

Kyoto University Economic Review, 1926–2003

Economic Research Office¹

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1. The Oldest Western Language Economics Journal in Japan

The *Kyoto University Economic Review* was founded by the Department of Economics of the Imperial University of Kyoto in July 1926. Although the publication of the journal was suspended due to the evacuation and confusion during the final stage of the war and after it (1945–1949), it continued up to vol. 76 in 2003. Since 2004, it has been succeeded by a new journal, which is open to the entire academic world and is titled the *Kyoto Economic Review*. The issues of this journal are numbered in continuation with those of its predecessor.

This is the oldest Western language academic journal of economics in Japan. It was followed, in the 1930s, by the journal of the Osaka College of Commerce and the journal of the Kobe College of Commerce. However, the former appeared for only five volumes (1933–1937), while the latter lasted for two volumes (1938–1942). The *Kyoto University Economic Review* exceeds them in continuity as well.

2. Significance of the Publication

The editorial foreword in the *Review*'s first issue described its aim as follows:

Many of the studies in the natural and social sciences already published in our country have had far-reaching effects in the advancement of sciences and enhancement of human happiness, but as the majority of them were written in the Japanese language they have not been accessible to Western scholars. Although studies in the natural sciences have been published by our scholars through books, university memoirs, reports of various associations and others all of which were written in Western languages, no similar attempt has, so far, been made as regards the studies in social sciences, the result being that the real condition in the field of our economic science has been almost unknown to the Western countries. Realizing that such a condition is truly regrettable from the standpoint of intellectual cooperation which should be established by the scholars of all nations, the Economic Department of the Imperial

University of Kyoto has decided to undertake the work of publishing a series of memoirs.

3. High Tide Around the Foundation of the Economics Department

It was in 1919 that the Department of Economics separated from the Department of Law of the Kyoto University. Prior to this, economics was taught in the School of Law, which was founded in 1899. Under a new decree of the Imperial University, economists in Kyoto were allowed to have new faculty as were their colleagues at the University of Tokyo. In 1922, full professor chairs in social policy and economic history were added to the original eight full professor chairs. In 1924, the department's capacity for the new enrollment increased from 100 students to 250 students.

Academics in Kyoto enthusiastically devoted themselves to the research. They formed the Society for Economics and held an annual assembly on the foundation day of the department. Professors and graduate students freely discussed various topics of economic sciences in the department's monthly workshops. The *Keizai Ronso*, which had been established eleven years before the *Review* (July 1915) was issued monthly. Most professors regularly published their articles in it.

Shiro Sugihara describes the decision of economists in Kyoto to establish the *Keizai Ronso*: "Around 1915, researchers who had grown up in Kyoto started joining the staff and academic productivity increased. Economists in Kyoto established the *Keizai Ronso* with the conviction that they were now independent from the University of Tokyo and could assume the role of a motor in the growth of economics in Japan. This continued for several years resulting in the separation of the Economics Department"¹.

We supplement Sugihara's comment with some historical information. According to the foundation plan of the School of Law in the Imperial University of Kyoto (1899), four full-professor chairs were to be assigned to economics. In the following year, the first chair in economics and a chair for public finance were established; the second chair in economics followed in 1901, and the chair for statistics followed in 1902. All professors who were nominated in these years were graduates from the University of Tokyo: Kinji Tajima, Kaichi Toda, Shusuke Hirobe, Masao Kambe, Gotaro Ogawa, and Hajime Kawakami. It was in the fall of 1907 that the first Kyoto graduate, Seiji Takarabe, joined the staff (first as a lecturer). He was followed by Shiro Kawada, Miono Yamamoto, Eijiro Honjo, and Shotaro Kojima. With staff coming from the university itself, economists in Kyoto achieved their independence from Tokyo. They devoted themselves to the growth of economics in Kyoto, in competition with Tokyo. Hyoue Ohuchi mentioned the active involvement of economists in Kyoto around the foundation of the department in his memoir as follows:

¹ Shiro Sugihara, *Nihon no Keizai Zasshi* (Economic Journals in Japan), Nihon Keizai Hyoron-sha, 1987, p. 47.

During these years, Kyoto University began to surpass Tokyo in the field of theory and policy research. Although Kyoto did not have esteemed professors, such as Noburu Kanai, Inazo Nitobe, and Kuranosuke Matsuzaki of Tokyo, some students of Kanai and Matsuzaki had established their careers as professors of economics in Kyoto. Some of these were Kaichi Toda, Kinji Tajima, Masao Kambe, Gotaro Ogawa, Hajime Kawakami, Shiro Kawada, and Seiji Takarabe (the last two were not graduates from Tokyo). They were equipped with powerful writing in addition to their rivalry with Tokyo. Thus, they endeavored to develop their journal, *Keizai Ronso*. In particular, the articles of Toda, Ogawa, Yoneda (Shotaro Yoneda), Kawakami, and Kawada attracted the public attention. Research in economic history by Uchida (Ginzo Uchida) and Honjo further increased the appeal of the journal. In the meantime, the sales of the *Keizai Ronso* began to exceed those of the *Kokkagakkai Zasshi* of the University of Tokyo and the journal caught up with the *Kokumin Keizai Zasshi*, an allied journal of commercial colleges of Tokyo and Kobe. In short, Kyoto became a new Mecca of the economics in Japan².

