

# Postwar Reclamation Policy and Social Capital

## – Sokano Settlement in Hyogo Prefecture –

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*<Abstract> This paper is a midterm report on an investigation into postwar reclamation projects in the city of Ono, searching implications for social capital research. The Great East Japan Earthquake, which occurred on March 11, 2011, is certainly one of the biggest crises Japan has faced in the 60 years since World War II. However, this does not change the fact that losing the Pacific War was one of the biggest crises for Japanese society as a whole in its modern history. Postwar reclamation projects accepted the millions of Japanese who had emigrated before the war in response to a national policy only to return to an impoverished nation due to the shock of losing the war and the food crisis. The question is whether or not the experiences from the postwar reclamation projects implemented as measures for returnees have any lessons to offer for a post-March 11 Japan.*

*Keywords: reclamation projects, postwar years, Sokano, agricultural land reform*

### Introduction

On September 8, 2011, the author conducted interviews with people involved in the postwar reclamation project in the town<sup>1</sup> of Daikai in the city of Ono in Hyogo Prefecture. Ono is about 30 kilometers northwest of Kobe and surrounded by the cities of Miki, Kato, and Kasai on the eastern shore of the Kakogawa River. People settled in the plains of western Ono along the Kakogawa River long ago, with the Kodoji Temple being established in the 7th century. Due to irrigation problems in the eastern hills, however, no one settled the eastern wasteland, an area

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<sup>1</sup> In this document, administrative units for place names are handled as follows: *-gun* is denoted as county, *-shi* as city, *-cho* as town, *-mura* as village, and *-gou* as township.

known as Sokano. After World War II ended in 1945, those from Yabu County who crossed the seas for Manchuria settlements returned home and settled in Sokano. These postwar returnees and demobilized troops were taken in and made to settle uncultivated lands in Japan in a policy called the emergency reclamation project, generally called the postwar reclamation project. The author has previously written about Ono history and proceeded to interview residents on the history of postwar settlements in the Sokano area.<sup>2</sup>

Historical study of postwar reclamation does have relevance to social capital study. Originally, I was studying postwar reclamation as a part of agricultural land reform history. With the earthquake on March 11, 2011 and ensuing nuclear disaster, however, I thought that awareness of the issues for those forced to move may share some common points with postwar reclamation historical study. A common point is the networks used by people expelled from their natural home towns to find new lands, build life bases and learned to coexist with the local community of their adopted home. I explored several issues: how migrants built and used their networks to build a new life, how migrants were received by their adopted homes, what policies there were for supporting migrants and their adopted homes. As people looking to form a new community in a new home, it was not a matter of whether they had social capital or not, but rather that they had to recreate their social capital anew, at least in part. In the age of crisis immediately following the war, the questions are how returnees were received and how the returnees utilized and created their social capital. Verifying the historical efforts of the people involved and supporting policies in a situation with several undesirable factors where migration was inevitable should still have significance today.

### **1 . Background on Settlement**

Three people were gracious enough to participate in interviews for this study: Ishio Ogura, the fourth president of the Sokano Agricultural Cooperative; Koji Tanifuji; and Toraji Fujiwara, the sixth co-op president. First we will look at how each of them came to settle on this reclaimed land.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Please also see my previous work for a history of postwar reclamation and land improvement projects in Ono: "Land Reform and Postwar Reclamation," *History of Ono*, Vol. III (2004).

<sup>3</sup> The interviews below were in part completed with recollections from the Sokano Agricultural Cooperation "History" (1965) and "Final Summary" (1976).



**Picture left: From the left: Koji Tanifuji, Ishio Ogura, Toraji Fujiwara**

**Picture right: Memorial for deceased settlers of Bei Er Tun and Sokano in Daikai community center**

### **Story of Koji Tanifuji**

Born in 1923, Koji was the firstborn son of Rinji Tanifuji, a blacksmith in the town of Hirotani in Yabu County, Hyogo (currently the city of Yabu). After graduating elementary school, Koji lived with his uncle in Kyoto until going with his father to Manchuria in spring 1940 as part of a group of settlers. They were part of the Yabu settlement in Bei Er Tun in Dongxing County, Binjiang Province (currently Mulan County, Heilongjiang Province), northeast of Harbin. The two were trained in Bei Er Tun for two years, then were allocated land in 1942 and began farming it. Koji's father died of sickness that same year. With one horse and one cow, Koji worked hard to farm the land as the head of his family.

Koji was allocated 13 hectares and cultivated it by himself with one horse. Due to insufficient irrigation and labor problems, the fields required direct seeding. Also, in the cold regions near Harbin, rice could not be harvested in September if there was frost. It was a race to see whether he could harvest the crops in 90 days after seeding. The seeds were provided through the Manchurian Colonization Corporation. The first year was hard; with direct seeding, Japanese millet mixed in with many of the rice plants. From the second year, farmers found that putting the seedlings in water in about a month made the millet wither and succeeded in eliminating it. They hired 40 or so local girls at once to take care of other weeding in one day. Local farmers did not use fertilizer, but rather would cultivate the land for 20-25 years and then move the entire village when it was depleted to change to new land.

Koji married his wife Fumiko in 1944, but was then drafted into the Gongzhuling Air Defense Forces in July 1945. He learned the war was over on August 17 in Szepingkai (currently Siping city). After his unit was disbanded, he set out for Harbin to find his family but was taken prisoner by Soviet forces. He was forced into hard labor for around 40 days in Mudanjiang,

working to widen tracks on the South Manchuria Railway, but avoided being sent to the Siberian countryside. After being released, he returned to the Yabu settlement and was rejoined with the community and his family. They then set out on the trip back to Japan in May 1946. Luckily, the Yabu settlement escaped the unfortunate raids that beset many Japanese settlements in Manchuria, with many stories of Soviet force invasions and retribution by KMT forces and locals. After transiting from Harbin to Jinzhou, Koji and his family became ill and had to check into a hospital for a while. After the detour, they arrived in Huludao and boarded a ship back to Japan. They passed through Sasebo and landed in Port Otake in Kure on October 17, 1946.

