

A Historical Note:
The Antithetical Receptions of Jean de Bloch in Japan
at the Time of the Hague Peace Conferences

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In Japanese storehouses of knowledge such as HEIBONSHA's and MARUZEN's *ENCYCLOPEDIAs*, SHOGAKUKAN'S *ENCYCLOPEDIA GENRE JAPONICA* and *ENCYCLOPEDIA NIPPONICA 2001*, or IWANAMI's *BIOGRAPHICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA*, there is no item about Jean de Bloch. Even in writings of Japanese intellectuals of today, particularly of those interested in the field of war and peace, no descriptions about Jean de Bloch can be found. Jean de Bloch seems lost in oblivion in today's Japan. This small piece of paper tries to recall Jean de Bloch from oblivion by recording a historical note of the fact that Jean de Bloch was introduced in Japan in 1902 and 1904, i.e., the years between the First Hague Peace Conference of 1899 and the Second of 1907, and was received antithetically by the two different Japanese at the time, i.e., Isoo Abe and other advocates of peace and Kaoru Inoue and other advocates of war as regards the Japanese-Russo War(1904-1905).

KEYWORDS Jean de Bloch Isoo Abe *RIKUGO ZASSHI*
MODERN WEAPONS AND MODERN WAR(1900)
KINJI NO SENSO TO KEIZAI(『近時の戦争と経済』)(1904)

Before the First Introduction of Bloch in 1902

At the end of CHAPTER IV DOES RUSSIA NEED A NAVY? of *MODERN WEAPONS AND MODERN WAR* [Being an Abridgment of *The War of the Future in its Technical, Economic and Political Relations* (With a Prefactory Conversation with the Author by W. T. Stead. Translated from the Russian, London, Grant Richards, 1900, 380 pp. +LXXIX pp.)] is a Bloch's description as to the possibility of Japan's future entering upon a war with Russia: "...from the direction of Japan there can be no serious danger. In her excessive armaments Japan is making efforts to follow in the footsteps of Europe, like the frog in the fable which, seeking to rival the size of the ox, blew himself out until he burst. Something of this nature must happen with

Japan. The Amur territory of Russia is a wilderness which Japan cannot threaten. It is inconceivable that she would enter upon a war with Russia even though she were possessed of a preponderance in battleships(p.127).” This prediction of Bloch as of 1898 was about to be wrong by 1902 when the first introduction of Bloch was made in Japan. In 1900(November 11), to show a more preponderance of the naval forces, Japan launched her new, modernest six battleships, of which the Mikasa was the world strongest at the time with a displacement of 15,140 tons, 4 thirty-centimetre guns, 14 fifteen-centimetre guns, 20 eight-centimetre guns and a maximum speed of 18 knots. In 1901(October 16), with the aim of containing Russia, the Government sent again as her diplomatic representative, Tadasu Hayashi who had represented the Government as envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary at the First Hague Peace Conference of 1899, to England for negotiations to form a military alliance with her, and in 1902 (January 30), three months before the first introduction of Bloch appeared in Japan, the Government reached the signature of the military alliance with England. The tide towards a war against Russia was almost in, for the part of the Government.

Isoo Abe: the first Japanese who introduced Bloch to the Japanese public

Probably the three official delegates of the Japanese Meiji Government to the First Hague Peace Conference of 1899, i.e., Tadasu Hayashi, Army Colonel Yusaku Uehara, and Navy Captain Shunma Sakamoto would have already known the name of Jean de Bloch before, at, or at least soon after the Conference. And probably an erudite press writer of the Tokyo Asahi Shimbun(a newspaper at the time) with a pen name of Gan-nan-sei, who, in the midst of the Conference, serialised 16 commentary articles entitled A HISTORY OF PEACE CONFERENCES (*HEIWAKAIGI NO YURAI*) which described various efforts to hold peace conferences up to the Hague Conference,¹⁾ would have already known the name of Jean de Bloch. But this should be taken as a mere conjecture, since the fact is that neither of them mentioned the name of Jean de Bloch anywhere in public. Who, then, was the first Japanese that introduced Bloch to the Japanese public?

