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JAPAN AND NATIONAL ANTHROPOLOGY

A critique

Sonia Ryang

Japan and National Anthropology

Japan and National Anthropology is an empirically rich and theoretically sophisticated study which challenges the conventional view of Japanese studies in general and Anglophone anthropological writings on Japan in particular. Sonia Ryang explores the process by which the post-war anthropology of Japan has come to be dominated by certain conceptual and methodological approaches and exposes the extent to which this process has occluded our view of Japan.

In an attempt to move away from theoretical trends which identify Japanese cultural boundaries with Japan's nation-state boundaries, consequentially portraying the country as racially homogeneous and culturally unique, Ryang examines:

- how wartime enemy studies shaped the direction of post-war anthropology
- the historical effects and significance of *Chrysanthemum and the Sword*
- key texts from the anthropology enquiry that started within the US military occupation of Japan (1945–1952)
- Japanese kinship and its relationship to the study of Japan as a nation
- the origins and development of the studies of the Japanese self.

This book will be welcomed by all students of Japanese anthropology and Japanese history. Its historical breadth and criticism of existing approaches provide a fresh and reasoned insight into the development and future of anthropology of Japan.

Sonia Ryang is Associate Professor of Anthropology at Johns Hopkins University, USA. She is also the author of *North Koreans in Japan*.

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Japan and National Anthropology

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For Samantha and Thomas

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Notes for the reader

Romanization of well-known Japanese names such as Tokyo is omitted. Korean authors' names are in principle transliterated in Korean, even when their work is published in Japanese. Japanese and Korean names follow the East Asian convention of listing the family name first, except for the cases where the author published in English and listed his/her name following the western convention. All translations from Japanese or Korean text to English are mine, unless otherwise noted.