Upon returning to Japan, they lived in the city of Akashi for a while. In Akashi, people from the former Yabu settlement settled in the Tamatsu Dormitory, a shared housing facility accepting returnees. Koji worked in downtown Kobe for a bit, but then heard word of a reclamation settlement. At first, he felt it ridiculous that they went to Manchuria because there was no food in Japan, and now there were such settlements within Japan. Despite this, the Tanifujis boarded a truck with 26 others from the Tamatsu Dormitory to the village of Shimotojo and started clearing the land in Sokano. This was in February 1947, in the dead of winter.

### **Story of Toraji Fujiwara**

Toraji Fujiwara was born in 1926 in the village of Nishidani in Yabu County, Hyogo (currently the city of Yabu). After graduating elementary school, Toraji entered an electrical training school in Fukushima-ku, Osaka in 1941 and later worked as a civilian in an Osaka army weapons factory. In April 1942, he moved his entire family to Manchuria on the recommendation of his brother, who had been at a settlement since 1937. The Fujiwaras joined the same Yabu settlement that the Tanifujis had. The settlement was jointly managed by 25 farm families in Furong Tun. Originally assigned to the paddy fields, Toraji then worked as an office worker in the head settlement office. Then in March 1944, he enlisted in the army when he reached 18 years of age. After being stationed with a unit in Suiyang County, Dongman Consolidated Province (currently Dongning County, Heilongjiang), the unit mobilized to Cheju Island. They were building up a defensive position there when the war ended. They were ordered to disband, and Toraji landed in Sasebo on November 16, 1945, the fastest in his family of three. After returning to Japan, he worked in factories in Osaka and Himeji, also dabbling as a runner at one point buying black market rice. He then received word that his family returned from Manchuria in June 1946 and reunited with them and the people from Yabu settlement at the Tamatsu Dormitory, although his mother had not survived. After rejoining with them, he decided to join the Sokano settlement on the recommendation of a group within the Yabu settlement including Shoji Fujiwara, president of the Asahi Agricultural Cooperative in Miki. He settled there in February 1947, almost the same time as the Tanifujis.

### **Story of Ishio Ogura**

Ishio Ogura was born in 1925 in the village of Mikata in Shiso County, Hyogo (currently the city of Shiso). In April 1939, Ishio volunteered for the Manchurian Youth Corps. He went to

Manchuria after training at the Uchihara Training Center in Uchihara, Ibaraki Prefecture (currently the city of Mito), opened by Kanji Kato, a Manchurian settlement leader.

From here, he trained and worked a total of three years in the Youth Corps Training Center in Tieling County, Binjiang Province (currently Tieli, Heilongjiang) and Tongbei Manchurian Railway Training Center in Tongbei County, Beian Province (currently Beian, Heilongjiang). Next, he helped with group land clearing in the Zenrin Volunteer Settlement in Tongbei County. Drafted in 1944, he then joined a unit in Chunhua, Hunchun County, Jiandao Province (now Hunchun, Jilin Province) as artillery. The unit was disarmed on August 27, 1945 after a battle with Soviet forces in which the 1,500-troop unit was reduced to only 60. After this, Ishio was taken to a P.O.W. camp in Jincang and made to work on railroad construction in the Muuli District of Siberia.

While interned in Siberia, the guards could only count as many prisoners as they had fingers on their hands, and roll call of the 200 prisoners took one hour. Ishio professes on the one hand wondering how Japan could lose to the Russians after seeing that even their noncommissioned officers could not read or write, and on the other being amazed at how the Russians calmly worked where Japanese were falling left and right. He lost friends in accidents during the hard labor, but also became enamored with Marxism while taking a "democracy course" during his internment. While the work was hard, the Russian soldiers worked under the same conditions and Ishio had a full stock of supplies by the end of his internment. He had few complaints other than the wish to go home.

In July 1949, Ishio was ordered home after three years and nine months of internment, sailing from Nakhodka and arriving in Maizuru on July 27. Introduced to the Tamatsu Dormitory by his brother who also returned from Manchuria, he went there and was recruited into the Sokano area as an additional settler. He thus joined the settlement much later than Tanifuji or Fujiwara.

In Japanese postwar reclamation policy, many of the settlers were people like Tanifuji that went to mainland China either as a part of prewar settlement or otherwise and came back to Japan when Japan lost the war. As understood from the interviews: 1) Manchurian settlers were often paired into communities in the adopted land according to where they were from, or more precisely, they were put into colonies made up of people from not their hometowns, but their same county; 2) their network from when they immigrated was still intact upon returning to Japan. More detail will be given on the emergency reclamation projects that took in returnees in this fashion in following sections. After returning to Japan, people from the Yabu settlement organized the Tamatsu Dormitory and accepted returnees from the same town, and many of the agricultural cooperatives were formed based on hometowns even in the postwar resettlement in Japan.

