

## **The TEIKEI Movement and Agricultural Ethics**

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### **1. Introduction**

There has been a great deal of discussion about sustainable agriculture. In order to respond to the problems posted by climate change and global warming, the government established a temporary fund. However, experts have expressed doubt over how this investment will be used. The problem seems to lie in the fact that little agreement has been reached concerning small scale family agriculture which accounts for the majority (85%) of agriculture across the world. At the same time, the organic agro-ecological movement, which started in Japan has been expanding worldwide. Therefore there is an urgent need to discuss how family-based agricultural systems can be made to improve, and the history of organic agriculture is a useful case study.

This research was undertaken in order to understand how the philosophy of organic agriculture came to be diffused worldwide.

Recently, Two Key words have arisen in climate smart agriculture, the first is “family farming”, the second is “Agro-Ecology”, the UN designated 2014 as the International year of Family Farming, and 2015 as the International Year of Soils.

These are the core issue of each country’s Agricultural Policy under the TPP or Free Trade system. Both of these key words have their roots in Organic Agriculture, and the TEIKEI movement, founded in Japan, which directly connects farmer and consumer.

This paper will discuss the original ethics of the Japanese organic movement “TEIKEI” and the possibilities the method offers in delivering an agricultural ethics adapted to the problems posed by climate change.

### **2. Definition of TEIKEI**

The vision behind TEIKEI could be defined as a Co-Partnership between the farmer and the consumer to support community -based agriculture through their mutual understanding.

The TEIKEI movement began as a reaction to the negative impacts of the mechanized and chemically intensive agriculture promoted by the Japanese government after World War II. The principles of TEIKEI are similar to the well-known Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), which began in 1986 in the US and is now spreading over the USA, EU and Asia pacific countries, influenced by the Japanese TEIKEI movement.

### **3. The Development of Organic farming in Japan**

To understand the background to the TEIKEI movement in Japan, we must first consider a number of historical topics linked to the organic farming movement. After World War II, land reform was prosecuted, and many sharecroppers became independent farmers.

It is reported that prior to this period, farmers' skills and the equipment they used were developed based on local organic resources and indigenous knowledge. But from the mid-1950's, the situation changed. Japan experienced rapid economic growth, and the economy shifted away from an agricultural focus and towards an industrial economy. In 1961, the Agricultural Basic Law was enacted, and large scale production through mechanization and chemical use was promoted. In the meantime, along with rapid economic growth came growing, nationwide, environmental pollution, and the pollution of the food supply came to be recognized as a serious problem.

Fearing for damage to both human health and the environment through use of chemicals, the Japan Organic Agriculture Association was founded. Established in 1971, it dealt in organic products. This is how the TEIKEI system, which is a direct marketing system between farmers and consumers was developed. In time, organic products came attract attention as "value-added" products that could be sold at a premium. As a result, products sold as organic but actually reliant on at least some use of chemicals were marketed, and confusion and distrust spread among consumers. Up until that point, the Government had kept silent about the organic farming movement, but, after observing such confusion, the Government set standards for organic products in 2002, and in 2006 a Law regarding the promotion of organic farming was enacted to establish sustainable agriculture and to meet consumer needs for safe and high quality food.



**Figure 1**

#### **4. The Motherland of TEIKEI, TAKAHATA and a key person for indigenous development**

In 1973, in Takahata town, Yamagata Prefecture, Northeast of Japan, a group of 38 local farmers started an organic agriculture cooperative. At that time, in the midst of the period of economic growth in Japan after 1945, almost all farmers in Japan had switched to so-called modern agriculture, using large quantities of pesticide, herbicide, and chemical fertilizers, buying machinery using loans provided by the government. There were deaths due to exposure to agricultural use of such chemicals.

During this period, local Takahata farmers started the Organic Agriculture movement, establishing a TEIKEI connection directly between farmers and consumers, person to person between the Takahata and Urban area.