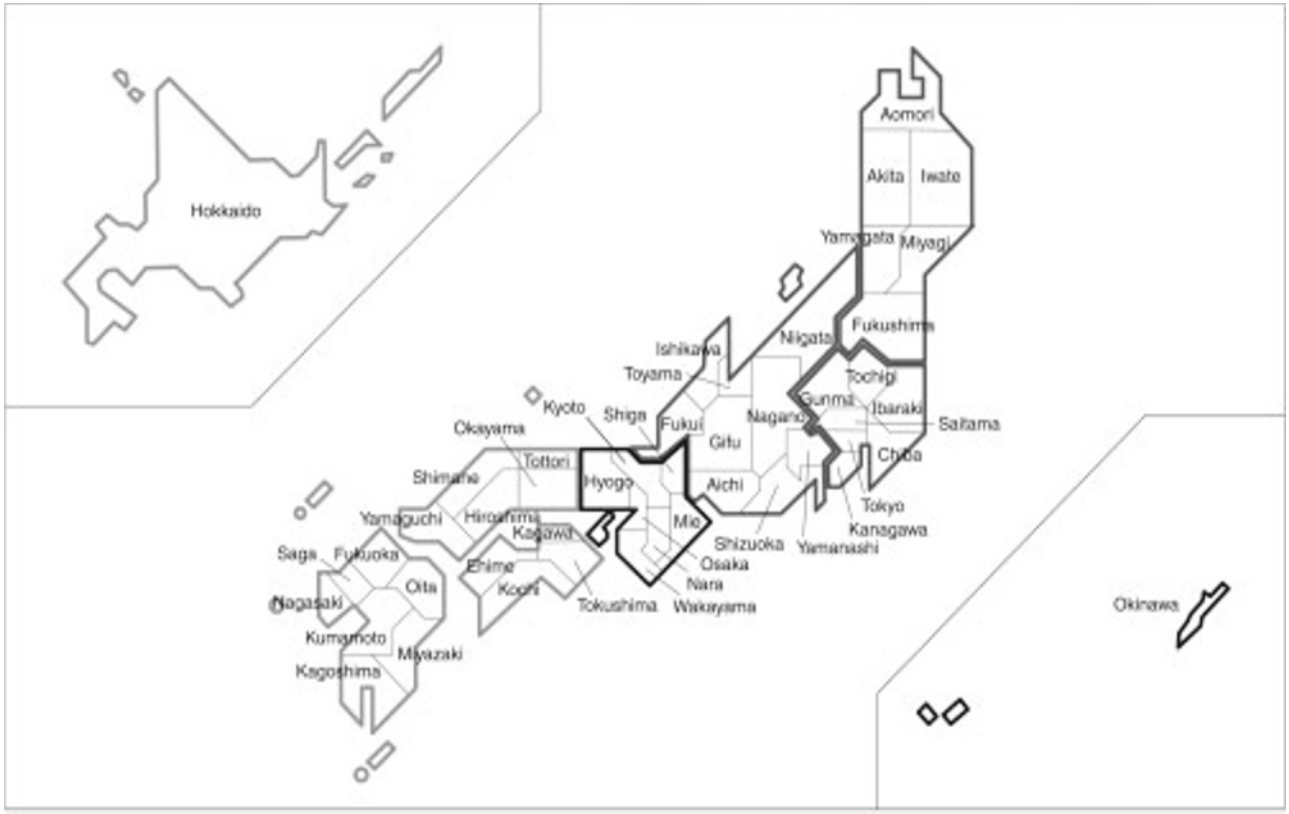

Figure 1: Map of Japanese prefectures
Source: By permission of the Japan National Travel Organization.

Introduction

Anthropology and Japan

Anthropology – the study of man – is a peculiar discipline, as it inherently implies not simply the study of man, but the study of man *by* man. In other words, it is eternally confined in the self-study, the exploration of one's own kind. Nevertheless, and sadly but perhaps inevitably, humans manage to create a division between those who study other humans and those who are studied by other humans. Of course, humans have always thought about themselves ever since they first possessed writing, if not earlier. But this nineteenth-century invention was different: whereas philosophers thought about why we are the way we are, anthropologists started with the question why *they* are the way they are.

The rise of this discipline, like that of many other modern academic disciplines, coincided with the colonial expansion of the west on a global scale. Since its birth in the nineteenth century, anthropology has gone through many transformations. It moved from what was an armchair reflection on remote, exotic tribes, to fieldwork-oriented hard science by the early decades of the twentieth century. By the mid-century, with the independence of former European colonies in Asia and Africa, anthropology faced a keen need to redefine its mission. In the face of stern criticism from within and outside the discipline, western metropolitan centers of anthropology came to terms with their own history as cultural sentries of imperialism.

In the period following World War II and the 1960s independence of African nations, anthropology saw an interesting turn initiated within the western tenet. The hitherto dominant British structural-functionalism began to lose its paradigmatic status: structural functionalism assumed the static equilibrium in the primitive tribal society and was ill equipped with theoretical tools to account for a new vision offered by the independence of African nations now aspiring to modernization and industrialization (e.g. Asad 1973). In France, unlike Britain, the influence of structuralism promoted by Claude Lévi-Strauss had been strong in anthropology (e.g. Lévi-Strauss 1963–76). Following the rise of post-structuralism in Parisian philosophical circles, in which new versions of Marxism, known variably as structural

Marxism or neo-Marxism, led by Louis Althusser (1971, 1984, 1990) became influential, anthropologists experimented with new approaches to traditional societies and re-examined the existing wisdom of the discipline by using a Marxist framework (Terray 1972; Meillassoux 1981; Godelier 1977; 1986; Diamond 1979; see also Bloch 1983). This dealt a further blow to the structural functionalist cast across the English Channel, where scholars responded to the impact of structuralism and neo-Marxism in varying ways (Douglas 1966; Leach 1974; Goody 1976).

An onslaught of critique and polemic by feminist anthropologists both in Britain and the US turned the male-centered table of anthropology radically around; feminists contributed to the deconstruction of the heretofore taken-for-granted paradigms of anthropology by confronting the discipline's occlusion of women on the one hand and by critically assessing each other's work on the other (e.g. Rosaldo and Lamphere 1974; A. B. Weiner 1976; MacCormack and Strathern 1980; Rosaldo 1980; Ortner and Whitehead 1981; Strathern 1981; see also Atkinson 1982 for a review).