## **2 . The Postwar Reclamation Project and Ono Settlement**

### **The Postwar Reclamation Project**

This section will explain what kind of project the postwar reclamation project that settled the three interviewees was and give an overview of settlement in the municipality which accepted them: Ono, Hyogo. The roots of reclamation policy for increasing food production go back to wartime. The Second Sino-Japanese War, started in 1937, was being drawn out, and 1939 saw poor rice crops in the Korean Peninsula and western Japan. These factors resulted in a severe imbalance between Japanese food supplies and demand, and the government formulated a plan to increase self-support for staple foods. The plan aimed to open up 500,000 hectares of fields for rice and other crops, settle 60,000 homesteads, and improve 1.72 million hectares of land over 10 years. The government announced the Agricultural Land Development Act in March 1941 and established the Agricultural Land Development Foundation in May 1941 for the plan. Funds and materials then dwindled as the war intensified, and the plan was inevitably shrunk, with much of it having to be suspended.

After the war, reclamation projects were an even more pressing issue than before with the addition of the reportedly seven million Japanese troops demobilized from overseas. On November 9, 1945, the Cabinet approved its Guidelines for Implementing Emergency Reclamation Projects. The guidelines called for a total of 1.55 million hectares to be cleared over five years, comprised of 850,000 hectares within Japan proper and 700,000 hectares in Hokkaido, reclamation of 100,000 hectares of lake and ocean surface over six years, and settlement of one million households. There were also massive undertakings in land improvement, aiming to product 2.1 million hectares of additional soil, redeployed arable land, and irrigation for farmland in three years, as well as increased production of around 7,500 kilograms of rice a year.<sup>4</sup>

The government originally expected to apply the existing Agricultural Land Development Act and Land Adjustment Act to acquire land, but they held little legal force for land appropriation. Thus, they felt it necessary to develop new laws in order to achieve the targets for emergency reclamation projects. They thus inserted language stipulating forced appropriation of uncultivated land into Article 30 of the Law Concerning the Special Measures for the Establishment of Landed Farmers, the legal basis for the Amended Land Reform Act. This allowed the government to acquire lands recognized as uncultivated when presented along with lands for development. This in turn allowed them to acquire and redistribute vast amounts of uncultivated land, both state-owned and privately owned. According to Tanifuji, such policies were in place when he settled on the Sokano plateau.

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<sup>4</sup> Postwar Reclamation History Committee's "History of Postwar Reclamation" (1967) has much detail on postwar reclamation projects.

### **Changes for reclamation projects**

At a certain point, reclamation projects began to change. In the early postwar period, emergency reclamation projects were formulated mainly to offer relief to demobilized troops and returnees. After clearing this first stage with the issue of repatriation, society started to regain its composure and require plans to be revised. There was a great backlash against postwar reclamation focusing on settlement of repatriates from the municipalities who were to take in these repatriates, especially from land owners whose uncultivated land was appropriated. These projects required forced land appropriation to take in the repatriates, but there were of course consequences. Not being used to farming and being subjected to severe conditions, many among the resettled quickly gave up farming for other professions. In the interest of increasing food production, the heightened demands of local farmers to increase planting area also pushed for revisions to the system. Thus, on October 24, 1947, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry removed the "Emergency" from the name of the Guidelines for Implementation of Emergency Reclamation Projects. They converted to policies which focused on increasing food production, shifting the stress of reclamation from settling repatriates to land improvements and more land for local farmers. With the Amended Land Reform Act coming to an end, that November the vice minister of Agriculture and Forestry ordered an end to appropriations of uncultivated land by the end of 1948 and gave the land area for uncultivated land to be appropriated for all prefectures on April 2. In Hyogo, a total of 7,500 hectares was to be appropriated, including 5,041 hectares of private land, 1,627 of national forest, and 832 hectares of former military land. However, these area figures for appropriation were decided without sufficiently surveying the lands, and the actual areas did not meet the national targets. In Hyogo, just over 60% of the plan, 4,535 hectares, had been appropriated by the end of 1948. Reclamation policy had turned a corner, and officials relaxed their stance on uncultivated land appropriation. They decided to reasonably select suitable lands and judge the qualifications of settlers in promoting reclamation settlement without focusing as much on how much land area they were given.

### **Reclamation Agricultural Cooperatives in Ono**

Most of the land reclaimed after the war in Hyogo was concentrated in the city limits of Ono. Sanda and the town of Yashiro both had seven Reclamation agricultural cooperatives, but Ono was the third in the prefecture behind them with six. Looking at the area of former Kato County, there were 15 cooperatives in the towns of Yashiro, Tojo, and Takino. In truth, a fourth of all the cooperatives in Hyogo were concentrated in Kato County.<sup>5</sup> One possible reason why

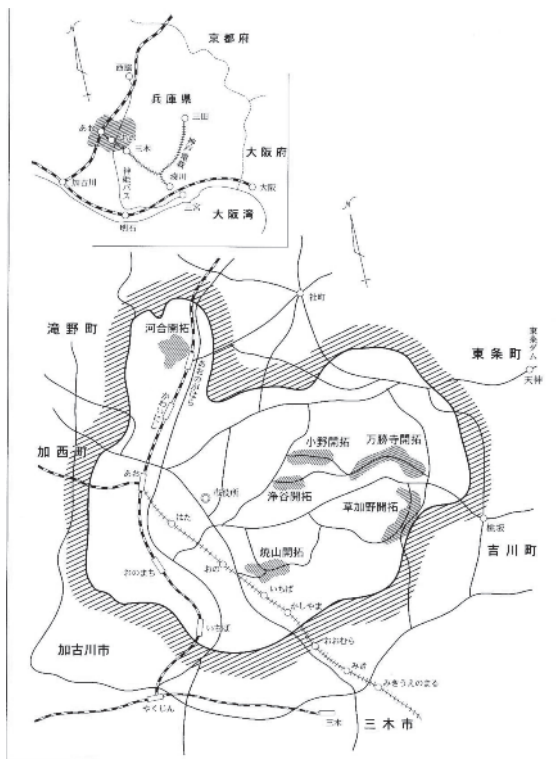
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<sup>5</sup> The other reclaimed areas in Ono were the Yorifujino and Ukisaka areas. In the Hyogo Agriculture and Forestry Department Land Development Section's "History of Hyogo Land Reform" (1953), reclaimed land in Yorifujino was in former Shimotojo, but according to Hyogo's "History of Postwar Development" (1974), the Yorifujino Reclamation Agricultural Cooperative was located on the border between the former village of Nakatojo and Yashiro. The first historical record is thought to be a mistake. Meanwhile, Ukisaka was a reclamation project including uncultivated land in the former Shimotojo in current Ono. The cooperative itself, however, was the Miwa Reclamation Agricultural Cooperative in Yashiro.



