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A perspective of transpacific labor movement.

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From Japanese to transpacific labor movement

What happened with Japanese labor movement for the last decade? How did the Japanese labor movement spend the frustrated time of so-called the “lost decade” when working people and their families in Japan suffered unprecedented political, economic, and social disaster? Did the political distrust, high unemployment, and social apathy transform the well-known (super!?) stabled industrial relations and (ultra!?) responsible unionism as the core of Japanese enterprise community? Did these enormous stresses and strains cause the workers and their families to have class-consciousness that had disappeared in Japanese society for a long time? Did part-time, especially women working at service industry, workers marginalized or excluded from the enterprise community organize their own unions to protect their extremely vulnerable status in Japanese labor market? Did these Japanese working people, no matter whether they are organized or unorganized, full-time or part-time, men or women, unite in overthrowing the government that had failed to help them in crisis?

It is hard to answer these questions at this stage when we have still no clear data showing that Japanese industrial relations system has been basically changed or Japanese

workers have been politically and socially more radicalized. Although truly there was no huge organizing of part-time workers and no serious political action of working people against the government, we do not really know the reason why there was no such event that could be predictable in other countries at the same conditions.

But, of course, this does not mean that Japanese workers did just call their suffering fate and accept it. It is wrong to say that the Japanese labor movement just looked on with their arms folded. Showing a main problem and its countermeasures of Japanese labor movement, this paper raises a question: whether Japanese organized labor movement, especially the biggest national labor federation, RENGO (Japanese Trade Union Confederation), shifts, if partially, its policy line and organizational structure toward “social movement unionism” that its counterparts have developed in Brazil, South Africa, and Korea since the 1980s and in the United States since the 90s.

It will take more time that this question can be answered with more concrete results of the policy and organizational changes that are currently, if partially, observed. Therefore, substantially, this paper aims at offering an alternative perspective that reexamines the past, present, and future of Japanese labor movement in the context of the new trend of the social movement unionism across the world.¹ This perspective,

¹ On more comprehensive information of Japanese labor market, industrial relations, and labor politics until the mid 1990s, see Mari Sako and Hiroki Sato, eds. Japanese Labour

simultaneously, can be extended geographically to the transpacific area. The social movement unionism, as mentioned above, has been discussed including the cases of the U.S., Korea, and Philippines. This unionism also has emphasized international solidarity and in fact there has been more and more interactions among unions of these countries.

The labor politics of the countries in the both sides of the Pacific, in fact, has been interconnected since the late 19th century, especially the Cold War era. The interconnectedness was more than union foreign policy and international economic conflicts. Some model of labor movement such as business unionism or syndicalism was transplanted, developed, modified, and re-transplanted across the Pacific. Until when will we keep considering labor movement as the national? Why don't we think about transpacific labor governance? In fact, in the current context of economic globalization, the future of Japanese labor movement can not be discussed without considering the future of Chinese, Korean, and U.S. labor movement.

Thus, this presentation is the first, if tiny, step to broadening spatially our perspective into the labor movement. In the following pages, the first part explains what

and Management in Transition: Diversity, flexibility and participation, London and New York: LSE/Routledge, 1997. On Japanese politics of the early 1990s, Purnendra Jain and Takashi Inoguchi eds. Japanese Politics Today: Beyond Karaoke Democracy, Melbourne: Macmillan Education Australia, 1997. On a critical analysis of the Lost Decade, Jiro Yamaguchi, "The Meaning of 'the Social' in Japanese Reform" (A paper presented in this conference).

the social movement unionism is. From the perspective of the social movement unionism, the second part describes the main problem that Japanese labor movement had. The third part shows briefly some examples that the RENGO may shift its policy line and organizational structure from its policy documents. The last part lists the questions that have to be studied in future, particularly in order to place this Japanese case in the context of the transpacific labor movement.

What is social movement unionism?