In the 1980s anthropology faced vigorous, multi-directional shake-ups: the intervention of postmodernism, reflexivity, and the return of the subject – including the native subject – to the center of research shifted the location of scholarly gaze of the discipline from the colonized, exotic, and different other to the inter-subjective engagement between the other and the west, remote field and the metropolis, and informants and ethnographer, while feminist and native critiques of the male/west-dominated tradition of the discipline continued to highlight the heretofore invisible participation of diverse scholars in the discipline. Notable was the feminist critique of science and medicine, including reproductive medicine (Martin 1987; Ginsburg and Tsing 1990, for example). At the same time, ethnography, the standard form of anthropological text, came under close scrutiny, as it embodied unequal relations of power between the ethnographer and informants, embedded in the mechanism of anthropological representation.[1] In the 1990s the eruption of ethnic violence and religious conflict, massive exodus of refugees, transnationalism on a global scale, and reinforced critique of medicine, science, and the nation-state captured the attention and passion of anthropologists (e.g. Schiller *et al.* 1992; Malkki 1995; Rabinow 1996; Ong 1999; Rapp 1999; Schmidt and Schröder 2001).

Today anthropology looks very different to when it began: people from cultures that used to be studied are members of the academy, and a few are indeed trendsetters. Women's voices have a greater weight, while textual forms of ethnography have expanded, incorporating experimental and experiential styles that would probably have been dismissed outright thirty years ago. Totalized discourse is out; localized yarn is in. Distanced neutrality raises eyebrows; political intervention inspires students and colleagues.

The field of anthropology has expanded to encompass research labs, clinics, nursing homes, homelessness in the street, law firms, government agencies, non-government organizations, diasporic communities, refugee

camps, and war zones. But the picture is not entirely positive. For one thing, ethnographic others largely remain others, while metropolitan centers continue to be centers. This dilemma has been emphasized but not dealt with. Age-old methodology lingers on in regional discourses due to the contradictions and methodological tensions inherent to fieldwork – after all, the ethnographer *writes*, natives are written about. Sometimes, ethnocentric or even reactionary interest prevailing in a particular cultural field is overcompensated in the western representation in the name of the native's point of view or in the guise of cultural relativism, largely ignoring the question "which native?" The order of the relevance of sub-fields bears witness to the apparition of colonial geography – thereby preserving the old trajectory connecting theories and places that, in Arjun Appadurai's words, "all capture internal realities in terms that serve the discursive needs of general theory in the metropolis" (1986: 46). At the same time, over-reflexivity has turned some quarters of the discipline into self-aggrandizing exercises of narcissistic self-flattering by anthropologists (Behar 1996; see Ryang 2000a for a critique).

Although totalization has been badly criticized, the region-specific or local discourse as an alternative still requires a propositional model, as a simple replacement of "the society" with "the locality" can do little more than scale down the same grand view – be it nationalism or positivism, holism or economic determinism (see Strathern 1990). Similarly, whereas the west remains the originating point of theoretical innovations, the rest offers cases, examples, and exceptions, although some become "exportable" paradigms as in African descent systems or Trobriand Kula exchange (Strathern 1988). Anthropology, and especially that of the more academic kind, in some very ironic ways has become an oasis to replenish the west's energy and self-recognition. The lack of reciprocity or mutual engagement between the theory-producing center and field data-gathering peripheries continues to vex the discipline.