settlements concentrated in this region so much was that much of the uncultivated land in these municipalities was relatively level. These lands were not cleared to that point because they had poor water access. The Higashi-Harima region traditionally had poor water access. While there were several attempts to clear the plateaus since ancient times, all attempts ultimately ended in utter frustration. When Tanifuji and the others came to settle the land, they were not aware of this history. At the time they were impressed with the vast plateau of Sokano as reminiscent of Manchuria, but looking back now they had no idea how rough the poor water access would make things.

The six cooperatives established in Ono each had their own different personalities. These lands were settled not only by returnees and demobilized troops, but also evacuees from the cities and troops and others coming to settle from outside the city limits. They also included the sons of local farmers, as well as existing farmers clearing the land to expand their own land and increase planting area. The settlers had a strong tendency to form cooperatives with others having similar backgrounds or from the same areas. Further, by also recognizing local aspirations to expand fields while promoting settlement, the government won the understanding of the locals on outside settlers. A description of the individual cooperatives is given below.



注 草刈野『沿革史』より作成。

**Map: Location map of settlements within Ono city**



### **Sokano Reclamation Agricultural Cooperative**

The Sokano area refers to a fan-shaped plateau in what is now the eastern part of Ono—at the time the town of Ono and village of Shimotojo—and part of current-day Miki, then called Hosogawa, a village in Minou County. In 1945, The Agricultural Land Development Foundation devised a development plan for the area. They appropriated uncultivated land from private owners and the village, and 41 households settled in the area between December 1946 and February 1947. Tanifuji entered the area in the second wave of settlements.

As described previously, many of those that settled in this area were returnees from Manchuria. Many were part of the 9th Yabu settlement, a planned migration of Yabu County residents to Bei Er Tun, Dongxing County, Binjiang Province, Manchuria. After returning to Japan, these people grouped and settled together. Many former colonists of Manchuria resettled in reclaimed land upon returning to Japan. In this case, they felt a sense of camaraderie having lived together in Manchuria and enduring an escape journey lasting a year or longer after the war. Based on these ties, they pushed on after the war to develop and farm the Sokano plateau into their second new home. The association was originally two groups that merged in December 1948.



**Left: Kaitaku Shrine, Right: Sokano Reclamation Memorial, erected in 1960**

### **Manshoji Reclamation Agricultural Cooperative**

This cooperative was established in the western neighbor to Sokano, currently called the town of Manshoji in Ono. This region is also mainly land marked for reclamation by the Agricultural Land Development Foundation. They cleared state- and private-owned forests and cultivated fields to be settled. Unlike with Sokano, this cooperative was comprised of evacuees, war victims and repatriates from different areas.

### **Kawai Reclamation Agricultural Cooperative**

Before the war, the village of Kawai in western Ono housed army training grounds, but part of this land was given up for emergency reclamation and became a settlement. The area is near the current town of Nishiyama in Ono. This cooperative was formed in August 1948 by a group of sons of farmers from the local area.

### **Ono Reclamation Agricultural Cooperative**

This cooperative was made in the area near the current town of Kiyotani in eastern Ono. The land was appropriated private- and state-owned forest given to settlers. This cooperative was comprised of a comparatively large number of local farmers looking to increase their own field area.

### **Kiyotani Reclamation Agricultural Cooperative**

This cooperative was located next to the aforementioned Ono Reclamation Agricultural Cooperative near what is currently Higashi-Shinbayashi in Kiyotani. It was formed on January 17, 1950, and, as with the Ono cooperative, was made up mostly of farmers looking to increase their plots.



**Picture: Monument to reclamation near the Kiyotani settlement**

### **Yakiyama Reclamation Agricultural Cooperative**

The last cooperative formed in the Ono city. With reclamation commencing in 1952 in the former village of Ichiba (now eastern Ono), this cooperative was formed in November 1952 of 11 repatriate and evacuee households, and 161 farmers looking to expand.

Table 1: Appropriated and sold land in Ono by postwar settlement

Units: ha

City Name	Area Name	Work Class	Land Class	Land Appropriated	Measure d +/-	Sold	Disposed Land	Roads/ Waterways, etc.	
Ono	Manshoji	C	F/P	84.7	-0.1	82.8		1.8	
	Horaino	A	P	16.5	0.6	15.6		1.5	
	Ono	C	F/P	98.1	-4.2	86.6	1.3	6.0	
	Yamashinden	M	P	5.3	1.1	5.1	1.2	0.1	
	Kashiyama	M	P	8.1	0.1	7.2	0.5	0.5	
	Kitano	M	P	5.2	-0.3	4.9		0.0	
	Yakiyama	C	P	56.6	0.9	50.3		7.2	
	Yakiyama (1)	M	P	1.4		1.4		0.0	
	Furukawa	M	G	0.5		0.4		0.1	
	Ichiba	M	O/P	2.3		2.3		0.0	
	Nagao	M	O/P	4.8	-0.6	4.0		0.2	
	Nishiwaki	M	O/P	1.7		1.6		0.1	
	Manshoji / Chuzan-Chuetsu	M	O/P	1.2	-0.3	0.9		0.0	
	Benzaiten	M	O/P	0.2		0.2		0.0	
	Engasan	M	O/P	1.3		1.3		0.0	
	Kurofuka	M	O/P	1.6	0.1	1.7		0.0	
	Nakaban	M	O/P	1.3	0.4	1.7		0.0	
	Takagi / Noyama-Souyama	C	O/P	21.4		18.8	0.4	2.2	
	Ono / Miki	Sokano	C	P	140.7	-14.9	115.8	0.9	9.1
	Ono / Yashiro (town)	Ukisaka	C	P	61.2	0.5	59.6		2.1
Kasai / Ono / Takino (town)	Aonogahara	C	G	158.0	1.1	158.6	0.5	0.0	