There has been a consensus in the social science literature for the last two decades that the labor movement in developed countries was in crisis. The literature has reported repeatedly declining strike activity, falling union density, shrinking real wages, and growing job insecurity in those countries. This picture that the labor movement is in crisis has been projected on the depressed mood of labor studies that the labor movement plays much less role in social change than before. This crisis of the labor movement and labor studies seems not temporary for many because its main cause is currently growing economic globalization and its political, social, and cultural effects against the labor movement.²

² On more explanation of this crisis, see Beverly J. Silver, Forces of Labor: Workers' Movements and Globalization since 1870, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge

However, as Beverly Silver says, “beginning in the late 1990s, a growing number of observers were suggesting that labor movements were on the upsurge, ... as a mounting popular backlash against the dislocation being provoked by contemporary globalization.”³ The surprisingly aggressive demonstration against the World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle in November 1999 along with the new activism of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organization (AFL-CIO)⁴, particularly, contributed to resurgent interest in labor movement and labor studies among social scientists in the U.S.⁵

Inspired by the reports of militant labor movements against the globalization in developing countries from the 1980s such as Korea, Brazil, South Africa, and Philippines,⁶ thus, the concept of the social movement unionism has been mainly developed among these U.S. social scientists and activist intellectuals. In fact, these

University Press, pp.1–2.

³ Silver, Forces of Labor, p.2.

⁴ On the new activism of the AFL-CIO, see Lowell Turner, Harry C. Katz, and Richard W. Hurd, eds. Rekindling the Movement: Labor’s Quest for Relevance in the 21st century, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001.

⁵ Silver, Forces of Labor, p.2.

⁶ On the militant labor movement in Korea, see Hagen Koo, Korean Workers: The Culture and Politics of Class Formation, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001; On the case of South Africa and Brazil, Gay W. Seidman, Manufacturing Militance: Workers’ Movement in Brazil and South Africa, 1970-1985, Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, University of California Press, 1994; On the case of Philippines, see Kim Scipes, KMU: Building Trade Unionism in the Philippines, 1980-1994, Quezon City: New Day Publishers and San Francisco: Available from SULU Arts and Books, 1996.

scholars and intellectuals explain and define the social movement unionism in their own ways. But the following description of the social movement unionism by Kim Moody is seemingly a common ground covering more or less these explanations and definitions.

Social movement unionism is one that is deeply democratic, as that is the best way to mobilize the strength of numbers in order to apply maximum economic leverage. It is militant in collective bargaining in the belief that retreat anywhere only leads to more retreats – an injury to one is an injury to all. It seeks to craft bargaining demands that create more jobs and aid the whole class. It fights for power and organization in the workplace or on the job in the realization that it is there that the greatest leverage exists, when properly applied. It is politically by acting independently of the retreating parties of liberalism and social democracy, whatever the relations of the union with such parties. It multiplies its political and social power by reaching out to other sectors of the class, be they other union, neighborhood-based organizations, or other social movements. It fights for all the oppressed and enhances its own power by doing so.⁷

In this description, a key phrase is “an injury to one is an injury to all.” The motto of American legendary radical union, the Industrial Workers of World (IWW), and the logo of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) challenge the organizational principle of capitalism: divide and rule.

According to the historical study of capitalism, a fundamental contradiction of the capitalism is that the expansion of capitalist production strengthens labor movement as a reaction and the concession (such as wage increase) made to control the labor

⁷ Kim Moody, Workers in a Lean World: Unions in the International Economy, London and New York: Verso, 1997, p.4-5.

movement brings decrease of profitability in the capitalist system while capitalist effort to increase the profit breaks an existing, if unofficial, social compacts and strengthening commodification (such as layoff and welfare cut) of labor brings decrease of legitimacy in the capitalist system. This dynamic of the de-commodification of labor/the establishment of new social compacts and the re-commodification of labor/the break of the old compact has been combined with “spatial differentiation among geographical areas” regarding the level/intensity of the labor commodification.⁸

Referring to the post-Second World War social contracts, for example, Immanuel Wallerstein expresses this mechanism more clearly; “One could cut in several-hundred-millions western workers and still make the system profitable. But if one cut in several billion Third World workers, there would be nothing left for further capital accumulation.” This spatial differentiation, in other words, drawing boundaries as to who will be “cut in” and who will be “left out” has also taken place within each country, industry, and company.

Beverly Silver points that there are three forms of the drawing boundary: 1. segmenting labor market (pursued mainly capital) 2. bounding citizenship (pursued mainly states) and 3. constructing exclusionary class identities on nonclass bases

⁸ Silver, Forces of Labor, p.20.

(pursued mainly workers themselves).⁹ These forms are interconnectedly used to be applied for different conditions of each case. Thus, labor history of each countries shows how race, ethnicity, and gender identities has been (re)constructed in combining all the three forms and how labor movement has been engaged in the drawing boundaries among white/nonwhite, immigrant/native, and male/female workers to protect the interest of its members under the social compact that the labor movement has been involved in.