Kanji Hoshi, a leader of the Takahata agricultural association, made great efforts to share the TEIKEI as a social common capital against the contemporary governmental policy. He had a belief that agriculture is the first culture of humankind. The person who ploughs the soil or sows seeds is blessed with rapture, pleasure and also pain. He valued the meaning of TEIKEI as a social common capital, which transcends money. He has promoted TEIKEI activities for the past 40 years within the Educational Sector through writing poems, newspaper and magazine articles, and books. He has written over 20 books in this period, and has been awarded a famous Japanese novel prize.

Under the great leadership of Kanji Hoshi, Takahata became the motherland of TEIKEI in the world and the method of TEIKEI has now spread worldwide, as CSA or AMAP.

Takahata's TEIKEI has kept the same price for rice over the past 40 years under the agreement made with consumers. Takahata demonstrated that it could be even more productive than conventional cultivation, producing 600 kg per 10ar with organic farming vs 300 kg with conventional farming, which struggled with the change of climate in this period. So we can say TEIKEI has proven the stability, not remaining steady even following the 2008 financial crunch.

The agricultural landscape of Takahata has been much praised. A "Garden of Eden", historical stone shrine was scattered around rice paddy fields in the area. Takahata was specified as target for depopulation through a government promotion supporting hilled rural areas. But in fact, TEIKEI farmers do not stand in need of such subsidies. For the past 40 years the price of their product of rice in the TEIKEI system has kept the same price for a direct relationship between farmers and consumers who do not depend on the market and conventional retail system.

Takahata is the original home of the TEIKEI movement, establishing an ethos of food solidarity between farmers and consumers sharing in organic agriculture. Its movement has expanded to other residents of Takahata and to young students in the urban area who come to Takahata for study tours.

From another point of view, I would like to mention about Takahata, they keep their ethical place around their daily-life with a strong focus on many gods and Buddha. in their culture. For instance, they have gods of the mountain. According to traditional lore in Takahata, the parents make their little children go to the mountain by themselves, to ask the gods of mountain permission to start to cultivate the rice paddy field of their village at the beginning of spring of each year. When the gods allow them to plough, the parents can start the ploughing together. They have several festivals from spring to the harvest time to confirm their process and to thank to gods. In this way the tie of community keep under the ethical promise between gods of nature and human. Nature has their completed system of gods living in every existence along with the space of people.

Since over 20 years ago, people who are attracted to Takahata's agricultural system, come to join the "Mahoroba Agricultural School" for the high season of agricultural work. The School was established by organic farmers and their consumers. Their consumers are passionate about supporting organic farms and providing rice and other produce for oneself.

What are the differences between TEIKEI and the conventional agriculture system? "TEIKEI" creates an alternative distribution system that does not depend on the conventional market.

Though the forms of "TEIKEI" vary, its main concept is basically a direct distribution system. To achieve it, the producer(s) and the consumer(s) have to communicate with each other to deepen their mutual understanding: both of them provide labor and capital to support their own delivery system.

In this system they usually establish delivery stations, where the nearest consumers from 3 to 10 families can get the delivered products selected and packed.

In the conventional Japanese market, producers have to pay a great deal of attention to the size and appearance of displayed items and need to prepare a specified amount of a specified crop. This is a major reason for the application of widely-operated agricultural chemicals. But with the "TEIKEI" system, producers have to carry out very little selection in distributing their products to their consumers; produce may be big or small, with or without mud on them.

The packing is much simpler and saves labor. Prices are set by an agreement on both sides through a process of direct negotiation. Such prices are, in most cases, higher than those set at the point of shipment in the conventional market, where only the producer's portion of the cost is satisfied. On the other hand, in the "TEIKEI" system, consumers are generally delighted because the prices are as inexpensive as those at grocery stores and at the same time the products are safer and better.

"TEIKEI" prices are usually set not to be expensive, but only to guarantee a moderate sum of living expenses and production costs for producers. Therefore, in the "TEIKEI" system, prices are evidently different from those at the conventional market, which are born out of the supply-and-demand balance. Yet the price paid or the income of a TEIKEI farmer is usually equal to or better than what is paid by the market, and it is also stable.

