

Founding of the Historical Association for Environmentally Local Economy (HAELE)

— The Industrial Revolution may have been the beginning of a tragedy ? —

Historical demographer Tony Wrigley (E. A. Wrigley) described the British Industrial Revolution as a uniquely British historical development, based on established demographic arguments, a historical change in the use of energy resources. The following quote contains the striking final words "the precursor of an overwhelming tragedy." It is a decisive critique of our times, but the hypothesis has not yet been fully analyzed.

The industrial revolution is usually depicted as a success story. ..., however, the industrial revolution may come to be regarded not as a beneficial event which liberated mankind from the shackles which limited growth possibilities in all organic economies but as the precursor of an overwhelming tragedy—assuming that there are still survivors to tell the tale.

(Wrigley, E.A. *The Path to Sustained Growth: England's Transition from an Organic Economy to an Industrial Revolution*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016, pp. 204-5.)

What Wrigley's work definitely proved was that Britain had begun to move away from an organic-economy society long before the Industrial Revolution. It was in sixteenth-century England that coal became the first energy source to be actively used in the world.

The nature of the organic-economy society based on the energy produced by photosynthesis has existed throughout the world strictly as something to be realized in the production process, all in the interrelationship with human activities. It was in the nineteenth century (the period from the eighteenth century or earlier to the beginning of the twentieth century, so the expression "the long nineteenth century" would be correct) that it was decisively and universally separated from the daily activities of human beings. It is actually not easy to systematically depict the environmental history of this century, in which advanced economic and colonial societies manifested themselves on the globe, on a global scale, and this is still not the case even in the current situation where many environmental histories have been written (J. Donald Hughes, *What is Environmental History?* 2nd Edition. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2016, p. 94). This is because knowledge about changes in individual societies and nature has not been accumulated sufficiently.

In considering the "long nineteenth century," it is tremendously valuable to discuss Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, who lived in the very nineteenth century itself, and in a sense, the significance of discussing Max Weber, who passed through the nineteenth century, will never disappear. However, if the Anthropocene, which has decisively changed the global environment, is short, the long nineteenth century may be forgotten, but the future is not optimistic.

In order to end the Anthropocene with an unthinkable short geologic age, we need to re-examine all of the historical processes leading up to the nineteenth century and the subsequent Anthropocene. Furthermore, we need to be aware again that it is not a single pathway, but multiple pathways in every region of the globe, and to clarify these pathways, we need to realize that the environment is locally defined. For example, we cannot equate the United Kingdom, which has only eight species of reptiles, with Indonesia, which has 514 species (National Astronomical Observatory of Japan, "2013 Science Almanac," Maruzen Publishing, 2012, p. 1004).

We need to remember that Kant once said that the root cause of war is nature itself. Nature is unequal.

- The condition of peace among human beings who live beside each other is not a natural situation (*status naturalis*), for the natural state is rather a condition of war. In other words, although there is not always an outbreak of hostilities, nevertheless there is a constant threat that this will occur. The state of peace must therefore be established, ... (Immanuel Kant, *On Perpetual Peace*, 1795, <http://a.co/91nHeAt>)
- Now, while nature has seen to it that human beings could live in all regions of the earth, she has, like a despot, also willed that they ought to live all over the earth, even when they had no inclination to do so and even without assuming that this ought is linked to an idea of duty arising from a moral law which would bind them to her. Instead she has chosen war as the way to achieve this end. (Immanuel Kant, *On Perpetual Peace*, <http://a.co/9vGcMju>)

I highly evaluate Hiroshi Tanaka's book, "Social Relations = Perspectives on the Division of Labor: Learning from the Wisdom of Marx and Weber Again" (Chuokoron Jigyo Shuppan, 2021, in Japanese). This is because it is a book that cannot be written by those who are ensconced in the familiar academic world of the extreme division of labor. At the same time, however, it is necessary to critically encompass this book and pass it on to the next step. Therefore, with his approval and endorsement, we decided to ask various experts to review the book and hold a joint review meeting to coincide with the inauguration of the HAELE.

I would like to propose the establishment of the Historical Association for Environmentally Local Economy as a place where people who sincerely live in all corners of the world, not just in the academic world, can gather to seek a new encounter between economic history and environmental history, which are almost completely separated in environmental history research societies, in the context of my own research activities specializing in economic history and environmental history. I would like to propose the establishment of the HAELE. We would like to create an opportunity to fundamentally reexamine "economy" and seek to integrate the two. I would like to reconsider the issue of the economy and the environment from the perspective of the living spaces and locality in which individual life forms live (see reference at the end of this proposal).

There is a group that deals with the history of ecological economy, and there is also a movement for environmental economic history. However, there is still a lack of academic movement that explicitly aims to join the history of economics or history of ideas with the history of economics and environmental history as a general history that involves discussions of various natural sciences. Environmental history has no boundaries or limits of knowledge. Many high-end environmental history studies are written by researchers and practitioners who are not historians. Furthermore, it would be an unexpected blessing if a businessman like Tanaka were to "do environmental history" (in the words of Donald Worster, a prominent environmental historian) as a new challenge.