4. Translators

Most articles in the *Review* were Japanese articles that were chosen from those in the *Keizai Ronso*. From the beginning up to the last issue before 1945, the names of translators and supervisors appeared in the *Review*. Most of them had worked with English newspapers in Japan, such as *The Japan Times* and *The Japan Chronicle*. Several foreign professors of the Faculty of Letters joined them as supervisors.

5. Distribution

Kyoto economists had to set up a worldwide distribution network of the *Review* on their own since this was the first attempt at international publication in Japan. They actually managed to do this and received a general welcome. In the second issue of the first volume of the *Review*, the editor reported the following:

Of the total 1,000 copies printed of Vol. I. No. 1, 800 copies were presented to universities, libraries, institutions, and professors of various nations, while the remaining 200 copies were put on sale at the Maruzen Book Store, and by now the edition may be said to be exhausted. To be more exact, the copies thus distributed were 200 for England, 200 for America, 100 for Germany, 100 for France, 100 for Japan, and 100 for other countries. From most of the institutions and economists to whom copies were sent, we have received kind comments and criticisms as well as letters of thanks, and we only regret that

² Hyoue Ohuchi, *Keizaigaku 50 nen* (50 years with economics), University of Tokyo Press, 1970, Book 1, p. 54.

space does not allow for the publication of all these in the present number. We have received, from many quarters, applications for copies, but the copies printed of our first issue were limited in number, and since the edition is exhausted, we intend to send copies of the present and succeeding numbers to these applicants with our compliments and this explanation.

Although the list of addresses no longer exists, the 800 addresses appear to be sufficient to cover significant institutions and scholars of the world at that time. Yet, the editor sent a letter dated October 1, 1926 to these recipients asking them to confirm their subscription and requesting them for information on other possible recipients. This reveals the determination of the editors toward the diffusion of their research results.

6. Overseas Repercussions

The publication of a Western language journal was a natural outcome of the confidence and conviction of economists in Kyoto. Indeed, there were considerable repercussions of continuously making the research results of the staff of the department public.

The feedback from overseas served as further encouragement for the staff's research. It is well known that the theoretical research of Kei Shibata in the *Review* was praised by Oskar Lange as the first attempt to bridge the gap between Marxian economics and the general equilibrium theory. The analysis of Japanese agriculture by Yoshinosuke Yagi was said to be appreciated by American policy makers, since it furthered their understanding of the situation in Japan. Later, after 1945, Maurice Dobb replied to Horie Hideichi's criticism of him in the 1955 issue of the *Review*.

7. Suspension from 1945 to 1949

From vol. 14 (1939) onward, the *Review* became a quarterly journal. It is remarkable that a journal composed mostly of English papers managed to continue during the years of war. Although we can imagine that distribution to the United States and Britain was difficult during these years, the actual situation is not clearly known. The *Review* was eventually forced to suspend publication at the beginning of 1944, with vol. 19, issue no. 1 being the last issue. It took several years for the *Review* to resume publication since the war and the subsequent reshuffling of staff had brought many obstacles to the reconstruction of the department itself.

8. Revival of the *Review* after the War

The *Review* was revived in April 1950 with vol. 20, no. 1. It returned as a biannual journal and was printed without any explanation in the editorial. One purpose

of the revival was to acquire academic resources from overseas in exchange. This was a particularly effective way of acquiring economics resources that were not available in bookshops from the new socialist countries of Eastern Europe. This contributed toward enriching the collection of the department library, particularly, in terms of East-European journals.

9. Decline of the *Review*

During the 1970s, the biannual printing of the *Review* became untenable and the publication itself became irregular. This was due to the outbreak and recurrence of the student unrest that annoyed the faculty for a decade starting from 1969. The blow was so severe that even the *Keizai Ronso* could not maintain its orderly printing during these years.

Another difficulty that the *Review* faced from the 1970s onward was that the standard publication process followed by the *Review*, whereby papers written in Japanese and published after translation, became outmoded. The internationalization of economics advanced to such an extent that Japanese economists could attend international conferences, contribute to foreign economics journals, and so on, without hesitation. The exclusive nature of the *Review*, which printed the works of only the staff without any formal evaluation, was conceived as lacking the essential qualities of a prestigious academic journal. Some of the faculty members preferred to use faculty discussion papers for an inner-circle discussion before contributing to overseas journals.

Finally, in 2003, the faculty decided to modify the *Review* as an open refereed journal from its 73rd volume onward. Along with this change, the name was slightly modified, and since 2004, it has been published under the name of the *Kyoto Economic Review*.

Cumulative Index to the Kyoto University Economic Review, 1926–2003 is available upon request to the Economic Research Office, Graduate School of Economics, Kyoto University.