
- [17] Negishi Hisako (2000) “The support initiatives for farm women business by farmers’ co-operatives” Agribusiness and corporation by farm women (Japanese) 35-50
- [18] Nishiyama Mima, and Yoshida Yoshiaki (2001) “The development of farm women’s market and their farm –the case of Ustunomiya agriland city shop–” Tech. Bull. Fac. Hort, Chiba University (Japanese) 55: 59-67
- [19] Nousei seikatsu sougou kenkyu center (2004) “The self-sufficiency in the locality for the better life of producers and consumers” Report of RLRS 2004: 11-12
- [20] Reynolds Laura T (2000) “Re-embedding global agriculture: the international organic and fair trade movements.” Agriculture and Human Values 17: 3: 297-309
- [21] Taniguchi Yoshimitsu (2002) “The Chisan-chisho Initiative in Akita Prefecture” Tohoku Agricultural Economy 21: 20-25 (Japanese)
- [22] Welsh Jennifer and MacRae Rod (1998) “Food citizenship and community food security.” Canadian Journal of Development studies 19: 237-255.

## 摘 要

本稿では、日本における地域の食に関する運動につい

て、発足の背景、展開過程を整理し、その展望についてアメリカとの比較を通して考察する。慣行栽培や市場流通など従来の農業のあり方と異なるものとしてオルタナティブな農業運動を定義し、1990年代後半に始まった地産地消運動に注目する。地産地消運動は地元で生産された農産物を地元で消費しようというものであり、「地域」という面的な範囲を活動範囲とするとともに、生産者と消費者がその地域を共有しているという点で従来のオルタナティブ運動と一線を画している。しかし、その多くは国内農産物の販路拡大を目的とした農林水産省の政策の下、政府や自治体が主導した運動となっている。

アメリカでは地域の食に関する運動には日本よりも長い歴史があり、議論の蓄積もある。既往の文献から地域の食に関する運動の目標、進むべき方向性などを整理した。アメリカでは地域の食に関する運動が食の安全、安心のみならず、地域の環境問題、地域における社会的公正の実現、民主的な地域運営など様々な社会問題を解決する手段として認識されている。一方、日本の地産地消運動は販路拡大の手段としてのみ認識されており、その限定的な位置づけのために食の安全、安心、食料安全保障を確保するための運動に矮小化されてしまう危険性がある。そこで、本稿では「食」と「地域」という概念が社会的公正、民主的な意思決定のための重要な手段になることへの認識の必要性を指摘し、地産地消運動の参加者それぞれが、食を入り口として地域資源としての環境問題、地域住民にとってのよりよい社会のあり方へとその関心領域を広げていくことが、地域の食運動の可能性をひらくものとして整理した。