As the key phrase, “an injury to one is an injury to all” suggests, a goal of the social movement unionism is to break the boundary drawn not only by capital and/or state but also existing labor movement for the social differentiation regarding the level/intensity of labor commodification. But this is not the goal that the only social movement unionism has among the labor movement. In fact, many organized labor movement regardless its movement style and organizational size do not deny officially equality among workers and ones with high unionization rate may come under a strong pressure to reduce any differentiation among its union members.

What the social movement unionism is distinguished from other unionism is the way in which the differentiation is reduced. The essence of the social movement unionism is rank-and-file participation and expanded mobilization. The social movement

⁹ Silver, Forces of Labor, p.24.

unionism tries to mobilize other groups and their members as well as its rank-and-file members in its organizing and other campaign. Many reports of the social movement unionism, in fact, show that environmental, campus, religious, human rights, and other groups have increasingly joined with unions in various campaigns from local through national to international levels.¹⁰

Involving broader social movement in union campaigns is often more than union tactics. The social movement unionism, thus, can be seen as a vehicle through which a tsunami of social movement appears. Building the social movement unionism and broadening social movement in a society is an interactive process. Involving broader social movement in union campaigns makes it easier to break down obstacles to member involvement and activism such as union bureaucratism and members' indifference to their unions. Involving broader social movement in union campaigns also makes it easier to accomplish institutional change such as labor law reform that will enhance power of activism of members. And Involving broader social movement in union campaign provides wider opportunity for more diverse people to be mobilize and lays the foundation for new social movement.¹¹

¹⁰ Lowell Turner and Richard W. Hurd, "Building Social Movement Unionism: The Transformation of the American Labor Movement," in Turner, Katz, and Hurd eds. Rekindling the Movement, pp.10-11.

¹¹ Turner and Hurd, "Building Social Movement Unionism," pp.11-12.

A major problem of Japanese labor movement

In Japan, where is the boldest boundary drawn in the differentiation regarding labor de-commodification such as increasing employment security, wage level, and welfare benefit? Japan has basically maintained, if partially modified, two-tiered economic structure through her economic development. Foreign observers often view Japanese corporate community with the image of gigantic, powerful, and prestigious companies (DAIKIGYO in Japanese) such as TOYOTA, HONDA, and SONY, their white color, largely male, workers in intelligent buildings, and few technicians working along with robots in automated factories. But this is not the only picture of the world of Japanese company.

According to a statistics of the Ministry of Industry and Technology in 1993, for example, Small and medium-sized enterprise (CHUSHO KIGYO or CHUSHO) with 300 or fewer employees totaled about 412,000 which is 99% of the total manufacturing establishment while the CHUSHO had about 7,810,000 employees which is 72% of the total manufacturing employees.¹² According to a statistics of the Ministry of Welfare and Labor in 2001, furthermore, 26% of total employees, 13.8 millions, are the irregular

¹² “Seisan wa Shuyaku, Jyoken wa Wakiyaku no Chusho Rodo,”(Chusho labor: leading manufacturing but secondary benefit), Hiroba Yunion, November 1995, pp.10-11.

(HI-SEISHAIN) and 7 millions among them are part time workers (PAAT), mainly women working at service industry. The HI-SEISHAIN increased by about 4 millions from 1993 to 2001 while regular employees (SEISHAIN) decreased by about 2 millions during that time.¹³

But the essence of the two-tiered economic structure is not the fact that the two different types of companies and workers' groups cohabit but one that the latter (CHUSHO and HI-SEISHAIN) plays a role of a bumper for the former (DAIKIGYO and SEISHAIN). The majority of the CHUSHO, for example, are subcontractors of DAIKIGYO. Jon Woronoff describes their relationship slightly exaggeratedly but not so misleadingly as follows:

Basically, larger companies use subcontractors to carry out activities or produce parts or articles that no longer interest them. These are usually less profitable operations or products. They are more labor-intensive and unpleasant. Thus, subcontractors produce older consumer electronics or fabricate smaller parts of ships. Sometimes they work in the parent company's own factory, sending their employees to do dirty and degrading tasks like painting, greasing, repairing minor defects or just cleaning up after hours. Naturally, subcontractors also try to get ahead by introducing improved techniques, adopting new technologies or acquiring better equipment. But this does little for their bottom line because the parent company, once it realizes they can produce more cheaply, demands that prices be cut. It exerts similar pressure whenever prices