And even with the recent big discounts in the market, consumers are still paying a comparable amount for TEIKEI produce as when buying conventionally farmed produce from retail stores.

However, such comparison of "price" is misleading and should be avoided.

By setting the TEIKEI price at a level that both parties agree at in the process of TEIKEI activities, farmers can secure self-reliance, continuity and stability while consumers can change their lifestyle and diet to maintain a supply of food that is both healthy and environmentally sound.

Then let us go further into TEIKEI activities. In 1978, JOAA, that is, the Japan Organic Agriculture Association, announced ten principles of TEIKEI as shown in figure 1. The

relationship between farmers and consumers may take several patterns, such as individual consumer to individual farmer, individual consumer to group farmer, group consumer to agricultural cooperation.

The scope of TEIKEI has also been expanded to address the problem of the aging society, environmental education for children, building cooperation between school farms, and the participation of consumers, and other activities to solve various social issues.

Prior to TEIKEI, individual farmers had tried to maintain independence through his or her indigenous development rather than depending on the governmental association or on agricultural cooperation, but by getting more and more individual in style, the linkage of community will consequently weaken.

## 5. Achievements made by the First Generation of TEIKEI;

1. Reducing the use of chemicals, establishing the method of Organic Agriculture, and increasing the numbers of farmers who engaged in the ecological-friendly practices, developing a Japanese Organic Agriculture based on the traditional culture.
2. Building a strong connection with urban consumers seeking food security, establishing a relationship of mutual trust as "a face-to-face relationship"
3. Establishing a treaty based on food-agriculture solidarity. They prohibited the use of genetic engineering in order to protect the natural ecosystem

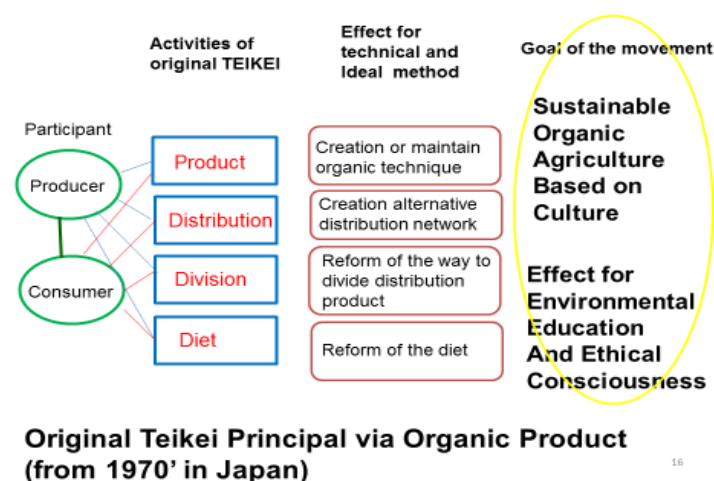


Figure 2

The first generation of TEIKEI farmers and consumers were connected via the organic produce

they shared as they built up "a "face-to-face" relationship. Over time, the effect of this relationship on the level of education around food and consciousness of the ethics of food increased. Since this time, the TEIKEI system has changed in a number of ways.

Recent data provides information about consumers' attitudes towards organic food. We conducted a web survey of 2000 people funded by the Japan Organic Agriculture Association. In this data, on the left (Fig. 4), we can see that over 60% of consumers have purchased organic food in their lifetime. In the graph labelled "Where do you buy organic foods?", on the right (Fig. 4), we can see that organic food is now available through a variety of channels. However, of the frequent customers of organic food, we can see that TEIKEI and so-called "farm fresh" produce still is the most important channel for these consumers (Fig. 4).

### **6. Data on organic farming 2011.**

This data shows fertilizer and pesticide use on agricultural land across selected countries (Fig. 3). You can see that although the amount is decreasing, Japan is still the top user of pesticide, and also uses plenty of fertilizers.

In Bangladesh, the use of fertilizer is quite high, and although with regards to pesticide use, it is lower in comparison to other countries, you can see that its use is steadily increasing.