## Notes:

- Chart based on chart from pg. 43 of Hyogo's "History of Postwar Development"

- Area converted to m2 from development property ledger and rounded to the nearest 100m2.

- For work class column: C = Contracted construction areas, A = assisted project areas,

M = areas with work other than the above, O = other areas

- For land class column, land appropriated from: P = Private/public land,

G = transferred from Government ministry other than MAF, F = transferred from Forestry Agency property,

O = Land stipulated for appropriation by Ono Land Committee

As shown in Table 1, there were several other cases of uncultivated land appropriation by municipal land committees outside of these Hyogo Land Committee settlements, but no other reclamation cooperatives with legal status were confirmed. Two things are clear from this regarding cooperatives in Ono: 1) early cooperatives were mainly people settling from outside the city, divided into groups returning from Manchuria and evacuating from cities; and 2) cooperatives established from 1948 onward were mainly local farmers looking to expand, used surplus national forestland, and were otherwise established in formats that would also benefit the local agricultural community.

### 3. Land Clearing and Farming

#### Difficulties in land clearing

According to Tanifuji, work in clearing the land was done almost entirely by hand. The Sokano area was conducive to clearing; the soil was full of red clay, the ground was relatively soft, and there were few stones. He plowed the land with a 12 cm-wide hoe purchased from a blacksmith in the town of Nishiwaki. When he needed a cart, he had to go nearly 40 km away to Hirono Station in Sanda. Sometimes he had to walk home. Provisions were scarce during the settlement

period, so each person was rationed about 270 g of rice per day. There were also no vegetables or other food given, so Tanifuji would stave off hunger by getting daikon radish leaves from a neighboring farmer and making a weak rice porridge. Developing farmers received 20-year loans from the national government, deferred for five years. Tanifuji would go to the Bank of Japan in Sannomiya in Kobe and come home with a backpack stuffed with 10 yen notes, but at the time was forced to use almost the entire sum for living expenses. Reflecting on his situation, he then made a proper farming plan and borrowed the money to make it happen. At first, Tanifuji sent his wife and children to Akaishi and settled the land by himself, and then invited them in June 1947. Their diet did not improve much even then, however; he bought up rice bran from the neighborhood to feed to his children. His family was put in a weakened state during this period, and he lost his eldest daughter to disease in 1948.

The first crop Tanifuji grew was sweet potatoes. At first, it was difficult to irrigate paddy fields for rice due to poor water access in the settlement. With little fertilizer and red clay for soil, the vines were slow to grow; when he started at the settlement, a thumb width potato was good. The settlers could use their own compost once the cooperative incorporated in 1948 and they brought cows in with aid for reclamation, but things were painfully difficult before that. They also had to dig their own wells. As a layman, it took Tanifuji 10 days to dig 16 to 17 meters before he finally hit water. For two years, it was a real struggle just to put enough food on the table to survive. Despite this, Tanifuji reflects with a wry smile that it was a rewarding experience that may just be the reason he has lived so long.

### **Cows introduced**

In 1948, the community received 23 milk cows. Tanifuji says that this had something to do with the fact that Kyoshin Milk came from Kobe and opened a dairy farm in the Aonogahara area of Ono in 1947. As the cows were given to the community, each household held onto one while they were mated, to be returned to the cooperative once they bore calves. In this way, they slowly increased their numbers. At their peak, 72 houses in the Sokano and Manshoji areas—nearly 70%—owned milk cows. They developed a system of managing their daily farming in which they would grow their own feed with the second crop for paddy fields. The Manshoji area received 34 hectares of national forest around 1980 and turned it into a pasture, but the number of farms handling dairy has decreased in recent years. A striking number have moved from self-grown feed to purchased feed, and there have been issues in finding enough labor and successors. There are currently only two farmers left in the community that manage dairy, one of whom is Ogura.

### **The struggle moving to paddy fields**

With the longstanding poor water access, farmers in Sokano had stuck to field crops out of necessity. They finally converted the land to paddy fields in 1958 thanks to improved water access from construction of the Kamogawa Dam. In order to get water from the dam, each house in the cooperative converted to paddy fields 0.3 hectares at a time. At time of settlement, each

house was allotted approximately 1.3 hectares of farmland, and they each eventually converted one hectare to paddy fields. In terms of rice crops, the Ono and Kato areas are known for producing Yamada Nishiki, a well-known rice for making sake. Yamada Nishiki is a relatively large grain rice with long stems, making it easy for it to fall down and a hard variety to grow. As it is a name brand rice for making sake, however, it can be sold for almost twice the price of normal rice. Fujiwara tells us this is why he started growing it and still does to this day. With sake rice crops being reduced and fewer young people showing interest in sake though, he is concerned with what the future holds.