The first Japanese was a man named Isoo Abe(安部磯雄, 1865-1949),²⁾ who, as he claimed himself in a letter to Leo Tolstoy later in 1904(September 4),³⁾ was a socialist and pacifist. By 1902 when he first introduced Bloch to the Japanese public, Abe was already an influential leader of the Japanese social, political and intellectual movements: he was a founding member of the first Japanese labour union(1897); he was a founding member of a study group of socialism(1898); and he was a founding member of the Japanese Socialists and Democrats Party (Shakai Minshu To, 1901), which was banned by the Government on the very day of its forma-

tion (May 20) mainly because the Party manifesto which Abe drafted categorically declared that the Party should act for reduction of Japan's arms as against the Government which was expanding her arms in preparation for a future war against Russia.⁴⁾ Abe was, then, a Unitarian leader, too. At the time in Japan where the universal suffrage was not held, Unitarian and other Christian intellectuals were among those who led and represented the public opinion. Abe was an editor of a Unitarian monthly magazine called *RIKUGO ZASSHI* (六合雑誌, COSMOS MAGAZINE in English). Its circulation being as small as 1,000,⁵⁾ the Magazine was favoured amongst intellectuals at the time.

In the contents of this magazine, no.257 issued on May 15, 1902, is a description that Abe made a series of 4 Sunday church lectures (on April 13, April 20, April 27, and May 4 of the same year) titled *BLOCH'S DISCOURSE ON IMPOSSIBILITY OF WAR* (ブロッホ氏の非戦論 *BUROHO SHI NO HISENRON*).⁶⁾ Although the texts or other written documents of his church lectures are still unfound, one can safely say that this was the first, public introduction of Bloch in Japan. And soon after the church lectures, Abe put in the Magazine two articles about Bloch: the first was a serial article in three installments (no.258, June 15, pp.57-63; no.259, July 15, pp.49-56; and no.260, August 15, pp.64-71) entitled *BLOCH'S DISCOURSE ON WAR* (ブロッホ氏の戦争論 *BUROHO SHI NO SENSONRON*) and the other, a single article (no.262, October 15, pp.66-68) entitled *BLOCH'S GREAT WAR MUSEUM AT LUCERNE* (ルサーンに於けるブロッホ氏の戦争博物館 *RUSAN NI OKERU BUROHO SHI NO SENSO HAKUBUTSUKAN*). These were the first written introduction of Jean de Bloch to the Japanese public.

An Outline of Abe's Introduction of Bloch in *RIKUGO ZASSHI*

Abe's first article *BLOCH'S DISCOURSE ON WAR* was almost a digest Japanese translation of *MODERN WEAPONS AND MODERN WAR*, as he noticed in the very beginning of the article: "A publication entitled *MODERN WEAPONS AND MODERN WAR* which has recently been translated into English from Mr Bloch's 4,000 page great work is a compact book with 350 pages or so but is good enough to know the gist of Mr Bloch's arguments. I will, therefore, take it as a basis in introducing the gist of Mr Bloch's arguments (no.258, p.57)." Yet, a close, word by word comparison of his Japanese article with *MODERN WEAPONS AND MODERN WAR* notifies us of the fact that, of the Book, Abe translated and digested only the chapters of PART I MILITARY AND NAVAL DEVELOPMENTS, except CHAPTER IV DOES RUSSIA NEED A NAVY? and CHAPTER VII THE CARE OF THE WOUNDED. As regards the chapters of PART II he touched none of them and excused at the end of the article: "Mr Bloch furthers on to detailed statistics of the national strength of the great powers of today and

insists none of them can endure the economic consequences of a future war. But if I write them all, I fear my article will be too lengthy. Therefore I will put down my pen at this point (no.260, p.71).”

The manner in which he described the article is such that he first puts up a Japanese subtitle, then gives a summarised Japanese translation of the section(s) in *MODERN WEAPONS AND MODERN WAR* covered within the subtitle, and often in the end of the translation, adds some comments of his own. For describing a profile of Bloch, for instance, he gave a digest translation from PREFACE vii-xiii of *MODERN WEAPONS AND MODERN WAR* and added his comments: that Bloch, as a result of his long-term study, had become a committed advocate to argue that war is no longer possible; that Bloch’s Russian book had given a great impact to the Emperor of Russia and contributed to the opening of the Hague Peace Conference; and that a criticism that Bloch had been a mere visionary was in fact quite wrong.