The TEIKEI Movement has just started to become a global movement since 2000, with CSA farmers in the EU and USA still developing the idea or philosophy of TEIKEI.

In Japan, farmers like Hoshi Kanji Hoshi are still unusual. While the number of organic farmers in Japan is increasing little by little, it is still only 0.47% (12,000) (Fig 3).

It is difficult in Japan for people any walk of life to go against the crowd. This is especially true in rural society, where people live in harmony with their community,

In Japan, agricultural society has been twisted around governmental policy.

Almost all farmers belong to local agricultural cooperative, which has led to the development of a collective mindset.

Kanji Hoshi tried to involve the organic movement in making changes at the local community, administrative, and local educational system level. He recognized that he could not achieve an organic agriculture by himself.

For example, he could not have stopped using chemical fertilizer or pesticide alone, as his own land would be affected by chemicals used on neighboring farmland close by.

The Japanese government still bases its policies on an industrial mindset: seeking to build up an organic food system via big companies making large investments of money and land, rather than building up a system the indigenous, grass roots way.

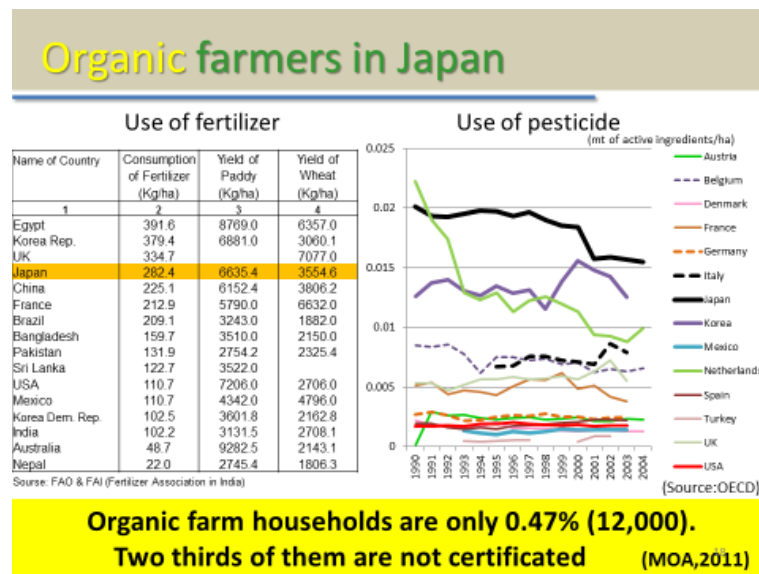


Figure 3

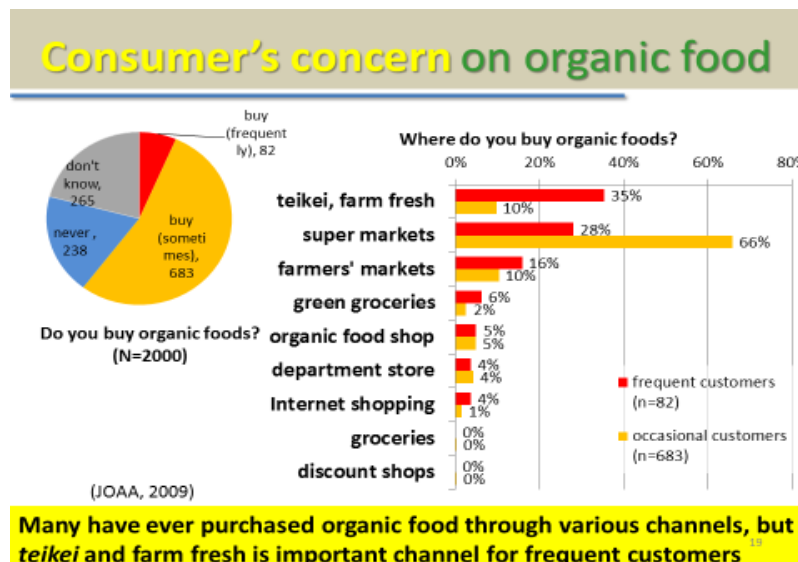


Figure 4

This graph (Fig. 5) shows consumers attitudes towards organic food. When asked for the reasons why they purchase organic food, the reason "to get chemical-free, safe food" is the



most selected.