**Left: Kyoshin Milk, Right: Yamada Nishiki, well known as a rice brand for sake**

**Table 2: List of reclamation agricultural cooperatives in Ono (as of 1967)**

Cooperative Name	Year Est.	Member Households	Area Used (ha)					Farming Format	Location (town name)
			Paddy Fields	Crop Fields	Orchards	Pastures	Total		
Sokano	1948	49	38.9	26.7			114.6	Paddy/dairy	Daikai
Manshoji	1948	55	47.2	21.4	1.4		125.0	Paddy/dairy	Manshoji
Ono	1950	21	16.8	3.3	0.7	6.0	47.8	Paddy/dairy	Kiyotani
Kiyotani	1950	11	11.0	2.3	1.2		25.5	Paddy/dairy	Kiyotani
Kawai	1948	19	0.9	19.0	0.7		39.6	Field crops	Nishiyama
Yakiyama	1957	11	10.9	1.9	0.1		23.9	Paddy/livestock	Futaba
<b>Total</b>		<b>166</b>	<b>125.7</b>	<b>74.6</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>376.4</b>		

**Note:**

Table reprinted from Masao Okada, *Memories of Yakiyama, Past and Present, Vol. 6, "Stories from Ono, No. 14"* (2000)

### Growing leaf tobacco

Another leading crop grown on the settlement was leaf tobacco. Since around 1968, 37 households in the cooperative have had tobacco as a commercial crop. With the Japan Tobacco monopoly the crop was good for income, but it was exceedingly time-consuming. There was such a lack of manpower that tobacco farmers did not have the time to even sleep during harvest season. A running joke in the settlement went that you "grow tobacco if you want to die young, raise chickens if you want to be poor, and grow strawberries if you want to fight." With the monopoly, transactions were graded very strictly. Fujiwara commented that the Japan Tobacco employees were as strict as rice inspectors in wartime and postwar Japan.

#### 4 . Friction and Life With the Host Municipalities

##### Issues with appropriation of uncultivated lands

The postwar reclamation project involved a number of troublesome elements which reached beyond that of normal land reform. Land reform usually involves giving land which has already been used for small-scale tenant farming, but this project involved handing land with no history of agricultural use over to new settlers and farmers looking to expand. With outcries over the nationwide food crisis, however, landowners had also given up to an extent and were willing to accept help in increasing production. Even so, appropriations of not only uncultivated land but also village- and privately-owned property met fierce opposition from many.<sup>6</sup> Nothing had ever grown on the uncultivated land, and not all new settlers wanted to continue farming for long. Also, as touched on previously, initial emergency reclamation projects were also a form of social policy for dealing with repatriates. From the perspective of increasing food production, there was no guarantee that reclamation settlements were the best choice. This also became the main basis for local farmers to demand more land for themselves. In addition, there were concerns and conflicts going beyond confrontations with single landowners and tenant farming. For example, lumbering and clearing forest regions in areas like the plateau in Manshoji and Sokano brought up common right issues with forest resources like leaf litter and firewood, as well as the danger of flood damage from lumbering.

In the committee minutes dated September 15, 1947, the local Ichiba Farmland Committee recorded opposition to the Sokano settlement as follows:

*Objections have been filed against appropriations by the Yamada and Ikejiri quarters. There are also objections on the grounds that the owners will inflict great harm on the quarters, and personal objections to losing the mountain.*

*The land should be able to produce some crops if cleared; however, the land looks to be about 2-3 hectares and will probably have very low yields considering how small the planned area is.*

*How much land area is to be appropriated?*

*Approximately 10 hectares.*

*Having surveyed the land myself, I agree with the chair that it appears to be about 2-3 hectares. Also, I'm not sure what sticks in our towns in the prefecture's plan, but the plot is long and narrow. Irrigation is also at issue; the three planned quarters extend up to the plateau and will result in flood damage. We are concerned for all those in the Ikejiri quarter. The land will be unbearable without water, and the first heavy rain will drain down into the pond and most likely flood*

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<sup>6</sup> For more on the difficulties surrounding uncultivated land appropriation in postwar reclamation policies, see my paper "A Study on Postwar Reclamation Policy" in the *Senshu Economic Journal*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (2002).



*over the embankment. We've had more problems with standing water in recent years and are struggling with flash flooding. Everyone here knows that every time it has rained in the past three years, water has flooded over the river embankments and damaged our paddy fields. If they put 2-3 hectares of crop fields and it causes more damage to the paddy fields, it will all be for naught. Clearing the land is a good idea in terms of increasing food production, but clearing out land in Ichiba or Sokano will greatly damage Ichiba. As such, I must absolutely protest.<sup>7</sup>*

In summary, local opinion was that in clearing 10 hectares, only about 2-3 hectares of this would be usable for cultivation. Further, they also stressed that large-scale development would place low-lying communities in peril as the Sokano plateau was acting to retain water from flooding the region. The members of the farmland committee all agreed with this opinion, and the committee, representatives from each quarter, a representative of the farmers' union and the town mayors all signed a petition against the prefecture's decision.

### **Coexisting with local expansion**

The lead up to and results of this petition are not clear. Seeing as the prefecture went through with settlement in the Sokano settlement community, however, they appear to have been successful in neutralizing local discontent. As mentioned previously, one of the measures used to diffuse the situation was increasing land for the local farmers. The agricultural reclamation cooperatives built in the latter stages of the reclamation project were mainly additional land for local farmers. In addition, additional land was allocated for 137 local farmers along with farmland for 98 newly settled households in Sokano and Manshoji, which were lands mainly for settlers. The plans for allocating uncultivated land to so many expanding farmers is a great expansion on the original plans from the Agricultural Land Development Foundation plans, and appears to be all due to the lobbying efforts of the towns. While such solutions are inconsistent with the development concerns on flooding voiced above, separate land improvements were taken as disaster prevention measures as discussed in Section 5. At any rate, by also approving a certain amount of land increases for local farmers, the prefecture was able to quell their discontent for the settlements and produce conditions in which the two parties could coexist. The government utilized such policy measures in many settlements across the country.