In this way Abe went on for the rest of the article. Under the subtitles: EFFECTIVENESS OF RIFLES, EFFECTIVENESS OF ARTILLERY, EFFECTIVENESS OF CAVALRY, EFFECTIVENESS OF ARTILLERYMEN, and EFFECTIVENESS OF INFANTRY(no.258), he gave digest translations from the first part of CHAPTER I HOW WAR WILL BE WAGED ON LAND of the same book, and his comment *en masse* was that such improved effectiveness of these areas would increase casualties at future wars. Under the subtitle: STRENGTH OF ARMIES(no.259), he gave a long translation from the latter part of CHAPTER I and commented that efforts of the great powers of Europe in increasing the number of soldiers would not only press their economy but also produce untrained soldiers, which eventually would lead to an unexpected prolongation of the end of a war. And under the subtitle of A PROSPECT OF A WAR BETWEEN TWO ALLIANCES(the second part of no.259), Abe picked up a statistics of the effective armies(as of 1896) of the both sides (i.e., of Germany, Austria, and Italy, and of France and Russia) from the top page of CHAPTER II PLANS OF CAMPAIGN: POSSIBLE AND IMPOSSIBLE and, giving a summarised translation of the CHAPTER, concluded that, because of the excessive number of soldiers of the both sides, there would be no possibility for either of the sides to accomplish the end of the war, and that the economic loss which would accompany the war would be irreparable. The last subtitle he put up in the article was DEVELOPMENT OF NAVAL FORCES(no.260), in which he included digest translations from 3 chapters of *MODERN WEAPONS AND MODERN WAR*: CHAPTER III THE FUTURE OF NAVAL WARFARE, CHAPTER V WHAT WARS HAVE COST IN THE NINETEEN CENTURY, and CHAPTER VI WHAT THEY WILL COST IN THE FUTURE. Starting to say that the development of the naval forces, particularly of its long-range modern guns and powerful projectiles

would endanger maritime towns and people living there, he finally concluded by commenting, "During 3,357 years from B.C.1496 to A.D.1861, we human beings have lived in war for 3,130 years and could live in peace only for 227 years. What a stupid thing we have been labouring for! Those who want to advance our social welfare, therefore, must exert our efforts for abolishing war, first and foremost(no.260, p.71)."

Abe's second, short article *BLOCH'S GREAT WAR MUSEUM AT LUCERNE* was, too, a digest translation from an article by William Thomas Stead entitled *OBJECT LESSONS IN WAR AND PEACE* in *The Review of Reviews* of 1902(vol.26, July 15, pp.37-40), as he notices in the beginning of the article: "I already introduced Mr Bloch's discourse on war in this magazine. This time I will touch upon a war memorial which should be regarded as his memento. In this past [August]⁷⁾ issue of *The Review of Reviews*, I have found an article which outlines the Museum. Therefore I will translate it into Japanese for your reading(no.262, p.66)." As a matter of fact, this second article was a mere, digest Japanese translation and had no comments of his own.

Behind the Belated Appearance of the Second Introduction of Bloch in 1904

The second introduction of Bloch in which Bloch was taken as an object to criticise appeared in December(10th), 1904. Not immediately after Abe's first introduction in June-August of 1902, but as late as 15 months after it, it came. What was there in this belatedness? There had been a long, serious battle between the advocates of peace and the advocates of war at the time operated before and after Japan's declaration of war against Russia of February 10, 1904.

In 1903, the Government ready for a war against Russia started its manipulation over the national public opinion by, for instance, in August(9th), backing up the forming of a civilian group against Russia (called *Tai Ro Doshi Kai* 対露同志会) and letting them voice their strong urge that Japan should enter into a war against Russia. The same was true of the formation of a patriotic women's group (called *Aikoku Fujin Kai* 愛国婦人会). This was organised soon after the Japanese declaration of war and its membership counted far over one million by September of 1904, i.e., three months before the appearance of the second introduction of Bloch. In addition, a famous newspaper at the time called *Yorozu Cho Ho*(万朝報) which used to be a strong supporter of the advocates of peace, changed suddenly into an advocate of war in October(8th), 1903. As a writer of a biography of Abe describes, "A great majority of the public opinion were for the Government and for the Government's war to defeat Russia."⁸⁾ For the part of the Government, therefore, only Abe and other advocates of peace were their internal 'enemies' left

to defeat.

