

# THE ORIGINS OF HUMAN GEOGRAPHY IN JAPAN

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## I

Some premises should be clarified before entering into a discussion on this theme, for opinions on the date of the formation of human geography in our present meaning can differ greatly not only in regards to the interpretation of facts but also in regards to differing stands taken with respect to the nature of human geography or, more generally speaking, on the nature of geography. By this latter term, we can understand three meanings as follows: a description or an idiographic science dealing with any part of the earth's surface, an ecological science concerning the interrelation of anything on the earth's surface with the environment, and a nomothetic science concerning space organization.

If we understand the term 'geography' to mean, in its etymological sense, a description of the earth, we can say that this kind of geographic knowledge existed and has always existed within human society.

Perhaps the most fundamental form of geography is the description of an area in which a human group lives. Primarily, such geographical knowledge has a practical character. Primitive societies had their oral traditions regarding the territories they occupied. There existed many geographical description, put together by the order of rulers or merchants, for administrative or commercial purposes. In modern states this kind of geographical description for practical purposes has been replaced by statistics, maps, cadasters, and other documents or reports; it no longer has reason, in the modern meaning, for existence as a science for practical purposes. In Japan from ancient times there existed a longstanding tradition or geographical descriptions of the states or regions (*fudoki* and *chishi*)<sup>1</sup> within the country. The failure of the project involving the compilation of the *Kokoku-chishi* at the end of the last century<sup>2</sup> marks a symbolical change in the history of Japanese geography, in regards to the use of geographical knowledge for administrative or economic purposes. Nevertheless, we cannot ignore other aspects of geographical description. As in the European history of social thought,<sup>3</sup> we can find many geographical descriptions in the writings of the enlightenment ideologists in the period of Japanese modernization after

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<sup>1</sup> As many people point out, there has been a strong Chinese influence on motives and styles in the compilation of geographical description (U. Tsujita, *Nihon Kinsei no Chirigaku*, Kyoto, 1971, pp. 51-69).

<sup>2</sup> The history of the compilation of *Kokoku-chishi* and its scientific significance has been discussed at length in R. Ishida, "Kokoku-chishi no Hensan", *Hitotsubashi Daigaku Shakaigaku Kenkyū*, Vol. VIII, 1966, pp. 1-61.

<sup>3</sup> In the case of French references, we have derived many suggestions from N. Broc, "Peut-on parler de géographie humaine au XVIIIe siècle en France", *Annales de Géographie*, LXXVIII Année 1969, pp. 57-75.

the Meiji Restoration. Also mentioned were the practical utility of geographical knowledge in efficient administration or military strategy or for better diplomacy. However, the main motive for the adoption of geographical description by these ideologists was the stressing of the need for the modernization of Japan, the abolition of feudal customs, and the acquirement of western culture; the readers were provided with examples of other countries as models or bases for comparison. In the sense that increased knowledge of other nations of the world might bring about advocacy of the notion of the universality of humanity, the stands adopted by the ideologists of enlightenment were not tied in with practical application in the political or economic sense.

Here arise four problems, which we are going to examine in this paper. The geographical description itself, i.e., the description of the distribution of social phenomena on the earth's surface, eventually assumes the nature of a causal or genetical interpretation of this distribution. Furthermore, as in the writings of the European illuminists, the environmentalistic view was the easiest, the apparently most persuasive and, hence, the commonest principle of the interpretations found in the writings of the Japanese enlightenment thinkers of the early Meiji period. Thus, the first problem to be discussed is what the nature of these environmentalistic interpretations is, and whether we should deem it to comprise the ideological origin of modern human geography in Japan. Secondly, we have to reflect upon another ideological aspect of geographical description. This might be dubbed the geographical consciousness of humanity which produces the geographical descriptions or the local chronicles instigated by the provincialistic mind. The consideration we must take into account, in this regard, are the highly centralized political and economic system of modern Japan, on the one hand, and the physiocratic tradition<sup>4</sup> which is sometimes thought to have had its roots in the pre-Meiji period and to have persisted till recently within the agrarian policy of modern Japan. Here, the question is how the interest in, and the insistence on, the importance of local chronicles or descriptions were influenced by this provincialistic and physiocratic thinking and whether this thinking constituted an incentive for the birth of the geographical science in modern Japan. The third problem to be discussed is whether the origin of human geography is of an institutional character, especially in regards to the educational system which, since the very beginning of the Meiji period, attached much importance to geography in the school curriculum. If academic activities in a modern state are conditioned on a large scale by the national educational system, the development of geographical studies in modern Japan should be traced in connection with the history of the educational system and with the often-shifting position of human geography in the school curriculum. And, granting the existence of a time lag between the stressing of the need for geographical material in the compulsory education system and the beginning of scientific studies in geography in academic circles, it is necessary to investigate the causes of this time lag or discontinuity between educational geography and academic or scientific geography in Japan.