In this process, conceptual topics that are married to certain areas continue to be preserved, arresting the disciplinary diversity of anthropology. Some time ago, Appadurai had the following to suggest:

> Let me start with an observation with which few will quarrel. Though all anthropologists traffic in "otherness," we may note that it has always been true that some others are more other than others. From the start, the ethos of anthropology has been driven by the appeal of the small, the simple, the elementary, the face-to-face. In a general way, this drive has had two implications for anthropological theory. The first is that certain forms of sociality (such as kinship), certain forms of exchange (such as gift), certain forms of polity (such as the segmentary state) have been privileged objects of anthropological attention and have constituted the prestige zones of anthropological theory. The second result has been that the anthropology of complex non-Western societies has, till recently, been a second-class citizen in anthropological discourse.
>
> (Appadurai 1988: 357)

Appadurai adds that studies of complex civilizations by anthropologists do exist, "but in a peculiar form" (1988: 357). This book is a study of one such "peculiar" case – Japan. We shall see in the pages to follow that as a complex non-western society, in Appadurai's classification, Japan occupies a second-class status among anthropological objects of study and, accordingly, topics and themes that have developed in the anthropological studies of Japan are outside "the prestige zones of anthropology." This does not mean that kinship studies did not exist in Japan or gift exchange in Japan did not previously attract the western anthropologist's eye: they did and continue to do so. Rather, as I hope to demonstrate in this book, Japanese kinship was studied in such a way as to confirm and conform to the existing kinship theories of western anthropology – the theories that are built in the west on the basis of the field data collected from non-western natives.

But what is really peculiar about the western anthropology of Japan, which was born in earnest from within the character studies of enemy nations during World War II, is that it has been predicated upon the conditions presented by a culture that proclaims its boundaries to be overlapping with those of the nation-state. Practitioners of Japan anthropology have not, so far, fully articulated this as a problem, more often than not accepting Japanese culture to be Japan's national culture and its cultural identity to be identical to its national(ist) identity.

As the title of the book implies, I deal with this case as one that faces a predicament and requires a critique due to its presupposition of overlapping boundaries between nation and culture. In other words, while Japanese culture is studied as a national culture, this approach is not clearly understood by the practitioners themselves: this is my contention. The peculiarity and predicament of anthropological studies of Japan do not simply arise in the division of labor following the distribution of power among "places" in western anthropology as suggested by Appadurai, but are the result of a two-way communication, albeit an unequal and asymmetrical communication, between western and Japanese researchers who have come to share a similar disciplinary background and represent similar socio-economic class and political dispositions.[2]

And, of course, the way we study Japan has a lot to do with the fact that Japan was never colonized by the west, thereby never presenting itself as an originary point of field data that provided the foundation for western anthropology. A propos Appadurai's classification, a further segmentation is necessary, notably a distinction between those non-primitive cultural entities that were colonized by the west, as in the case of India, and those that were not colonized by the west, as in the case of Japan. This doubly marginalizes Japan in the anthropological inventory of "others." In other words, for a long time Japanese were not even included in those other humans whom anthropologists studied in order to find out why they are the way they are.

Japan before anthropology

Japan, of course, is not new in the western literary scene. Its Tycoon was known, its local lords observed, its supernatural stories recorded, its customs documented, its maps drawn, and its architecture and aesthetics loved. Some key observations came in opposites: its people were admired and ridiculed, its civilization praised and lamented, its modernization believed and doubted, and its technology welcomed and feared. In a word, a strange, unfamiliar Japan, with quite a few irresistible enticements and entertainments despite enigma and distrust, had always existed prior to the anthropology of Japan (Alcock 1863; Clark 1878; Bird 1973 [1880]; Hearn 1904; Chamberlain 1905; Satow 1921; Hearn 1927; Taut 1936, for example).

Unlike the western perception of the "Orient" that according to Edward Said occupied a special place in western European experience – that is, the colonial encounter (Said 1978) – Japan was not included in Europe's overall colonial ambitions. Unlike Islam, Japan was not feared in terms of unfamiliar religious potency; its unfamiliarity was of a secular sort and generated endearment, ridicule, tantalization, and sometimes sympathy rather than fear. According to Richard Minear, who succinctly portrays this difference:

> Unlike that Orient [in Said], Japan is the remotest segment of the "Far East" and was unknown to the West until Marco Polo's time (Said opens his discussion of "the Orient" with the *Iliad* and Aeschylus's *The Persians*); another two hundred and fifty years would elapse before Japan saw its first Westerners. Intensive political contact, suspended at Japan's insistence in the seventeenth century, resumed only in the nineteenth century. Japan did succumb to Western use of force in the nineteenth century and, briefly, in the middle of the twentieth; but Japan did not become a colony. Matthew Perry's *Narrative of the Expedition* (1856) may bear superficial resemblance to Napoleon's *Description de l'Égypte* (1809–1828); but we look in vain for a colonial overlord like Britain's Lord Cromer.
>
> (Minear 1980a: 514)[3]

Of course, this all changed once Japan became a genuine threat to the west, especially after World War I. Until then, compared to other cultures that the west colonized and hence directly dealt with, Japan remained relatively insignificant, politically meaningless, economically harmless, and, above all, inscrutable. It is only during the interwar years and World War II that the west had to deal with Japan, its people and culture, first as an outcaste from the Anglo-American-dominated international community and then as a most unfamiliar and formidable enemy, the monstrous source of yellow peril.

Earlier accounts perceived Japan to be strange and anti-scientific, and at times comical and almost hilarious. Here are some examples. At the turn of

the century Basil Chamberlain, a British traveler and a long-term resident in Japan, wrote of its kinship as follows:

> It is strange, but true, that you may often go into a Japanese family and find half-a-dozen persons calling each other parent and child, brother and sister, uncle and nephew, and yet being really either no blood-relations at all, or else relations in quite different degrees from those conventionally assumed … though genealogies are carefully kept, they mean nothing, at least from a scientific point of view, – so universal is the practice of adoption, from the top of society to the bottom.
>
> (Chamberlain 1905: 17)

Warren Clark, an American missionary teacher, wrote on Japanese contrariness:

> In a Japanese house the roof is always built first, and the other parts afterwards! With a kind of celestial instinct, they always commence at the highest point and work downwards. In all the lesser occupations of daily labor, such as digging, sawing, planning, cutting lumber, boring holes, or turning screws, the Japanese do just exactly the reverse of what people do on the other hemisphere.
>
> (Clark 1878: 57)

Isabella Bird, an English traveler, on Japanese people:

> So lean, so yellow, so ugly, yet so pleasant-looking, so wanting in colour and effectiveness; the women so very small and tottering in their walk; the children so formal-looking and such dignified burlesques on the adults, I feel as if I had seen them all before, so like are they to their pictures on trays, fans, and tea-pots.
>
> (Bird 1973 [1880]: 12)

Bruno Taut, a German architect, on the Japanese and rats:

> The fact that the Japanese consider the rats as more or less domestic animals was confirmed by nearly every one. … When the children go to bed at night, they like hearing the rats rummaging above the thin ceiling. They say: "Listen to Mr. Rat at his games."
>
> (Taut 1936: 27)

Then Lafcadio Hearn, arguably one of the best-informed western connoisseurs and commentators of Japan of the day, wrote on the impact of Japan's modern higher education on the emotion of its people:

> [I]t is … undeniable that, the more highly he is cultivated, according to Western methods, the farther is the Japanese psychologically removed from us. Under the new education, his character seems to crystallize into something of singular hardness, and to Western observation, at least, of singular opacity. Emotionally, the Japanese child appears incomparably closer to us than the Japanese mathematician, the peasant than the statesman.
>
> (Hearn 1927: 308)

After this lament Hearn reminisces about olden times, stating that "[a]mong the Japanese of the old regime one encounters a courtesy, an unselfishness, a grace of pure goodness, impossible to overpraise. Among the modernized of the new generation these have almost disappeared" (Hearn 1927: 310).

Endearment to people who do things differently to us, enchantment with the land that is full of miniatures and childlike creatures, nostalgia for the old, pure Japan prior to its contact with pragmatism that spoiled the Japanese heart as much as it saved Japanese technology – these are usually not the starting points of classical anthropology. Colonial government, territorial expansion, mercantile advancement, and missionary evangelism (except for those in the sixteenth century) did not precede these literary accounts of Japan. Japan was, in short, funny and strange, not profitable or useful. It is no coincidence that Japan is the only real country that Gulliver, not the anthropologist, traveled to.