## **5 . Kamogawa Dam and Land Improvement Projects**

As described above, much of the farmland newly cleared in Hyogo Prefecture for settlement following World War II was within the city limits of Ono. The anguish of the settlers who cleared this land—land that had not be arable in the over 2,000 years since Japan started farming—

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<sup>7</sup> “Minutes for farmland committee of Ichiba Town, Kato County, Hyogo Prefecture,” town of Ichiba.



exceeds the imagination. However, there is one more factor that made it possible for the settlers to accomplish this feat, as well as to live together with the local municipalities. This missing piece is the Toban area land improvement project, which centered around construction of the Kamogawa Dam.

The many issues have been already been discussed above. With the Kakogawa River running through the western part of Ono, the west was well irrigated and had developed paddy fields long ago. In contrast, the east part of town was hilly with poor water access. Furthermore, the region does not see much precipitation and is known for having frequent droughts. This in addition to lack of a good water source made for much of the land being left as uncultivated. It follows that water access was of concern in Ono before the reclamation project. The solution thought up for this was a land improvement project to build a dam.

In the mid 1920s, Junkichi Kondo, the former mayor of Ichiba supposedly looked at the valley in Doi on his way to visit the Banshu Kiyomizudera Temple and thought it might be a good idea to build a dam there to control flooding downstream.<sup>8</sup> Then in 1938, he persuaded the 27 mayors in the counties of the Kato, Kasai, Kako and Minou to join the Alliance for Resource Development in the Toban Region and worked on a petition to the Diet. Originally, Kondo's ambitious plans were to create enough water to supply 6,000 hectares of paddy fields to parts of the four counties. The plan would also clear 1,500 hectares of forest in the hills for new paddy fields as well as 1,000 hectares of farmland for crop fields. This plan was to both increase production of sake rice and help stabilize farm management while also using some of the water for industrial use. The Diet adopted the Proposition for Development in Toban in March 1939 thanks to the dedication of the mayors, and the project had entered the preparation stage. Due to poor timing, however, the project was forced to a halt in December 1941 when Japan entered the war.

In September 1945 after the war was over, Hyogo Agricultural Land Division Head Toshio Koga turned his attention to reviving the development plan as part of measures to increase food production amidst the pressing food crisis. Also, Ichiba mayor and Junkichi Kondo's son, Tsugu, resumed his father's plan, taking the reformation of the Conference of Kato County Mayors as his opportunity to get it restarted. With help from occupation forces, the Kyoto Office of Agriculture started construction on the National Tojogawa River Irrigation and Drainage Office on location in May 1947, realizing a plan 20 years in the making. The plan was reduced from its prewar scale to service an area of approximately 4,000 hectares, but would ensure a welcome 18 million tons of water for the region. Built on the Kurodani Chisaki Kamogawa River in the town of Tojo, the 42-meter high concrete dam with its 8.38 million ton effective storage capacity was christened the Kamogawa Dam. There were challenges in negotiating compensation to displaced residents as the township of Doi in the village of Kamitojo would be submerged by

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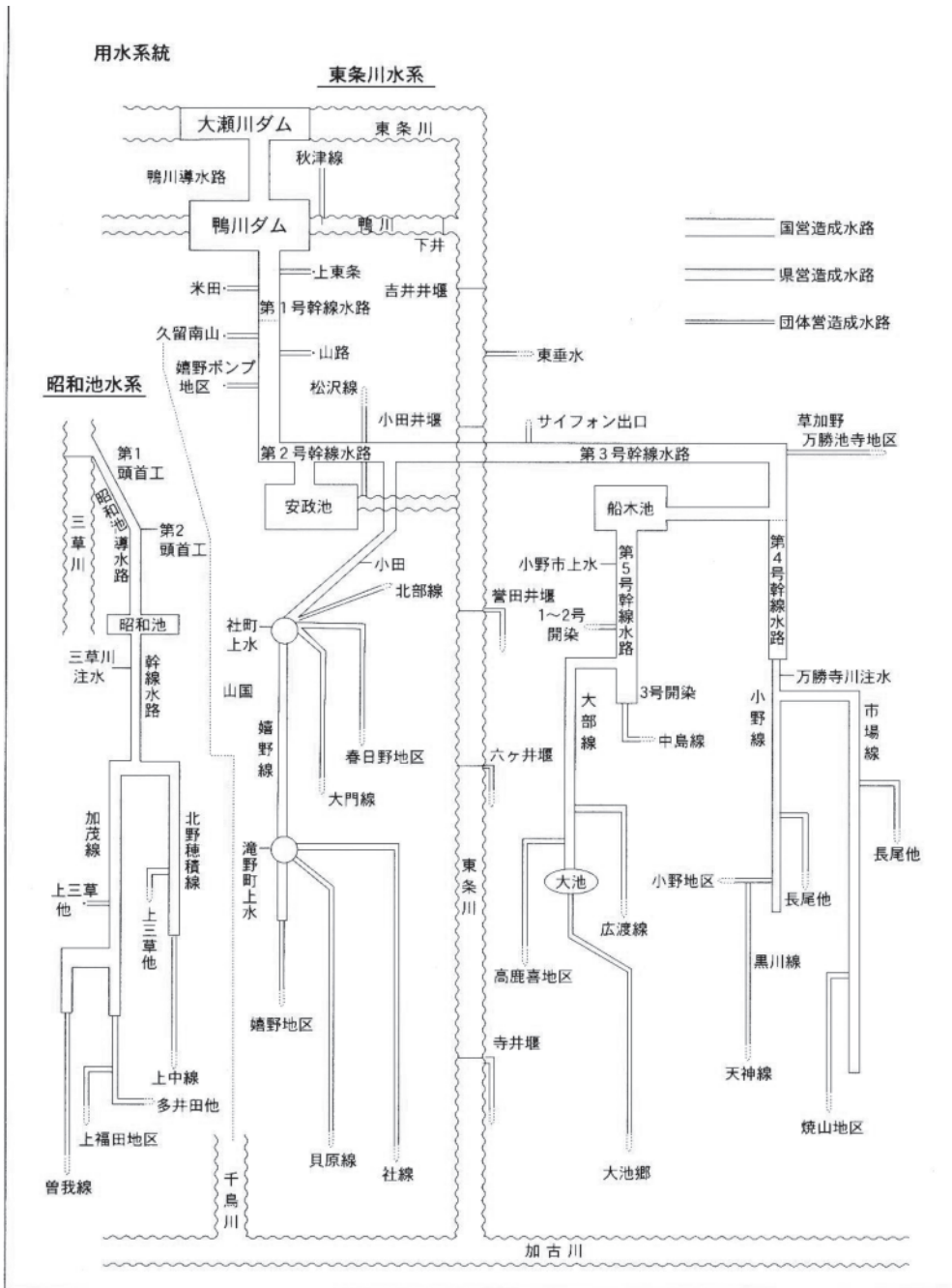
<sup>8</sup> *A History of Land Improvements in Hyogo*, edited by the Hyogo Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Division, Land Improvement and Consolidation Section (1990), pg. 683.