The Government's 'enemies', on the other hand, continued their struggle against the Government mainly through a combined effort of Abe's study group of socialism and a newly organised socialist group called Heimin Sha(平民社). The latter, which was set up on October 8th of 1903, the same day when the two famous socialists at the time, Denjiro(commonly called Shu-su-i) Kohtoku and Toshihiko Sakai resigned from the Yorozu Cho Ho, started to publish, from the next month(November 15), their own weekly newspaper called Heimin Shimbun(平民新聞) with the aims of publicising their views on pacifism, disarmament, abolition of war, and of course, socialism. Abe, being an editorial writer of this weekly, put in it a reprinted extract of his first article of 1902 focusing Bloch's statistics of the excessive amount of the military expenditures spent in the past wars(no.10 issued on January, 1904) and, wrote an editorial article appealing to the then Russian socialist party to try to stand on a common footstep of pacifism whereby they should not take up guns against their own government nor against the Japanese comrades(no.18 issued on March, 1904). An editorial article entitled *NO TAX INCREASE!* Kohtoku wrote in no.20(issued on March, 1904), in which he bitterly criticised the Government decision to increase tax for the purpose of procuring its war expenditure, produced a great sensation nationwide, but, it also produced a misfortune that the Government came in to interfere in its publication.⁹⁾ From the Government side, they could have found other good excuses to interfere in such articles as *A REPLY FROM THE RUSSIAN SOCIALIST PARTY*(no.36 issued on July 17, 1904) in which the Russian Party showed their solidarity with the Japanese counterpart shouting for the abolition of militarism and hailing to the international socialist parties; *TOLSTOY'S DISCOURSE ON THE JAPANESE-RUSSO WAR*(no.39 issued on August 7, 1904) in which the whole article of Tolstoy in *the London Times*(June 27) where he condemned both governments of Russia and Japan as to the Japanese-Russo War was introduced in translation; and *A REPORT FROM THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST PARTY CONFERENCE*(no.48 issued on October 9, 1904) in which Sen Katayama, another famous socialist at the time, reported that he had addressed in the Conference that the Japanese socialist movement was in progress.

According to a statistics,¹⁰⁾ the total copies of the Heimin Shimbun sold in the year of 1904 alone mounted up to 200,000; the total copies of leaflet they distributed for the expansion of socialism up to 32,000; and the number of meetings they held up to about 160 including 44 in Tokyo, 57 in provinces, and 13 for women audiences, some of which collected more than 1,000 audiences. But this was the limit of their resistance against the Government. In November (16th), 1904, with a confidence of a victory in the War, the Government banned the activities of Abe's study group of socialism, and was ready to dissolve the Heimin Shimbun and Heimin

Sha, which actually happened soon in the next year, in January(29th) and October(9th), 1905. The second introduction of Bloch came in between these times. It came, therefore, not as a simple reaction to Abe's first introduction of 1902, but as a result of the whole process of the Government's manipulation over the public opinion.

The Second Introduction of Bloch in 1904

This time it came, not in a form of a digest translation article Abe did, but in a form of a complete, full translation book from *MODERN WEAPONS AND MODERN WAR*.¹¹⁾ It includes, of course, CHAPTER IV DOES RUSSIA NEED A NAVY? of Part I which, probably, Abe deliberately omitted from his translation. It was published by a publisher called MIN YU SHA (民友社 FRIENDS OF DEMOCRATISM in English), now a supporter of the Government,¹²⁾ under the title of *KINJI NO SENSO TO KEIZAI* (近時の戦争と経済 MODERN WAR AND ECONOMY in English). It has 400 pages for its body and additional 10 pages for *PREFACE* by Baron Kaoru Inoue, ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer; 4 pages for *INTRODUCTORY NOTES* by Translator (whose name is not described); 1 page for a profile of Bloch in which the name of Bloch's International Museum of War and Peace at Lucerne is mentioned; 2 pages for *Contents* including all chapters of PART I and PART II of *MODERN WEAPONS AND MODERN WAR*; and an extra interleaf for *EPIGRAPH* by ex-Prime Minister Hirobumi Ito, which is written in Japanese calligraphy meaning: 'When we face a matter in our lives and have abundant reason to deal with it, we must deal with it with a definite determination.'¹³⁾ The 400-page body is very well-organised for reading, with additional subtitles given in the top margin of the pages, and with three special marks—single circles, double circles and black dots¹⁴⁾—put beside the Japanese translation where, supposedly, the translator or the publisher wanted to emphasise. An example marked double circles, for instance, is a place(p.139) for Bloch's prediction as to the possibility of Japan's entering upon a war with Russia, which is quoted in the beginning of this paper.