Our standpoint concerning contemporary human geography is that it is to be considered the study of the principles of the spatial organization of human activities or, in other words, the analysis of the mechanism and the processes regulating the spatial systems of interrelated human activities. In this sense we regard human geography as a compound whole of the

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<sup>4</sup> K. Takeuchi, "La tradizione fisiocratica in Giappone", *Il Giappone* (Roma), Vol. IV, 1964, pp. 101-114.

nomothetic sciences having a common unified angle of analysis. However, though many geographers have come to agree about it only recently, such a viewpoint was not predominant in academic circles at the time when the so-called academic or scientific geography was established in Japan. The prevailing attitudes at that time were either to rely on environmentalism (i.e., to define human geography as the study of the interrelation of society with the physical environment) or to specialize in morphological studies of the earth's surface. So the discussion on the origin of modern human geography in Japan must refer not only to its relation with the tradition of geographical description but also to changes in the stands adopted at different times by the geographical sciences. This is the fourth point to be considered. Furthermore, in this respect, we must consider the influences of foreign schools of geography as well as the history of increasing interest in the spatial aspect in fields of discipline other than that of geography.

## II

After 1860, the Tokugawa Shogunate several times sent diplomatic delegations to Western countries. Some young members of these delegations later published reports of their journeys or popular books on Western countries. Though, with their knowledge of certain European languages, they constituted a select elite among the intellectuals of that period, their direct observation was naturally very limited. In order to write a comprehensive world geography for example, they had to consult current foreign literature on the subject, mainly Dutch and English. By the year 1860, in Western countries, there had already appeared systematic and encyclopaedic geographical publications such as C. Ritter's nineteen-volume *Die Erdkunde*. But the books to which the Japanese authors had recourse to were not of this classical category; their references were generally popular geographic books, scholastic textbooks or descriptions of this kind.<sup>5</sup> As for translations or adaptations of Western geographical literature, these were by no means new, for since the seventeenth century many books on world geography based on Western sources had already been published. This was first accomplished indirectly through Chinese translations of Western works or information accidentally acquired from foreigners (for instance, Giovanni Battista Sidotti, a Sicilian priest who entered Japan clandestinely at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and who was questioned, after his arrest, by Hakuseki Arai.) Later direct translations were made by scholars who had studied the Dutch language by the order or with the permission of the Shogunate. What characterized indigenous geographical publications after the 1860's, i.e., after the opening of Japan to foreign intercourse, was that they were reinforced by the authors' own experiences<sup>6</sup> even if very limited ones, in foreign

<sup>5</sup> This fact is pointed out in R. Ishida, *Chirigaku Entakukaidan*, Tokyo 1954, pp. 114-121. *Ibid.*, "Nihon no Chirigaku: Sono Hattatsu to Seikaku ni tsuite no Shoron", *Chiri*, Vol. X, No. 1, pp. 27-49; U. Tsujita, *op. cit.*, p. 284.

<sup>6</sup> The diaries written by some of the members of the missions during their journeys were later published. There are also many historical studies on these missions. A detailed study on the mission of 1862 to Europe is T. Haga, *Taikun no Shisetsu: Bakumatsu Nihonjin no Seio-Taiken*, Tokyo 1968.

countries and the illuministic aspiration towards civilization<sup>7</sup> which was regarded by them at that time as synonymous with Westernization and modernization. Thus the ideological stand of the geographical descriptions of the world published a few years before the Meiji Restoration was the herald of Meiji enlightenment thought.

One of the most representative figures among the authors of this kind was Yukichi Fukuzawa (1835–1901), who participated three times in Shogunate missions to Western countries. After 1866, he published several popular geographical books and introductory textbooks on world geography, as well as many other works on political and economic subjects. Most of his geographical writings were, according to his prefaces, translations of popular books on history and geography published in the United States and in Britain. We cannot know exactly which books were used as references for each of his works except for the three-volume *Seiyojijo-gaihen*, published in 1867, which consisted of translations of a part of *Political Economy, for Use in Schools and for Private Instruction* of Chamber's Educational Course. His most popular geographical work was the *Sekai Kunizukushi*, published in 1869. The popularity of this work (comprising six volumes printed from carved wooden plates) was partly due to the fact that it had been designated as one of the geography texts to be used in primary schools after the establishment of the national educational system in 1877.<sup>8</sup> But the *Sekai Kunizukushi* had been published four years before the establishment of the modern Japanese school system and had already been fervently accepted by the general public. The reason for this success was also the style of this work which took the traditional rhythmical form of the seven-and-five syllable poetic meter enabling it to be easily memorized. However, it should be noted above all that, despite its style, this work was abreast of the times in the enlightened age of Meiji. Though the source of his knowledge of world geography were banal foreign textbooks, everything in Fukuzawa's work was fresh information for the Japanese readers of the time. By means of such material, he inculcated in his readers a belief in the universality of the human will to progress. The philosophy he advocated in this work was a simple and impetuous evolutionism. In the sixth volume he presents an outline of political geography which he paraphrases as a geography of man. Here, all the nations of the world are classified fundamentally into four steps ascending from the barbarian or primitive to the civilized

<sup>7</sup> We cannot deny that some scholars who had studied foreign languages in order to find out about Western technology and military science in the period of restricted international relations under the seclusion policy of Tokugawa Shogunate, as a matter of course also, deepened their knowledge of Western, civilisation and fully realized the necessity of popularizing information regarding foreign countries among the Japanese people. But they insisted on this indispensability because of the aspiration towards the strengthening of the defense power of the country, and also on the further development of diplomatic tactics. This may be seen in the many fragmental geographical writings of Shoin Yoshida (1830–1859), who had failed in an attempt to stow-away to the United States. (On the geography works of Shoin Yoshida, see U. Tsujita, "Yoshida Shoin to Kokubo-chirigaku", *Kyoto Teikokudaigaku Chironso*, Vol. XII, 1940, pp. 279–296). Anyhow, the scholars of that period were lacking in that illuministic style of thinking, characterized by the belief in the progress of humanity identified with the enlargement of freedom and the increase in material well-being.