¹³ "Hi-Seishain Yo Nin ni Hitori no Jitsuzo," (Irregular employees: a fourth of the total employees), Hiroba Yunion, June 2002, pp.4-5. There is no clear definition of the HI-SEISHAIN except the meaning of one who is NOT (HI) SEISHAIN. But if the meaning of the SEISHAIN is interpreted as a full member of an enterprise community, HI-SEISHAIN means non- or, at most, quasi-member of the community.

competition occurs or it wishes to export more. In fact, the pressure for lower prices is unending. Worse, in most cases, subcontractors do not even get a fixed price for their output; it is always negotiable. Nor do they receive a written contract in most instances; they have to accept verbal commitments.¹⁴

This difficulty of the CHUSHO in the two-tiers economic structure has been passed on to the workers of the CHUSHO in their labor conditions. The level of the fixed wages of the CHUSHO workers with 100 and fewer employees in 1996, for example, are 76% of the ones of the DAIKIGYO workers with 1000 and more employees. The level of the fixed wages of small business workers with 4 and fewer employees (REISAI) are 65% of the one of the DAIKIGYO workers. The level of bonus of the CHUSHO workers with 1000 and fewer is 65% of the one of the DAIKIGYO workers. In the case of the CHUSHO workers with 100 and fewer it is 41%. In the case of the REISAI workers with 4 and fewer it is 25%.¹⁵

86% of the DAIKIGYO workers' in 1996, moreover, had a five-day workweek while only 49% of the CHUSHO workers and 23% of the REISAI workers had the five-day workweek. The level of retirement money of the CHUSHO workers with 300 and fewer employees is 42% of the one of the DAIKIGYO workers with 5000 and more

¹⁴ Jon Woronoff, The Japanese Economic Crisis, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992, p.70-71.

¹⁵ "Konnani Hidoi! Chusho Rodosha no Jyoken Kakusa," (What the serious differentiation of labor conditions between DAIKIGYO and CHUSHO workers!), Hiroba Yunion, April 1998, pp.31-32.

employees. In the case of the CHUSHO with 100 and fewer employees it is 28%. The level of the welfare benefit of the CHUSHO workers with 1000 and fewer employees is a third of the DAIKIGYO workers' with 5000 and more employees. In the case of the CHUSHO workers with 100 and fewer employees is 20%.¹⁶

According to a survey in 1999, on the other hand, many of the PAAT (part-time workers) did not have retirement money and welfare benefits that even the CHUSHO workers, if much less than the DAIKIGYO workers,' had. About 70% of the PAAT thought that their levels of labor conditions were lower than the ones of the SEISHAIN (regular employee) who did the same job at the same place.¹⁷ Another survey in 2000 indicates that more and more employers would hire HI-SEISHAIN (irregular employees) such as the PAAT for the position where the SEISHAIN occupied because of the lower costs of the HI-SEISHAIN.¹⁸

So what did Japanese labor movement do for these CHUSHO and HI-SEISHAIN workers? The answer is that the Japanese labor movement kept basically them unorganized. In 1985, for example, the number of the DAIKIGYO workers with 1000 and more employees was 8.3 millions and 64% of them were organized while the number

¹⁶ "Konnani Hidoi! Chusho Rodosha no Jyoken Kakusa," pp.32-33.

¹⁷ RENGO Hakusho 2002 (RENGO white paper 2002), 2001, p.49.

¹⁸ "Seishain: Yo Nin ni Hitori no Jitsuzo," p.5.

of the CHUSHO workers with 100 to 999 employees was 8.6 millions and 28% of them were organized. But the number of the CHUSHO workers with 99 and fewer employees was 21 millions and only 2.5% were organized. The union density as a total was 24.4% in this year. In 1997, furthermore, the number of the DAIKIGYO workers increased to 9.8 millions and 59% of them were organized while the one of the CHUSHO workers increased to 11 millions and 20% were organized. But the number of the CHUSHO workers with 99 and fewer employees jumped to 27 millions and just 1.5% of them were organized. The union density as a total was 22.6% in this year.¹⁹ The number of the PAAT (part-time workers), on the other hand, was 6.3 millions and the union density among them was just only 1.5% in 1990. In 2000, the number of the PAAT jumped to 10 millions, but the union density was still only 2.6%. The union density as a total in this year was 21.5%.²⁰

Why did the Japanese unions keep the CHUSHO and HI-SEISHAIN workers unorganized? Because this was a result of the postwar social contract that labor and capital made in Japan. Japan experienced enormous rising of labor militancy after the Second World War, especially 1950s. In order to overcome restraints brought by this tsunami of labor militancy, Japanese manufacturing companies such as steel,

¹⁹ RENGO Hakusho 1999, p.85.

