


Hirofumi Uzawa 1928–2014: A personal tribute

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I was very sad to receive an email on 28 September 2014 from my friend Takashi Yagi telling me of the death of Hiro(fumi) Uzawa on 18 September 2014. On 1 October, his son, Tohru, sent me an email which contained a full and wonderful tribute to his father which concentrated particularly on Hiro's activities when the family returned to Japan in 1967.

It was my great good fortune and privilege to meet Hiro at Stanford in 1965 and to get to know him and his family – the Uzawas' children and ours are much the same age – when he visited Cambridge in 1965–1966. We met again when he gave a seminar in Adelaide in the 1970s. I felt most honoured when he wrote the introduction to the Japanese translation of *A 'Second Edition' of The General Theory*, edited by Peter Riach and myself and published by Routledge in 1997. Most of all, I was delighted to be included with him in volume IV of *The Makers of Modern Economics*, edited by Arnold Heertje and published by Edward Elgar in 1999.

Hiro was a superb economist who brought his mighty mathematical powers to bear on vital problems in economics, problems always related directly to the welfare of people, especially those who were poor and unjustly treated. Although he fell out of love with Marxian economics (his introduction as a young man to what Keynes once dubbed 'our miserable subject'), he nevertheless used his 1960s writings on economic growth to test mathematically Marx's insights into the nature of economic growth.

Hiro was a great admirer of Keynes and, even more, of Thorstein Veblen, whose *The Theory of Business Enterprise* (1904) he considered a deeper analysis than Keynes' own essential insights in *The General Theory*. Hiro came to know Richard Kahn, Nicky Kaldor and Joan Robinson and, through them, to interpret Keynes' system (correctly – I would say that) in a post-Keynesian manner rather than in the neo-classical way as exemplified by *IS/LM* analysis and the neo-classical synthesis. Hiro's greatest mentor was Ken Arrow of whose mind and contributions he, as ever modest, was in awe.

Hiro always had a fine social conscience allied with great moral courage. As the 'United States ... seriously escalated its military involvement in Vietnam', he considered the war, as I did too, the most immoral war of the 20th Century. He further felt that, as an Asian, he could no longer live in the United States. He 'was greatly disturbed by the moral, political, and economic implications of the American escalation ... its brutal, savage military tactics ... the serious damage the Vietnamese people were suffering'. He 'was particularly concerned that ... as an Asian, [he was standing] by silently while [his] neighbouring people were suffering at the hands of a country in which [he] was living ... out of [his] own choice'. So, after 'a relatively calm year' at Churchill College,

Cambridge, he thought it was time to return to Japan (quotes from p. 147 of his essay 'Born in the shadow of the mountains', in the Heertje volume).

Back in Japan, he increasingly devoted himself to environmental problems, bringing his powerful analytical mind to the development of explanations and policies with which to tackle them. His extensive list of publications is packed with seminal and now classic articles taking in a wide range of fundamental issues. These contributions, which bear witness to his wonderful humane attitudes, to his courage, all combined with a natural modesty, testify to what being a good person actually means.

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