Customers are also interested in family health and the flavor of the food. As for frequent buyers of organic food, they are twice more likely to state an interest in the environment and the farming environment than those who buy organic food only occasionally. We can say that they have high level of consciousness about environmental issues.

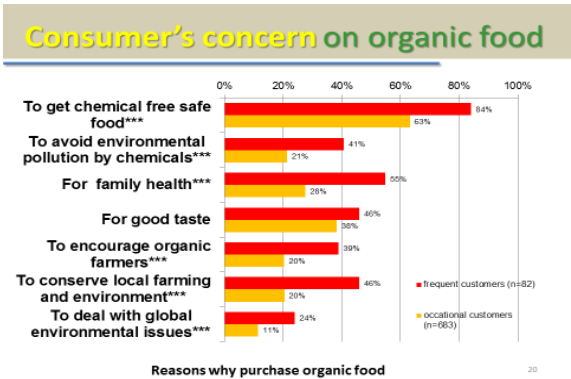


Figure 5

Next, let me show you research over the economic aspect of TEIKEI system. We conducted a survey of 140 TEIKEI farmers. In this graph (Figure 6), each color shows the share of income from TEIKEI.

The dark blue box (Fig 6), shows that the for the largest group of participating farmers, that is 59 people, TEIKEI income accounts for more than 90% of their livelihood. This group accounts for 43% of farmers working in the TEIKEI system. The annual income of organic farmers varies from 50 US\$ to one hundred thousand US\$.

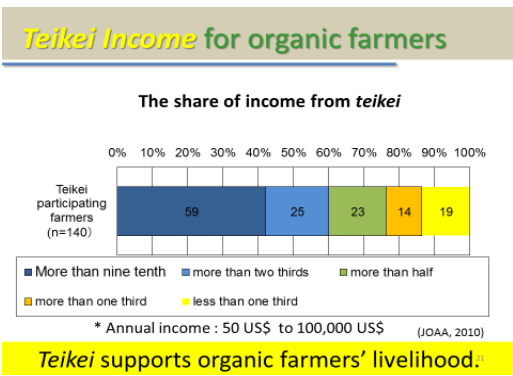


Figure 6

Regarding the reasons why customers continue to use the TEIKEI system, it becomes clearer at

the data on TEIKEI participants.

The graph (Fig 7) shows reasons to participate in TEIKEI for consumers, for farmers with groups, and for farmers without groups independently. For all of them, to deliver or get safe food is the main reason for continuing within the TEIKEI model.

However, for consumers, you can see that to maintain the livelihood of organic farmers is the second ranked reason while for producers, to deliver good quality food comes next. This shows there is a mutually supportive relationship, with each group considering each other's benefit. From those Data We can say TEIKEI used to be a relationship between producer and consumer solely based on organic produce, but it is getting to be more a socialized relationship based on a philosophy of mutual support.