dam construction, but Doi finally signed off on a compensation package on September 1, 1948 and construction was underway. With the U.S. also adding some collateral, Kamogawa Dam was completed three years later on October 1, 1951. Along with dam construction, work started in June 1951 on the main channels to supply water from the dam to farmland within the recipient area. Developed over 10 years through to 1960, the main channels were numbered one to five and ran a total length of 17 kilometers. Branch channels to the settlements and general farmland were built and managed by the prefecture, groups or contracted out as construction projects.

The water from Kamogawa Dam was originally planned mainly to supplement local irrigation, not for pumping up to the settlements. It was only due to persistent negotiation by settlers mostly from the Sokano area that it was agreed for water to be pumped to the region through a group-managed channel off main channel number 3. At the time, the issue of pumping water was regarded as being serious enough to warrant pouring capital for farming into lobbying for pumping water. Further complicating matters, the Sokano and Manshoji areas required electric pumps as natural streams alone were not enough for pumping due to the topography. Thus, the Sokano-Manshoji Irrigation Association (first association president: Takashi Nishiyama) was formed to build the channel and manage the pumping station. The association internally determined area water allocation and financial contributions. A local association needed to manage the pumps, but they had to invite an engineer as there were none in the association. Pumping normally took about three months, but with a shortage of engineers at the time, they could not find anyone willing to come for just a three month contract and were forced to pay a year's salary for someone to come. Thus, the Soukano area had to pay twice: once for Toban land improvements in relation to the dam and once for administrative expenses for the electric pump. These expenses plagued the area for many years.



**Left: Kamogawa Dam, Right: Bridge over main channel no. 1**



注 『東播改良区50周年』より作成。

Diagram of Kamogawa Dam irrigation

Despite the hardships as illustrated above, the Kamogawa Dam and main channels were completed. Through their completion, irrigation to the settlements in Sokano, Manshoji and other areas in Ono increased rapidly and the land was steadily converted from crop fields to paddy fields. In addition, these areas were proactive in raising dairy cows off paddy fields, which at the time was considered a rather progressive approach. These areas were regarded as Hyogo's model case for new farm settlers as they began to sprout up one after another. Further, the improved irrigation from Kamogawa Dam benefitted other communities other than the settlements, becoming the foundation for the settlements and existing communities to live together in harmony.

### **Conclusion**

This paper is a midterm report on an investigation into postwar reclamation projects in the city of Ono. Further empirical analysis is needed on how farming developed after settlement, but at this point I will close by touching on the relationship of this study with social capital research.

The Great East Japan Earthquake, which occurred on March 11, 2011, is certainly one of the biggest crises Japan has faced in the 60 years since World War II. However, this does not change the fact that losing the Pacific War was one of the biggest crises for Japanese society as a whole in its modern history. Postwar reclamation projects accepted the millions of Japanese who had emigrated before the war in response to a national policy only to return to an impoverished nation due to the shock of losing the war and the food crisis. There is no doubt that comparing this to current day measures for disaster victims was a tall task. The question is whether or not the experiences from the postwar reclamation projects implemented as measures for returnees have any lessons to offer for a post-March 11 Japan.

With its current financial circumstances and social situation, it would be difficult for Japan to enact a settlement project as in postwar Japan, reallocating more than one million hectares of land and developing large-scale infrastructure. Even in the postwar crisis, however, it cannot be denied that the accepting regions visibly opposed accepting returnees from abroad in various ways. We should pay attention to the efforts the postwar administration put into pushing projects that benefitted both the returnees and the accepting municipalities.

Further, there is no need to point out again that while the returnees had left their hometowns looking for a new start, their home network played a large role for many. Manchurian colonization itself stressed home networks, and these home networks functioned as vital personal connections in postwar resettlement. It should be conceivable that the settlers were supported by their former hometown networks while forming a corner of a new integrated society as a member of their new home.

While none of this really exceeds common sense observations, I close this paper merely by pointing out that we need to be very cautious when enacting unconventional measures which deviate from these basic elements.