Fortunately, in Japan, Kohei Saito's "Capitalism in the Anthropocene" (Shueisha Bunko, 2020) has set forth a "de-growth communism" and clarified the path toward genuine de-economic growth. This has brought Marx's review to a dimension that is not transient. In his German doctoral dissertation (*Natur gegen Kapital. Marx' Ökologie in seiner unvollendeten Kritik des Kapitalismus*, 2014), he argues that the decipherment of Marx's manuscripts is at the heart of what makes ecologist Marx Marx's manuscripts are at the center of the discussion. This has been made possible by the basic research of the compilation of the complete works of Marx and Engels (MEGA, new editions published since the 1970s), which has been ongoing for many years.

However, it was only in 2017 that the finished version of German Ideology was finally published from its unflagging work (Marx, Karl u. Friedrich Engels. 2017. *Deutsche Ideologie. Manuskripte und Drucke. Karl Marx Friedrich Engels. Gesamtausgabe (MEGA) Erste Abteilung. Werke/Artikel/Entwürfe. Band 5. Hrsg. von der Internationalen Marx-Engels-Stiftung, Amsterdam/Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter GmbH.*) It is only here that we can get a glimpse of the whole of early Marx. Although Wataru Hiromatsu's newly edited edition of German Ideology (Iwanami Bunko, 2002) was also compiled quite accurately, it is not the complete version.

[German original]

Die Produktion der Ideen, Vorstellungen, des Bewußtseins ist zunächst unmittelbar verflochten in die materielle Thätigkeit & den materiellen Verkehr der Menschen, Sprache des wirklichen Lebens. Das Vorstellen, Denken, der geistige Verkehr der Menschen erscheinen hier noch als direkter Einfluß ihres materiellen Verhaltens. (Deutsche Ideologie, S.135)

[English translation]

The production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness, is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men — the language of real life. Conceiving, thinking, the mental intercourse of men at this stage still appear as the direct efflux of their material behaviour. (Marx and Engels. 1976. The German ideology. Moscow, 1976, Third revised edition., p. 42)

The word "Verkehr" as used in nineteenth century Germany is polysemous. In Japanese, it is translated as "traffic," but it seems to have been used for both logistics, sexual intercourse, and now traffic. However, there was also a transformation and layering of linguistic culture unique to the German-speaking world, and because of this polysemy, Marx and Engels initially used "Verkehrsverhältnisse" (= modes of "exchange"). This polysemy is the reason why Marx and Engels initially used "Verkehrsverhältnisse" (= modes of "exchange"), but gradually, only the expression "Produktionsverhältnisse" (= modes of "production") would later survive. This change can be read in the composition of the various drafts in the German Ideology. There is also an attempt to reconstruct it in a new web version (<http://online-dif.com>).

This problem overshadows Tanaka's argument, but Saito's hypothesis that the ecologist Marx was born at the last phase of Marx's life also remains problematic if we examine in detail the various writings and manuscripts on the completed version of German Ideology and beyond. Was it really a shift from economic growth principle in the later phase of Marx? This is because Saito did not have access to the complete version of the German ideology when he wrote his doctoral thesis.

This is just one example, but the history of economics, the history of ideas, and the history of economics and the history of the environment require a renewed and intimate dialogue. In particular, it is a challenge to focus on the places where people live, and to examine the meaning and self-understanding of the language used there on a daily basis, such as "Verkehr," the persistence and change of society, and the progress of scientific and technological knowledge. Through this activity and dialogue, an environmental historical review of the "economy" of the

"long nineteenth century" on the earth, from the eighteenth to the early twentieth century, will be possible. If we can reduce this inequality, we may be able to mitigate the possibility that extreme weather and other phenomena can cause great damage to individual regions and make them more robust. If this happens, the method of focusing on that local living spaces may come to be evaluated as one strategy for moving toward de-economic growth while maintaining a highly divided society. I hope that by learning from the past, which is also a great laboratory, we can respect the natural individuality of each place and present new options for the future based on a scientific foundation.

Here, I would like to establish and continue the HAELE as a place to thoroughly sublimate ("Aufheben" in German) Tanaka's writings, to confirm what he calls "continuity of discontinuity," and to constantly search for new couplings of elements, and I hope to gain the support of many people.

September 4, 2021

(Translated on November 14)

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Reference:

Murayama, Satoshi, and Hiroko Nakamura. 2021. "'Industrious Revolution' Revisited: A Variety of Diligence Derived from a Long-Term Local History of Kuta in Kyô-Otagi, a Former County in Japan." *Histories* 1, no. 3: 108-121. <https://doi.org/10.3390/histories1030014>