<sup>8</sup> Regarding the position of geography in the curriculum of elementary schools in the early period of the Meiji education system, see U. Tsujita, "Meiji Shonen ni okeru Shogakko-kyoka toshite no Chirigaku no Ichi ni tsuite", *Kyoto Teikokudaigaku Chironso*, Vol. VIII, 1936, pp. 535–561. T. Karasawa, *Kyokasho no Rekishi*, Tokyo 1956, pp. 85–86. K. Nakagawa, "Kyokasho kara Mita Chirikyoku no Rekishi" (I), *Chiri*, Vol. XV, No. 1, pp. 156–161. Nakagawa reasonably corrects Karasawa's affirmation that Fukuzawa's *Seiyojijo* was also designated as a primary school textbook. In fact, *Seiyojijo* was assigned only as a supplementary reading book.

or enlightened state. For instance, China, Turkey and Persia are declared to be at a semi-barbarian stage and the United States, Britain and other West European countries have reached the civilized or enlightened state. He does not mention Japan in this work<sup>9</sup> but the implicit assertion was that Japan was endeavoring to attain the civilized state, shedding its remaining semibarbarian situations. This conviction, this aspiring towards civilization was just what the *Sekai Kunizukushi* appealed most to in the readers of those days.

It is natural that the ideologists of the younger, growing nations did not have recourse to a fatalistic determinism. Neither did Fukuzawa, for whom geographical description was not the analysis of the causes of the regional differences in the earth's surface but the demonstration of the possibility of the further evolution of a backward Japan. He described the physical features of different parts of the world; but his geographical writings do not contain environmentalistic interpretations. To the precursory illuminists of late-joiner countries, environmentalism was anathema in contrast with the thinkers of enlightenment of first-comer countries to whom it was a blessing.

With the success of modernization measures, however, the situation rapidly changed. Already in another successful textbook of geography for primary schools, the *Kochishiryaku* by Masao Uchida (1842-1876), first published in 1870 and, like Fukuzawa's work, a compilation of translations of foreign textbooks, we find some creditable references to Japan. The evolutionist viewpoint was a fundamental one in this textbook also, and Japan was described as the only nation having success in attaining full civilization among the semicivilized or semibarbarian Asian countries.<sup>10</sup> *Kochishiryaku*, which was designated a textbook of the upper grades, contained more detailed descriptions than *Sekai Kunizukushi* and, hence, required more explanatory parts. For an author of the Meiji enlightenment period, the main principles of geographical interpretation were, logically, those of historicism. But we should also notice that, unlike the *Sekai Kunizukushi*, Uchida's work contained environmentalistic explanations. Perhaps this was due to the influence of the viewpoint presented in the original Western textbook.<sup>11</sup> Uchida did not connect the physical conditions of Japan with her political independency and economic prosperity; but for the 'semibarbarian' or 'semicivilized' countries which were at that time under the colonial rule of the Western powers, he often indicated environmental factors as reasons for their backwardness. We point out this difference, in Uchida's textbook, from the work of Fukuzawa, because this environmentalistic explanation has shown a tendency to increase in the course of time, not only in geography textbooks but also in various writings having geographical descriptions.

The formation of environmentalistic thought in modern Japan was stimulated by two conditions. The first condition was the introduction of the historical philosophy of enlightenment through translations of Montesquieu and Buckle.<sup>12</sup> These works had in-

<sup>9</sup> Later, in other publications, he spoke often with nationalistic overtones of the superior endowments of the Japanese people (for instance, in the postscript of *Tsuzoku Kokken-ron* written in 1878).

<sup>10</sup> M. Uchida, *Kochishiryaku*, Tokyo 1870, Vol. I (in *Nihon Kyokasho Taikei*, ed. T. Kaigo, Vol. XV, Tokyo 1960, p. 93).

<sup>11</sup> Among the books which Uchida mentions in the preface, we can identify two English textbooks, i.e. that of Alexander Mackay and Goldsmith's *Grammar of Geography*. A fine bibliographical study of *Kochishiryaku* is, M. Nakajima, "Uchida Masao cho Kochishiryaku no Kenkyu", *Chiri*, Vol. XIII, No. 11, pp. 29-33.