²⁰ RENGO Hakusho 2001, p.76.

shipbuilding, automobile, and electrical equipment developed “a multilayered subcontracting system that simultaneously allowed them to guarantee employment to (and establish cooperative relations with) a core labor force, while obtaining low-cost inputs and flexibility from lower rungs of the supply network.”²¹

To make this system work, these companies desired that their subcontractors were free from the restraint of labor militancy and their enterprise unions as a partner cooperated with their management by leaving their subcontractors unorganized, preventing their rival, often militant, unions from organizing them, or by organizing them and controlling the subcontractors unions. A similar pattern was happened in the case of unorganized HI-SEISHAIN workers. And this is an essence of postwar Japanese industrial relations: job security of core workers at the expense of periphery workers.²²

Is The RENGO Heading Toward Social Movement Unionism?

So how has the RENGO dealt with this problem of Japanese two-tiered economic

²¹ Silver, Forces of Labor, p.42.

²² On a general description of industrial relations of subcontractors, see Norma Chalmers, Industrial Relations in Japan: the Peripheral Workforce, London and New York: Routledge, 1989; On the case of steel, see Andrew Gordon, Wages of Affluence: Labor and Management in Postwar Japan, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001; On the case of Automobile, see Michael Cusumano, The Japanese Automobile Industry: Technology and Management at Nissan and Toyota, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1985; On the case of the HI-SEISHAIN workers, see Kumazawa Makoto, translated by Andrew Gordon and Mikiso Hane, Portraits of the Japanese Workplace:

structure? The RENGO was established in 1989 through the labor unification movement since the 1970s led by the DAIKIGYO enterprise unions. The aim of the labor unification movement was that these DAIKIGYO unions seized hegemony of Japanese labor movement which had held by public sector unions such as municipal, national railway, postal workers, and teachers' union, associated with the Japan Socialist Party, the NO.1 opposition party in Postwar Japan.

The DAIKIGYO enterprise unions, until the 1970s, had remained independent from national labor politics as long as they could secure the job security of their members and they could be cut in their company's growth. But as Japanese economic growth slowed down since the 1970s, the DAIKIGYO unions shifted to be involved in the national labor politics because they needed more and more to rely on forces outside their company, especially the government and their policy, in order to secure their members' job and maintain, at least, their living standard.

According to the original plan of the unification movement that the leading DAIKIGYO unions held, the RENGO was supposed to keep public sector unions and other left-wing private sector (mainly CHUSHO) unions out of it. But these unions, after all, joined the RENGO in only two years after the DAIKIGYO-led RENGO had been

established in 1987. In fact, these public sector unions and left-wing private unions began to shift their class-oriented policy line to sector-oriented one so that they could have an opportunity to represent alternative sectors to the DAIKIGYO sector in the RENGO. This early joining of public sector unions and non-DAIKIGYO private unions widened the policy stance of the RENGO and broadened its social and economic perspective than the DAIKIGYO unions had expected.²³

Reading through the policy documents has adopted since the first biannual conference and every years' SHUNTO ("where much coordination takes place between and among employers and unions at the industry and national levels in the process of wage bargaining")²⁴ policy, in fact, it turns out that reducing the differentials of labor conditions between DAIKIGYO and CHUSHO workers and between SEISHAIN and HI-SEISHAIN workers has been moved from the margin into the center of its policy. The ways in which the goal should be accomplished has been also shifting from lobbying the government to increase its subsidy to the CHUSHO enterprises into more intervening collective bargaining in each enterprise by urging each CHUSHO union to set minimum

²³ On the formation of the RENGO, see Toru Shinoda, "Rengo and policy participation: Japanese-style neo-corporatism?", in Sako and Sato, eds. Japanese Labour and Management in Transition.