A close reading of *PREFACE* by Inoue in particular will lead us to an understanding that there are three objectives in this publication—criticism against Russia, criticism against Bloch and, though mostly not overtly expressed but suggested between the lines like the epigraph by Ito, encouragement upon the Japanese public in taking an armed peace road in the world of that time as a future of Japan. Inoue, who read the final draft of the translation the month before its official publication and was asked to write the preface of it,¹⁵⁾ starts in his *PREFACE* by criticising Russia: "It is said that the Hague Peace Conference came to be held because Bloch's book had moved the heart of the Russian Emperor. And half of the world opinion at

the time praised the Emperor's pacifism and took him as the Saviour whilst the other half doubted his true intention and said that this Peace Conference might be his fraudulent manoeuvre where he conceals a true intention to save the cost of his European forces and to transfer them to East Asia that he wanted to control. Frankly, I must conclude that the latter opinion became true....(PREFACE, p.1)." Inoue continues his criticism against Russia by saying that the Russian desire to monopolise the wealths of China and Manchuria was wrong (PREFACE, p.2). Then he turns his criticism to Bloch, first by taking up the Bloch's allegory of Japan and Russia in CHAPTER IV DOES RUSSIA NEED A NAVY? of *MODERN WEAPONS AND MODERN WAR* (see the first page of this paper) and says, "Now nine months has passed since the war [the Japanese-Russo War] began and, behold an unbroken series of victories for our imperial army and navy witnessed by the eyes and ears of the whole world...Mr Bloch said that, in his comparison of the military force of our Japanese empire and that of his native country, ours was a frog and the Russian's was an ox and the frog, if it got angry, was only destined to blow itself out until it burst. This was nothing but a sheer insult against us. Look now at the ox running away. All we can hear is its lowing. Who can predict the future? Mr Bloch was wrong. He now should call the Russian's the black, foolish donkey (PREFACE, p.5)."¹⁶⁾ As regards Bloch's argument that the great economic loss in a future war will lead to a destruction of a nation, Inoue points out, "The future growth of war expenditure is a natural phenomenon in the development of civilisation....But that is not an absolute condition, but a relative condition as to whether or not a nation should enter into a war...The point is whether a nation can raise the war expenditure or not....(PREFACE, pp.6-9)." And he introduces a British example that the government had imposed tax even on commodities such as dishes, hats and bricks and that the British commons had borne it with their firmest patriotism and with their indefatigable patience (PREFACE, p.9). At the end of PREFACE he argues against Bloch by saying, "In this world there is no way to take but an armed peace as long as the great powers have borders to divide, interests to differentiate, armaments to compete (PREFACE, p.11)." One interesting criticism Inoue made in PREFACE is a criticism against W. T. Stead. He says, "Mr Bloch was introduced to the world of English Language by way of Stead, an English. Stead is best known as a sympathiser of Russia....(PREFACE, p.10)." This comment was probably Inoue's euphemistic criticism against Russia and such Japanese as Abe who introduced Bloch by way of Stead.

Strange enough, there is no criticism against Russia in *Translator's Notes*. It of course shares in most of Inoue's criticisms against Bloch's discourse on the impossibility of war, and softly expresses its own counterarguments such as "There could be cases where a future war finishes within three years instead of five that is expected, so that the economic loss will be

less (*TRANSLATOR'S NOTES*, p.2).” On the other hand, it praises Bloch as a great, practical thinker and even goes far to say, “If one compares Mr Bloch to Tolstoy who is an utopian advocate of peace, that comparison is totally wrong (*TRANSLATOR'S NOTES*, p.4).” At the end of *TRANSLATOR'S NOTES* there is an explanation about the title of this book: “Why is this book titled *MODERN WAR AND ECONOMY* is because Mr Bloch’s *THE WAR OF THE FUTURE* largely describes about the modern wars and the accompanied economy. One may wonder if there was a Government’s intention hidden in this titling that, showing the objective statistics by Bloch, the Government urge the Japanese people to overcome the economic hardship facing them. The year of 1904 when the second introduction of Bloch appeared was such time in the history of Japan.