<sup>12</sup> The *Défense de l'esprit des lois* of Montesquieu was translated into Japanese (*Banpo-seiri*) in 1876 and the *History of Civilization in England* of Henry Thomas Buckle in 1879.

spired the intellectuals of the Meiji period with the idea that the history of civilization was a continuous conquering of the forces of nature in every nation which therefore came to be characterized by the physical features of its territory. This deterministic view came to be more and more accentuated with the Japanese success in the assimilation of Western technologies and institutions. For the economic and political development of the nation necessitated, and also resulted in, a kind of nationalistic sentiment, or, so to speak, the impetus to self-identification. The physical features of the Japanese archipelago were stressed, as well as the endowments of the Japanese people, to indicate the characteristics of the Japanese nation, the history and the civilization of Japan, the unique nation in Asia. Here was the second condition which stimulated the formation of environmentalism in Japan, that is, the romanticism of a growing nation.

We can see the attainment of this Meiji period environmentalism in the persons of Kanzo Uchimura (1861–1930) and Shigetaka Shiga (1863–1927).<sup>13</sup> Uchimura is known rather as a Protestant ideologist and agronomist and Shiga as a journalist and politician. Perhaps Shiga could be considered more as a geographer with his many geographical works and with his lectures in geography at Waseda University. But both were enthusiasts of geography and knew many important works of Western geographers, such as Arnold Guyot, Carl Ritter, George P. Marsh, Alexander von Humboldt, Elisé Reclus, Friedrich Ratzel, etc. No longer mere translators of minor textbooks of school geography, they followed current trends of geographical studies in Western countries and applied their science to identify the task and the nature of the Japanese nation. In this nationalistic respect, Shiga was the more fanatical and we can find there already, at the end of the nineteenth century, the germ of the expansionism and chauvinism of the coming 'Great Imperial Japan'. For instance, in the *Nihon Fukei-ron*, one of his most famous works published in 1894, after a rather scientific description of the physical characteristics of Japan, he suddenly emphasize the superiority of the geographical position of the Japanese archipelago in Asia. *Nanyojiji* published in 1887, (which introduces on the opening pages his quite ridiculous English poem beginning "Arise! Ye sons of Yamato's land!"), was a book advocating the southern expansion policy. While Shiga's environmental determinism was influenced by the Ratzelian theory, Uchimura's environmentalism was, as rightly pointed out by Shinsaku Yamana,<sup>14</sup> based on the teleological theories similar to those of C. Ritter. Uchimura's *Chijin-ron*<sup>15</sup> was certainly a geographical essay resulting from his two-year study of geography and history in the United States; but his main purpose was to pinpoint the vocation of Japan in a geographical context. This vocation was, according to him, the achievement of an intermediate role between East and West. At the basis of this affirmation we cannot help perceiving the unity, or what we venture to call, the syncretism of Christianity and geographical teleology. The connection of Protestantism with geographical interests in

<sup>13</sup> R. Akamine, "Nihon ni okeru Kankyoron no Seiritsu", *Komazawa Daigaku Chirigakkaishi*, Vol. II, 1934 (Reprinted in *Keizaichirigaku Nempo*, Vol. III, 1956, pp. 8–14). R. Ishida defined Uchimura and Shiga as belonging to the "school of environmentalist human geography" (R. Ishida, *Chirigaku no Shakaika*, Tokyo 1958, pp. 78–79).

<sup>14</sup> S. Yamana, "Chijin-ron to Chirigaku", *Kagawa Daigaku Keizai Ronso*, Vol. XXXVI, 1964, pp. 171–185. The teleological character of Uchimura's *Chijin-ron* had been already noted by G. Ishibashi, "Wagakuni Chirigakkai no Kaiko", *Kyoto Teikokudaigaku Chironso*, Vol. VIII, 1936, p. 4.

<sup>15</sup> This book was first published in 1894 with the title, *Chirigaku-ko* (literally translated, "Considerations on Geography"). Here, we used the text in the *Uchimura Kanzo Shinko-chosaku Zenshu*, Vol. IV, pp. 5–105.

Uchimura's thinking itself constitutes another interesting theme. However, we restrict ourselves to noting the reformistic tendency connected with the knowledge of applied sciences (as for instance agronomy) in the Meiji period. In this respect, Uchimura's cultural background was similar to that of his friend, I. Nitobe, to whom we will refer later. Uchimura had, on the other hand, much interest in geography previous to his enrollment at the Sapporo Agronomical School. This interest was the expression of an intellectual attitude of that period which called for broader knowledge of foreign countries, without considering the causes for the diversity of world civilization.

He shared romantic or patriotic sentiments in common with Shiga concerning the growing Japanese nation before the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895. Later, however, his teleological determinism gradually took on a tendency to recognize the universality of humanity and the relativity of the national interests of all countries. This always led him back to a pacifism based also on his Christian ideas. On the contrary, Shiga stressed nationalistic sentiments more and more under the increasingly strong and absolute regime of *tenno* Japan.