²⁴ Mari Sako, "Shunto: The role of employer and union coordination at the industry and inter-sectoral levels," Sako and Sato, eds. Japanese Labour and Management in Transition.

wage level within its enterprise.²⁵ Even the DAIKIGYO unions has been recently urged to set the minimum wage level within its enterprise so as to raise the wages of the PAAT working at its enterprise who are often unorganized.²⁶

It is important to note that the RENGO has emphasized “social,” “fairness,” and “power” in its policy line since the late 1990s. Drawing on the terms, seemingly, the RENGO has tried to appeal itself to the public as a ‘new labor movement’ fighting for ‘humanistic’ moral economy against ‘coldhearted’ globalization based on market mechanism. In fact, the RENGO called itself “social labor movement” in the late 90s.²⁷ And now the RENGO identifies itself as a social movement and calls other social movements to make a coalition.²⁸ The current keyword in the RENGO documents and its presidential speech is “solidarity.” The actions for supporting the CHUSHO and HI-SEISHAIN workers became the symbol of the current RENGO movement.

Behind this policy sifting of the RENGO, there was a structural change among the industrial federations affiliating to the RENGO. The DAIKIGYO unions, especially the ones of leading export industry such as steel, shipbuilding, automobile, and electrical

²⁵ RENGO Hakusho 2003, p.34.

²⁶ RENGO Hakusho 2002, p.27.

²⁷ RENGO Hakusho, 1998, p.34.

²⁸ The RENGO 7th biannual conference policy 2001. The RENGO invited representatives of other social movements such as environment and human rights in its May Day gathering in 2003.

equipment, has been losing their influence within the RENGO as well as their membership as these industries has had more and more difficulty because of high-yen rate, catching up by other countries, especially China, and high-cost of domestic production. On the other hand, the CHUSHO unions, especially machine industry which has been relatively autonomous from subcontracting system, has strengthened their voice as the CHUSHO sector by merger of rival federations which used to compete for organizing workers in this industry.²⁹ Similar merge of the CHUSHO federations took place recently in chemical and service industry.³⁰

Increasing importance of local RENGOs is another structural change in the RENGO. In fact, local RENGO, in prefecture-level and sub-district-level, has been expected to lead their joint struggles as the RENGO put a great deal of effort into the bottom-up of the labor conditions of the CHOSHO in SHUNTO.³¹ The RENGO, furthermore, has shifted its financial and human resources for organizing campaigns more and more into these local RENGOs because the DAIKIGYO unions can be no longer expected as a major organization in increasing membership as before. Thus, while the executive committee where the decision making of the RENGO was substantially done

²⁹ They newly created the JAM with about the membership of 460,000, the 4th biggest federation in the RENGO in 1999.

³⁰ The ZENSEN merged with the CGS in 2000 and they (the name is still the ZENSEN) became the 3d biggest federation with the membership of about 590,000 in the RENGO.

had been composed of only industrial federations, the representatives of ten big organizations among prefecture RENGO were recently added to the committee.

Is the RENGO joining transpacific social movement unionism?

Given that the social movement unionism is characterized above, especially with emphasis on the two but interconnected points: breaking differentiation in labor de-commodification out and breaking boundaries inside and outside union movement down, how can we interpret the shifting of the policy line and the structural change of the RENGO? In order to do it, of course, we still need to examine to what extent the shifted policy is accomplished and to what extent the organizational change influences on the power relations in the RENGO. But we can, at least, say that the RENGO is heading toward the social movement unionism.

So there are another series of questions. For example, is this the first time for Japanese labor movement to head toward the social movement unionism? Why did the leaders of the RENGO shift its policy line despite they were from the DAIKIGYO unions? How can we relate these changes in the RENGO to their circumstance including economic globalization and moral hazard during the lost decade?

³¹ RENGO Hakusho 2001, p.29.

Moreover, how similar is the case of the RENGO to ones of the social movement unionism in Korea, Philippines, the US, and other Pacific-rim countries. How different are they? How do they influence each other? How does the development of the social movement unionism in these countries interconnect each other? For example, are they an expression of workers' nationalism or internationalism?

These questions will lead us to understand more deeply current situation of the labor movement in these countries. But, at least, the perspective of the social movement unionism provides us a window through which we can overview the trend of the labor movement across the Pacific.