FOOTNOTES

- 1) See articles on June 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19 & 20.
- 2) For reference see a brief biography of Isoo Abe in *BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF MODERN PEACE LEADERS* (Greenwood Press, 1985), pp. 4-5.
- 3) Abe’s letter to Tolstoy (Sept. 4, 1904) was first publicised far later in 1930. And a translation—not the original—of Tolstoy’s reply letter to Abe (Oct. 23, 1904) was first publicised on August 27, 1905. See Yoshikazu Takano: *NIHON SHAKAISHUGI NO CHICHI: ABE ISOO* (Isoo Abe: THE FATHER OF THE JAPANESE SOCIALISM), Abe Isoo Kankokai, 1970, Interleaves.
- 4) Among other aims of the Party were nationalisation of railway, electricity and gas; legalisation of trade union; enforcement of universal suffrage; and abolishment of the Maintenance of the Public Order Act.
- 5) This is a calculation of Norihisa Suzuki: *RIKUGO ZASSHI KAISETSU* (A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION OF *RIKUGO ZASSHI* [republicated]), Fuji Shuppan, 1986, p. 14.
- 6) Japanese ‘HISEN (非戰)’ can also be translated into ‘renunciation of war’.
- 7) August is erroneous. This should be July.
- 8) Tetsu Katayama: *ABE ISOO DEN* (A BIOGRAPHY OF ISOO ABE), Mainichi Shimbun, 1958, p. 125.
- 9) For this article Toshihiko Sakai in charge of the Newspaper was charged 2 month imprisonment. He was the first victim of the Government attack.
- 10) Tetsu Katayama, *ibid.*, p. 131.
- 11) The translation excludes *PREFACE & AUTHOR'S PREFACE*. These two parts will be translated into Japanese by the present writer of this paper.
- 12) This publisher, too, used to be an advocate of democratism until the end of the Japanese-Sino War (1894-5). Since then it turned to be nationalistic.
- 13) Ito’s calligraphy was: 窮理在平生臨事要明斷.
- 14) There are altogether 367 places: 22 double-circled places, 185 single-circled places and 160 black-dotted places.
- 15) The date of writing *PREFACE* is described Nov. 1904. And at the end of *PREFACE* Inoue describes the fact that he was asked to read the translation and to write the preface of it (*PREFACE*, p. 11).
- 16) Inoue used a Japanese expression meaning ‘a black, foolish donkey’ which derives from a Chinese fable.

Acknowledgements

Thanks must first go to library reference staff who provided their expertise to enable me to meet with new findings and discoveries: Library staff of Sapporo Gakuin University, who helped to finally find out the existence of a complete Japanese translation of *MODERN WEAPONS AND MODERN WAR*, i. e., *KINJINO SENSO TO KEIZAI*; Library staff of Doshisha University, from which Abe graduated, who collected all Abe’s

writings in *RIKUGO ZASSHI*; and Library staff of Waseda University, at which Abe was a professor, who showed most interesting material including the letters between Abe and Tolstoy.

I am also grateful to Mr Yoshitsugu Konno and Mrs Taeko Nakamura for explaining the positions of Unitarians and Congregationalists at the time and for hinting at a possibility where Abe and W.T. Stead might have met each other somewhere in Europe, or, at least they might have been in close touch in one way or another.

Very particular gratitude is due to Dr Peter van den Dungen, for he has continuously encouraged me to work on the Bloch's connection with Japan. Without his encouragement I would have only known about Bloch that he was the man who built the International Museum of War and Peace at Lucerne, Switzerland.

Note: This text was originally prepared as a presentation paper for Peace History Society Symposium, May 11–15, 1999, The Hague.

(21 June 1999)

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要約 Summary in Japanese

日本の知識の宝庫—例えば、平凡社の『大百科辞典』や丸善の『エンサイクロペディア』、小学館の『万有百科大事典』や『日本大百科全書2001』、はたまた、岩波の『西洋人名辞典』—に、「ジャン デ ブロッホ」の項はない。今日の日本の知識人、とりわけ戦争と平和に関心を持つそれらの書物にも、ジャン デ ブロッホは出てこない。今日の日本人にとって、ジャン デ ブロッホは忘却の人である。本小論は、1899年の第1回ハーグ平和会議と1907年の第2回の間、1902年と1904年にジャン デ ブロッホは確かに日本で紹介されているという事実、そして、紹介した日本人が片や日露戦争に反対した者であり、片や同戦争を推進した者であるという事実を掘り起こし、ジャン デ ブロッホを忘却から甦らせるものである。

本稿は、1997年札幌学院大学研究促進奨励金による成果の一部である。

This is an outcome of Sapporo Gakuin University Research Support Grant for the academic year of 1997.

(つばい ちから 人文学部教授 平和学専攻)