Thus, by the end of the nineteenth century we can see that the modern environmentalistic idea had taken root in social and humanistic studies in Japan far before the establishment of departments of geography in Japanese universities. The environmentalistic explanation took on more importance also in the geography textbooks used in schools. Regarding this point we can observe a certain parallelism between increasing nationalistic control and the increasing importance of the environmentalistic interpretation in geography textbooks. In 1886, the official approval system of all textbooks of compulsory education was adopted.<sup>16</sup> However, after 1904, only textbooks both compiled and published by the Ministry of Education for unified use throughout the whole country, could be used at primary schools. In the period of the official approval system, however, the contents of geographical textbooks had changed little in comparison with those of the preceding years. They continued to be in the style of the *Kochishiryaku* and other works of the early Meiji period, which consisted mostly of rather monotonous enumerations of many place names. For instance, in the chapters on Japan, immediately after the presentation of this country's physical features, we find the listing of administrative divisions and boring descriptions of each administrative unit.<sup>17</sup> In the chapter on Japan of the first official textbook of geography for primary schools compiled by the Ministry of Education in 1903 we can read the following paragraph: "The population of our country reaches almost fifty million, who all live happily under a sovereign descended from an unbroken line of emperors";<sup>18</sup> then follow the paragraphs on the administrative divisions of Japan. In the new edition of 1910, this paragraph was rewritten as follows: "Our country has a generally mild climate with abundant precipitations and is rich in agricultural products such as rice, wheat and cocoons, as well as mineral and fishery products. The population, which consists mostly of *yamato* people, is roughly estimated at sixty-eight million. They have His Majesty the Emperor

<sup>16</sup> Since 1873, The Ministry of Education had been publishing geographical textbooks written by various authors or compiled by the normal schools. But at that time the school authorities and the local governments had been able to adopt freely the textbooks written and published privately. After 1886, only authorized textbooks could be used at schools of compulsory education level.

<sup>17</sup> Perhaps the last and typical example of the textbooks of this kind was *Shintei-chishi* published by Bungakusha, which published four revised editions up to 1902.

<sup>18</sup> *Nihon Kyokasho Taikēi*, *op. cit.* Vol. XVI, Tokyo 1965, p. 352.

descended from an unbroken line of sovereigns over them; towards him they bear profound, loyal and patriotic sentiments".<sup>19</sup> Then we read the corresponding part in the 1918 edition as follows: "In the northernmost part of our country there are some excessively cold places and in the southernmost part some very hot places, but most of our country has a mild climate and the precipitations are not scarce. For these reasons our country is rich in varied natural resources and fit for the life of the inhabitants whose number has increased to exceed seventy million. Most of the population of the country consists of *yamato* people whose number reaches more than fifty-four million. The rest are about sixteen million Koreans in Korea, over 100,000 aborigines and more than three million Chinese people, immigrated from China, in Formosa. Also, in Hokkaido, live the Ainus, and in Sakhalin the Ainus and other aborigines. They differ ethnically from each other but all have in common the status of loyal subjects of the Emperor".<sup>20</sup>

In 1919, the year following the first publication of this textbook, the Department of Geography was established at the Imperial University of Tokyo; many professorships in geography had already been founded in different universities before that date. This meant that this official elementary school textbook was compiled under circumstances involving the establishment of academic or pretended scientific geography in Japan. Upon comparison of the above cited three texts, however, would it be prejudiced to say that so-called academic geography was expected, in one sense, to answer the growing demand for the awakening of nationalism, while idealizing the Japanese empire from the environmentalistic viewpoint? And would it be improper, also, to affirm that the term "scientific" or "academic" studies meant a genetic hence, an environmentalistic explanation for most of the promoters of geography of that period?

### III

As mentioned above, the traditional *fudoki* had been, because of their very nature, compiled and utilized mainly by the central government, the last attempt at compilation of this sort, *Kokoku-chishi*, having been given up upon development of statistical, cartographical or other modern means of carrying out specific surveys of the country. The significance of the enumerative and exhaustive descriptions of the territory for the ruling authorities has, thus, been lost but regional inquiries themselves continued to be made by the authorities even after the failure of the compilation of the *Kokoku-chishi* in the mid-Meiji period. Some were specific surveys for administrative purposes, others were investigations of the common laws of every district and inquiries into tenant-landowner relationships made by the Ministry of Agriculture, Commerce and Industry after occurrences, which were frequent, of agrarian disputes, etc. Still others were local chronicles, compiled by the local governments of prefecture, province and municipality.

The fact that many such surveys are important because inquiries of this kind stimulated interest in the regional differences in varied social and economic phenomena of Japan. The contrast between the advanced western Japan and the backward eastern Japan, for instance,

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 394.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 430.

had been already widely recognized since the beginning of the Meiji period,<sup>21</sup> but with the progress of many specific surveys this contrast was shown in detail by the beginning of this century, in terms of land productivity, forms of landownership, industrialization, urban development, etc. Prior to the attention of professional geographers to the regional differentiations in Japan, which started only after 1920, many scholars in agricultural economic,<sup>22</sup> folklore,<sup>23</sup> etc., had already analyzed the regional structure of Japanese society.