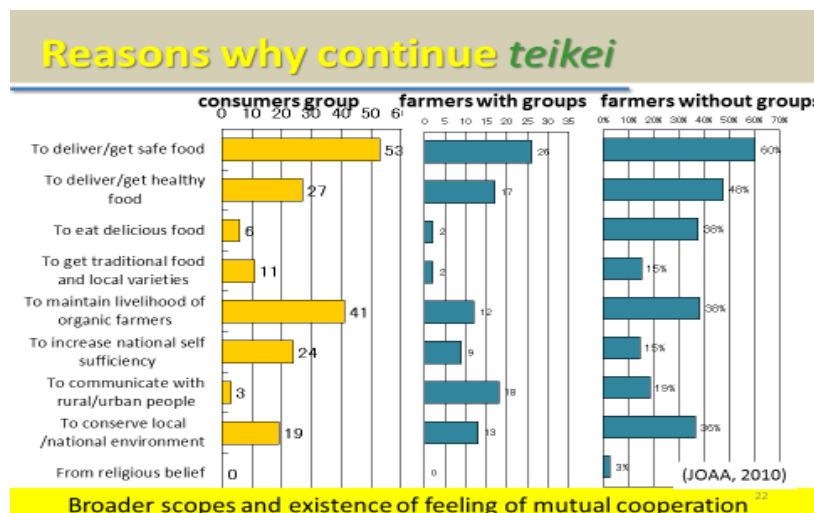


Figure 7

Now I would like introduce the 2nd generation's new TEIKEI practice, the Takahata Co-living Project (TCP). I am vice president of it.

TCP started in 2011, following the Great East Japan Earthquake. Because of the harmful unfounded rumors arising from the Fukushima nuclear disaster, the TEIKEI relationship faced a crisis and was set to collapse in North East of Japan, including in Takahata town. Fukushima nuclear disaster divided the relationships of the local area, and also the direct cooperation of farmers and consumers.

Prior to the disaster, we had taken many students to Takahata for an agricultural experience, but following the crisis, we decided to build a mutual organization to form a new TEIKEI

movement, joining the conventional TEIKEI relationship in sharing an organic rice project.

The Waseda Environmental Institution and Takahata established a co-association, TCP to start a new TEIKEI which is not only supporting agriculture, but also sharing an educational and cultural experience. We now have 80 farmers and consumer leaders.

Yet we are struggling against an invisible army of the nuclear influence.

Once again we are standing up for a world of peace and no-sacrifice. "The soil of North east in Japan did not die. The soil is still alive. But as we know, the contamination of radioactive waste lingers strongly but unevenly in hotspots. Depending on the natural conditions, we cannot detect radioactivity. On the other hand we can say that all the soil of Northeast in Japan has been damaged.

Farmers of Takahata had traditionally used "zeolite" in their soil. It is effective in adsorbing radioactive cesium from the soil. According to the latest survey, the soil of Takahata contain some quantity of zeolite naturally and work for reducing damage from the external contamination.

This inequality and invisibility of radioactive contamination caused a rift between the Farmers and Consumers. So I started new movement of TEIKEI, the

Takahata Co-living Project. Its mission includes "Disaster Agreement" and "Cultivation of Education"

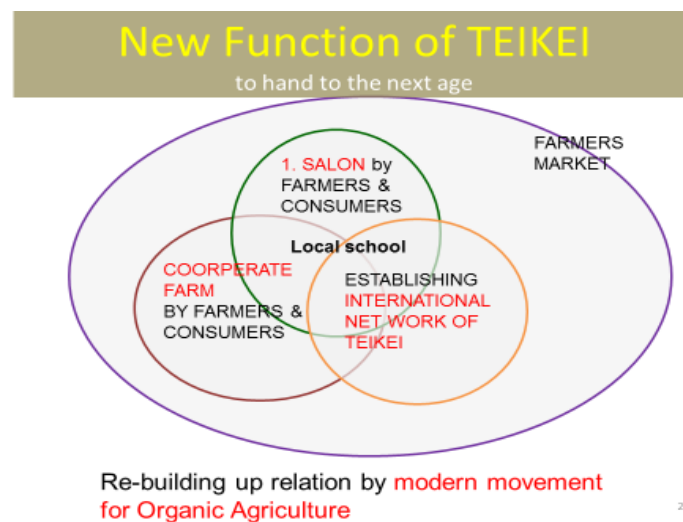
### **7. The New Function of TEIKEI**

In fact conventional TEIKEI was already showing signs of weakening due to the aging of the first generation of TEIKEI consumers and farmers. Meetings and exchanges were gradually decreasing. So the challenge for us for us is to develop a multi-dimensional TEIKEI, supporting each other's lives, collaborating for the wellness of organic agriculture as a part of human culture. Re-building the relationships, we can see each other's minds and not only our faces through a mutual dialogue by co- partnership

We have a vision for the next generation of TEIKEI:

1. To build enough common farmland to allow us to become self-sufficient, preparing for disasters to come

2. To develop effective policy. We have opened the “Aooni Salon” to talk about the policy and economy of the agriculture and food system. They have a famous tale of “*Cried AKAONI*”, written by Hirosuke Hamada(1893-1973), born in Takahta. In the story, Aooni, the blue ogre made self-sacrifice for his only friend Akaoni, the red ogre who wanted to be good terms with people living in village.
3. To build an international network. By Linking to the citizens’ international network of Community Based Agriculture(CSA), to build the center of a TEIKEI network, matching and connecting new-age collaborators like new farmers and looking for the links and collaborations with CSA farmers and consumers worldwide to hand over the next generation to create a new TEIKEI movement.



**Figure 8**

## 8. Achievement of New TEIKEI(2011～)

Now we can summarise the achievements of new TEIKEI as below;

Achievements of New TEIKEI model:

1. Revived the ecological system from contamination by increasing the wildlife inhabiting the rice paddy fields, to building up more resistance to disaster.
2. Realized multi-exchanging to complete the Program of “Cultivate Mind Education” involving local government, many citizens and students.
3. Established a “Disaster Treaty” and brought it to mutual agreement
4. Enhanced Communication within the TEIKEI system to enable members to express

their own opinion about world politics, economy and ethics. Building TEIKEI from a “face to face” relationship to a “Relationship that they can see each other’s mind”

The relationship us based on “ 利他 ”=to support & devote oneself to the other person

In Fig. 9, the starred boxes are new activities and philosophies of the TEIKEI system over the past 40 years. We can see that the TEIKEI movement was originally a simple relationship based on products from the agricultural farming industry. However, TEIKEI was expanded to include Co-Farming, Food Education, Studying and Delivering Opinions on Politics and Sustainability, Utilizing Local Unused Resources & the Ecological system and Participation in Farmers Markets, Getting back to the soil, mutual sharing, Building up Media Literacy and Conservation Biodiversity.

These activities had unique characteristics for each agricultural farm and created the desired market style, which resolves issues between consumers and producers. A goal of the TEIKEI movement is to create Sustainable Organic Agriculture Based on Culture, affecting Environmental and Ethical consciousness and Re-building the Organic Movement, creating a system which is easy for the younger generation to participate in, and with a view to handing over responsibility to the next generation. We understand that ethical consciousness has changed.

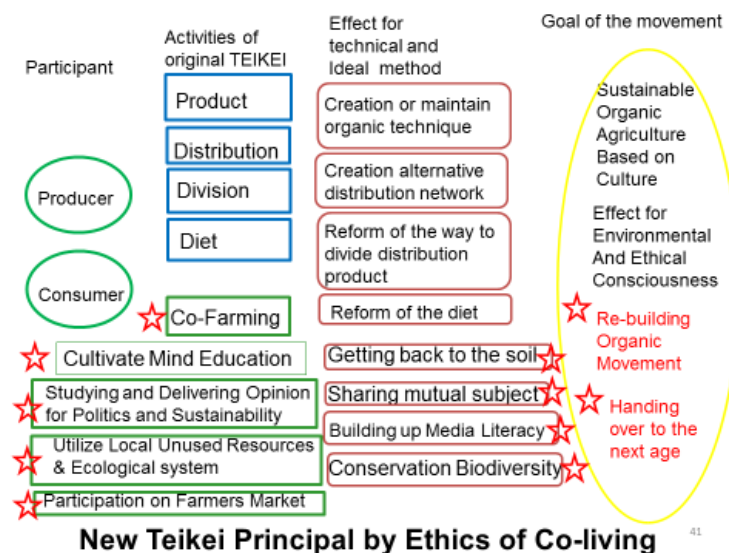


Figure 9

## **9. Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), TEIKEI, AMAP, Reciproco, ASC**

The names may be different but the essence is the same. Active citizens are making a commitment to local farms to share both the risks and the bounty of ecological farming.