The above-mentioned local chronicles compiled by local authorities have a rather complicated character. The compilation of local geography or chronicles has actively continued down to even now by many prefectural or municipal authorities. The style of the descriptions is mostly that of the traditional *fudoki*, that is, the enumerative description of all items within an administrative demarcation. These geographical descriptions were certainly able to serve practical purposes such as administration and education, but in the highly centralized and functionally organized modern state that was modernized Japan, such old-fashioned descriptive geographies were gradually losing their practical significance. They must be regarded as endeavors towards self-identity on the part of local regional units. Generally, they have been compiled upon the initiative of the local authorities; but without the basis of consensus and support of the provincialistic sentiments of the population they might have not been realized. We should remark that, though the style of the descriptions was sometimes monotonous and formally exhaustive due to their official character, the compilation of local documents had a fact-finding value for the progress of geographical knowledge in Japan.

Provincialism in Japan has, as the term itself indicates, been recognized and expressed in relation with the country represented by the capital, Tokyo. In the early Meiji period of enlightenment, every provincial or native custom was considered barbarian and uncivilized. Cities, especially the capital, Tokyo, were literally centers of civilization. But in the process of the original accumulation of capital and industrialization, which had been accomplished at the sacrifice of rural districts, the poverty of the peasantry and the social and economic discrepancy between the city and the village where remained the underemployed masses under a parasitic landownership system, became more and more marked. Thus, in Japan, the problems of the province versus the center found their expression predominantly in rural problems. Many social problems which, in advanced countries, had appeared during the industrialization period as urban problems, for example, unemployment and underemployment problems, sanitary problems, etc., appeared in Japan, more than elsewhere, in poor countrysides. Under such circumstances, the interest in local characteristics or provincial problems arose after the end of the last century both in the

<sup>21</sup> However, this regional difference was explained mainly by the historical conditions in which the western parts of Japan had always received cultural influences from continental Asia, which later came to be diffused in the eastern part of Japan. An interpretation of this kind could be found already in the *Kochishiryaku*, Vol. I (*Nihon Kyokasho Taikai*, Vol. XV, *op. cit.* p. 94).

<sup>22</sup> For instance, I. Nitobe noticed in his *Zotei Nogyo-honoron* (1908) the differences of the increase rate of population among the prefectures and discussed its causes (pp. 338-340).

<sup>23</sup> As K. Yanagida states in his autobiography *Kokyo Shichijunen* Tokyo, 1959 (now in *Teihon Yanagida Kunio-shu*, 1964, Appendix, Vol. III, pp. 1-421), in his childhood he had been very impressed by the miserable condition of the peasants in the famine of 1884, which made him take up the career of an agronomic officer of the Ministry of Agriculture, Commerce and Industry. And, from investigations which he conducted in different villages all over Japan as a governmental officer, his interest in folklore grew; this eventually made him the founder of the school of Japanese folklore.

ideological sphere and in policy arguments. In the ideological sphere, this tendency had been motivated not only by social-reformistic sentiment in regards to the poverty of the peasantry, but also by the nativistic idea in reaction to extreme Westernism and the influence of Pestalozzi in the education principles governing school geography. In the "Guideline for the Curriculum of the Elementary School" (*Shogakko Kyosoku Taiko*) enacted in 1891 by the Ministry of Education, instructions were given to "begin the lessons of geography and history . . . with the daily experiences of pupils such as the landform, the native land (*kyodo*)" or "with the chronicles of their native land".<sup>24</sup> As for policy arguments we should observe that many agronomists also began to discuss measures for the relief of the peasantry around the end of the last century and some of them leaned toward the study of folklore, rural sociology and local history. We can call physiocrats those who asserted the necessity of relief measures for the peasantry, in the sense that they considered agriculture the most important basis for national development. But they did not oppose the industrialization policy of the government, as we can see clearly in the writing of Inazo Nitobe (1862-1933)<sup>25</sup> and Tokiyoshi Yokoi (1860-1927).<sup>26</sup> The reasons for their attaching importance to agriculture and the relief or rural poverty were various: to secure a large domestic market for the manufacturing industries, to vindicate the autarchy of foodstuffs, to protect healthy human resources for the army, etc. In this respect, they differed from the ideologists of the Tokugawa feudal period who had considered agriculture the basis of the wealth of the country. We have to remark also that those agronomists of the Meiji and Taisho periods never referred to feudal ideologists before the Meiji Restoration but always cited examples of agrarian policies in advanced industrial nations. Anyhow, we cannot easily ascertain the continuity of the tradition of the physiocratic thought from the Tokugawa period to modern Japan.

Not all the agronomists who discussed rural problems around 1900 came to be interested in local fact-finding studies. For instance, T. Yokoi, who made such contradictory assertions such as promoting the protection of cultivators with the retention of absentee landownership or the decentralization of the political system with the strengthening of *tenno* absolutism, dealt with the problems of agrarian policy from the viewpoint of political economy and advocated conservative protectionism on a national level.

Two most important figures who began to study the local characteristics of the peasant's life proceeding from interest in the agrarian policy, or so to speak, founders of *jikata-gaku*<sup>27</sup> or a Japanese *Heimatkunde*,<sup>28</sup> were Inazo Nitobe and Kunio Yanagida (1875-1962). Around 1905 both had begun to organize, independently, small private groups to study the provincial life of the peasantry or their folklore. These two groups united in 1910 and continued to

<sup>24</sup> Cited from N. Haga, *Chihoshi no Shiso*, Tokyo 1972, p. 84.

<sup>25</sup> I. Nitobe, *op. cit.*, 1908, pp. 646-658.

<sup>26</sup> T. Yokoi, *Nogyo-shinron*, Tokyo 1905, pp. 613-616. On Yokoi's thought, see Y. Murakami, *Nihon Noseigaku no Keifu*, Tokyo 1972, pp. 29-77.

<sup>27</sup> N. Haga, *op. cit.*, 1972, pp. 70-71. The term *jikata* was used under the Tokugawa regime to mean the knowledge necessary for the administrators of the countryside in order to control the peasantry, and especially to collect tributes.

<sup>28</sup> Among the educationalists who emphasized the importance of direct observation in the daily life, the influence of the German *Heimatkunde* was very strong.

hold regular study meetings at Nitobe's home".<sup>29</sup> Among the members of these meetings, we find Michitoshi Odauchi (1875-1954), Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871-1944), Tadaatsu Ishiguro (1884-1960), etc. The reports read at the meetings were mainly on their field studies conducted in different parts of Japan. The meetings of this group continued until 1918, when Nitobe left Japan to go to Europe. The activities of this group are highly significant in considering the history of human geography in Japan. The initial study specializations of the members were varied; some, such as Nitobe, Yanagida and Ishiguro, worked on agronomics or agrarian policy while others, such as Makiguchi, were school teachers. As scholars they were out of office; at least they did not belong to such orthodox academic institutions as imperial universities. They were interested in the true native Japanese culture, but they were well acquainted with Western sciences, even though, in some cases such as that of Yanagida, they never cited from Western literature. We marvel at the rich citations from foreign geographers in the outline of human geography by T. Makiguchi, the *Jinsei Chirigaku* published in 1903 with the preface of S. Shiga. His concept of geography was not new but embraced rather popular environmentalistic principles. As for his knowledge on foreign geography, by this period, the presentation of geographical studies and the different reports on foreign countries had been made by several scholars, and through the activities of the Geographical Society of Tokyo (*Tokyo Chigaku Kyokai*),<sup>30</sup> and Makiguchi had followed all this information. He consequently came to the conclusion that it was necessary to stress the primary importance of observation of the homeland (*Heimat*); and this belief, thus characterized his *Jinsei Chirigaku*.

I. Nitobe, on the other hand, eruditely cited the works of Seebohm, Meitzen, Hanssen, etc., to demonstrate the necessity for studies on agrarian history, rural sociology and settlement morphology.<sup>31</sup> He had deplored the lack of studies of this kind in regards to Japanese villages. We regard the *Nihon Nominshi*<sup>32</sup> of K. Yanagida, which consisted of the transcripts of his lectures at Waseda University in 1924, and the *Toshi to Sonraku* (1914) of M. Odauchi, to be two pioneer works of the study of the settlement geography of Japan, in response to the task presented by Nitobe.

We saw that Nitobe's and Yanagida's "ruriology" group consisted of the connoisseurs in studies by Westerners and, besides, they were Tokyo intellectuals. Their aspiration towards the understanding of rural or provincial matters (*jikata-gaku* or *kyodo-kenkyu*)

<sup>29</sup> K. Yanagida, *Kokyo Shichijunen*, *op. cit.* (now in *Teihon Yanagida Kunio-shu*, 1964, Appendix, Vol. III, pp. 187-188). For information on the activities of this group and the role of I. Nitobe, we referred to F. Hashikawa, "Meiji Seijishisoshi no Ichidanmen: 'jikata' no Gisei to Jittai o Megutte", *Nihon Seijigakkai Nenpo*, 1963, pp. 96-119.

<sup>30</sup> For information of the activities of this Society, founded in 1879, and its publication, we owe a great deal to the detailed studies made by R. Ishida, "Tokyo Chigaku-kyokai Hokoku (1879-1897): Meiji-zenpan Nihon Chirigakushi Shiryō toshite", *Hitotsubashi Daigaku Shakaigaku Kenkyu*, Vol. X, 1969, pp. 1-83. *Ibid.*, "Chigaku-zasshi: Sokan (1889) yori Kanto Daishinsai made", *Hitotsubashi Daigaku Shakaigaku Kenkyu*, Vol. XI, 1971, pp. 1-95. Though the character of this Society had not been, at least until 1923, so much academic as social, nevertheless it contributed much to diffuse geographical information concerning foreign countries and also the works of famous foreign geographers.

<sup>31</sup> I. Nitobe, *op. cit.*, pp. 269-302. From this description we can estimate that he had at least consulted F. Seebohm, *The English Village Community*, 1883; G. Hanssen, *Agrarhistorische Abhandlungen*, 2 Vols., 1880-1884, and some works of A. Meitzen but not his main works *Siedlung und Agrarwesen der Westgermanen und Ostgermanen*, 3 Vols., 1895.