In the past 12 years, Just Food, a non-profit in New York City, has organized 80 city centre groups and matched them up with farms within 2 – 3 hours' drive of the city, serving 20,000 households. In California, Live Power Community Farm has added solar panels to its barns and offers educational programs for city children. In Wisconsin, Vermont Valley has one of the most innovative approaches to the farm labor problem – they recruit 50 members out of the 950 members who hold shares) who agree to work 4 hours a week for 20 weeks as the CSA harvest crew.

Now TCP have built links with URGENCI and hope to build up the TEIKEI network in the Asia-Pacific Area.

In June this year, a People's Expo was held in Milan animated by around 20 international multi-country delegations of networks already active on the issues of food sovereignty, environmental justice and human rights, for a total of 200 delegates. I myself was present as the representative of the Japan Organic Agriculture Association & TCP. We discussed food sovereignty and environmental justice with the food and agricultural industry, represented by Via Campegina, Slow Food Association and URGENCI.

CSA's have been greatly expanding all over the world. On the other hand there are no CSA participants from amongst the Asian Countries.

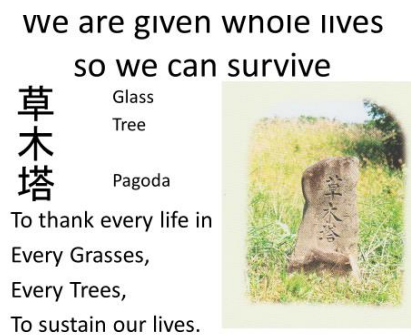
Since 2011, a number of Italian organizations, operating in very diverse sectors (development, environment, human rights, producers and consumers rights, etc.), have been looking forward to the "Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life" Universal Exposition, held in Milan. Its aim was to influence the public debate by the concept of feeding the Planet based on the principles of food sovereignty and environmental justice.

## **10. Conclusion**

At the end, it is suggested that for Japan to keep our TEIKEI as the model of CSA to the other countries, more attention should be directed in the further enhancing its ties with multifunction of Diverse Roles and Multi-functionality of Agriculture and Agricultural Community rather than building up an organic food certification aimed at the free trade system

controlled by the global food power game.

We can see several So-moku to in the TAKAHATA area, which thanks the spirit of the grass and trees that are ploughed into the farmland or used as fuel to sustain our lives.



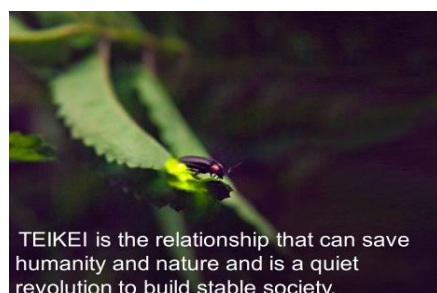
**Figure 10**

1. TEIKEI is a holistic system that has the potential to change the future of agriculture. It is a comprehensive cultural activity that gives self-reliance to farmers and a new cooperative life to consumers.
2. It is inseparably tied to organic agriculture and to the ways of living of human beings through reviewing and restructuring how food and agriculture should be. It can't be changed easily.

After 40 years passed, the firefly came back to Kanji Hoshi's rice paddy field,

Firefly only can live only along clean streams. The rice paddy field is inhabited by so many little Insects and other creatures which keep the natural balance.

In the figure (Fig.12) on the right side, Buddha is depicted, and around the Buddha all the creatures form a circle.



**Figure 11**

Now we want to conserve the circulation of KACYO FU GETSU (the beauties of nature: literally Flower, Bird, Wind and Moon) of oriental nature.



**Figure 12**

If we are concerned about the future of our natural surroundings, a further study of how our social and political choices under a neo liberal economy have been determined. I suggest that we work towards:

1. Changing to the policies around food to start promoting TEIKEI organic agriculture as the most effective route to food security and the effective multifunctioning of agriculture.
2. Formalizing the status of TEIKEI organic agriculture
3. Submitting the new TEIKEI model as an opportunity to move beyond the neo liberal economy to a more sustainable model.

We can choose our future.