<sup>32</sup> K. Yanagida, *Nihon Nominshi* was first published in 1931 in Tokyo and now in *Teihon Yanagida Kunio-shu*, Vol. XVI, 1962, pp. 163-236.

was in this sense the aspiration of those who had lost their homeland, or at least, lived far from it. They had not exercised a great deal of influence on the people who lived and were interested in their native land. Especially in the field of human geography, their influence had been rather limited in the educational movement. Furthermore, Odauchi and other geographers aligning themselves with him had collaborated with the Ministry of Education in laying down the nationalistic guidelines for geographical education in schools and, thus, lost their non-official liberalistic character. Until World War II, Odauchi and some geographers continued to maintain relations with K. Yanagida and his school of Japanese folklore. But what distinguished Yanagida and some of his students from the geographers of the Japanese *Heimatkunde* was that the Japanese folklorists carried out much more consistent work in collecting the traditional native cultures which remained in every remote corner of Japanese villages. Thus, they established proper methods and found proper fields, true to the name of the school of Japanese folklore.

We cannot completely ignore a certain impact which the tendency to emphasize regional studies had on academic geographers who began to settle in professorships at different universities from around 1910.<sup>33</sup> This impact was most apparent in the field of historical geography and settlement geography; but it should not be exaggerated for, at that period, intensive regional surveys were made by rather academic geographers having a positivistic attitude than being possessed by the provincialistic mind.<sup>34</sup> T. Makiguchi had been regarded by authoritative academic geographers merely as an ardent school teacher who had studied a little more diligently than other school teachers, and T. Odauchi and the students under his influence as marginal followers of the folklore school. But for these academicians, every region, every province, every countryside area was recognized as a part of the national territory; furthermore, the national territory was part of the earth's surface. When these positivistic and mechanistic minds began to reflect on the utility of their science, their position was but one remove from geopolitics.<sup>35</sup>

#### IV

As we have seen before, during the early Meiji period of enlightenment much account had been made of geography as a school subject. This had been due mainly to the illuministic or Westernistic social climate of the day which, however, had not lasted long; and also to the importation of an education system from continental Europe by the Meiji governments. The role for the encouragement of the nationalistic mind, which was bestowed on school geography in the following period, corresponded perhaps to the same tendency developing during the last quarter of the nineteenth century in Western countries. But we should note that, even at this period of the institutional development of geographical studies in Japan, those who compiled geography textbooks were not specialists in geography, but

<sup>33</sup> Detailed chronological studies on this topic are: R. Ishida, *op. cit.*, 1965; *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, 1971, pp. 6-10.

<sup>34</sup> Later, when the studies of the homeland came to be stressed in the course of the evolution of nationalism in Japan, the academic geographers adhered, in their regional studies, to this reactionary trend of romantic nativism. We can find this type of thinking in the writings of one of the representative academic geographers, G. Ishibashi, *op. cit.*, 1936, p. 17.

<sup>35</sup> On geopolitics in Japan, see K. Takeuchi, "Nihon ni okeru 'Geopolitik' to Chirigaku", *Hitotsubashi-ronso*, Vol. LXXII, 1974, pp. 169-191.

historians, economists or administrative officers trained in disciplines other than geography. In the normal schools geography was strictly connected with history and taught generally as a complementary subject of history. In fact, if geography consisted of the mere enumeration of place-names, it did not require specialization; historians could enumerate a sufficient number of place-names where such and such historical events had occurred; and economists could specify an inventory of products of such and such a place. It was in the environmentalistic context that the necessity of the academic institution of geographical specialization became fully realized. At the Imperial University of Kyoto, in the Faculty of Literature, a professorship of geography had been founded in 1907 to which Takuji Ogawa (1870–1941) was appointed. At the Imperial University of Tokyo, Naokata Yamasaki (1870–1929) was nominated as professor of geography in the Faculty of Science and later, in 1919, the Department of Geography was founded under his chairmanship. The study of geomorphology became very active in the 1910's. A visit to Japan by A. Hettner in 1913 stimulated this trend. Hettner's concept of geography as the science of chorographical differentiation was not properly understood in Japan at that period. E.C. Semple's popular book (*Influences of Geographical Environment*, 1911) which was translated in Japanese in 1917 had considerable influence, though authoritative geographers of the universities somewhat disdained this work because of its popular character. If human geography is the study of the interrelation between human activities and the physical environment, a specific preparation for the study of both human and physical aspects, especially for that of the physical environment, was necessary. In fact, the first heads of the geography departments of the Universities of Tokyo and Kyoto were experts in geology.<sup>36</sup> The subsequent evolution of human geography in academic circles to this day is another problem for examination. Here, we have just pointed out that, many years before the establishment of academic geography, there already existed, in germinative form, different studies of human geography in the modern meaning. These original traditions of modern human geography in Japan are such that they deserve to have been inherited in full by geographers after 1920; that they have not is a matter of regret.

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<sup>36</sup> M. Odauchi noticed later, with disappointment, that geographical studies at the Imperial University of Tokyo had not been able to show development of an ecological perspective because of the inclination towards physical geography. (M Odauchi, "Nihon Jimmon-chirigaku no Keimoki" (1), *Shinchiri*, Vol. II, No. 6, 1948, p. 3.