An epistemological break occurs during World War II. Before, Japan captured the west's imagination and filled its leisurely time; now, it loomed as an entity the west had to handle full time at a cost of losing the cannons and airplanes, and above all the lives of its soldiers, as Japan turned from an enigmatic dwarf that loved cherry blossoms and merry feasts into a yellow devil, the devil from the land of inscrutability where people take honor in suicide, have no emotion and feelings, and eat livers still warm from a human carcass.

The desperation of the wartime situation – not so much in terms of military superiority but more in terms of the availability of information about Japanese culture – would color the subsequent study of Japan for a long time thereafter. After the war, western anthropology, because of, not despite of, the lack of its prior knowledge on Japan, became one of the most fertile grounds to cultivate a new image of Japan, which went through a quick transformation from a yellow-skinned evil to a hard-working and efficient ally of the US in the Cold War. The process of this transformation is subtle, yet obvious in part because of the very nature of anthropology as an academic discipline, that is, the study of "other" humans, and in part because of Japan's self-presentation to the outside world and the world's perception of it, that is, Japanese cultural uniqueness; in this, as we shall see, Ruth Benedict's *Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (1946) played a decisive role.

For many decades after the war – long after Japan was reinstated as a member of industrial (and "free" as opposed to Sovietized) nations – ethnographic studies of Japan focused on strange, unfamiliar aspects of Japanese society, fundamentally different from those of the west. This was matched by Japan's self-promotion as culturally unique, with its postwar prosperity being attributed to its racial homogeneity as well as the west's acceptance of the Japanese miracle, with its management style studied and emulated. This book tells a story of the emergence of this new Japan from within the western anthropological discourses.

What this book is about

In this book I discuss anthropological texts that have been influential in forming the Japan sub-field. A few texts that I discuss are not written by anthropologists. But they are included because of their lasting impression in the field of the anthropology of Japan. Some key texts that appear in this book have been dealt with by existing critiques of *nihonjinron*. *Nihonjinron* refers to the body of discourse that emphasizes Japan's cultural uniqueness. Although such discourse existed before and after World War II, it gained special attention in the 1970s and 1980s when Japan's economy ascended to the unquestionable position of leadership in the world. By now *nihonjinron* has been, so to say, thoroughly castrated. Critics approached it from all angles: methodologically by revealing the flaw in research; empirically by demonstrating that the information was simply incorrect; epistemologically by showing that what authors claimed to be uniquely Japanese has always existed elsewhere and, hence, its foundation is false; and politically by revealing its ideological (i.e. nationalistic) overtone (see Dale 1986; Mouer and Sugimoto 1986).

Nihonjinron also held sway over the anthropology of Japan. Indeed, several writers of what came to be the bible of *nihonjinron* were anthropologists, including Chie Nakane (see Chapter 5). Although some anthropologists, such as Harumi Befu, were critics of *nihonjinron* (Befu 1990, 1993, 2001), overall the cultural uniqueness of Japan and the Japanese was a welcome factor for the anthropology of Japan. After all, what could be a better justification for studying Japan anthropologically? Thus a specific critique from within anthropological discourse has not hitherto been clearly addressed.

The purpose of this book is to revisit key texts specific to Japan anthropology, assessing their contribution to the postwar emergence of Japan as an anthropological field. As such, I follow the development of this sub-field and because of this the reader will note that not all my texts are well known or widely read. Paradigmatic works, including *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (Benedict 1946), are recycled and fed back into texts that exist on the peripheries of Japan anthropology, and together they form an organic process of constituting the boundaries of the Japan field by giving it a unique shape and making it into what I call

national anthropology. For this reason I analyze texts, some of which may seem insignificant or unknown to the reader, yet which embody the dominant trend in very illustrative ways.

From this, it should be clear to the reader that this book is not a survey: there already exist a number of excellent survey articles on the Japan field (see Sofue 1959, 1960, 1969, 1992; Smith 1989; Tamanoi 1990; Kelly 1991; Robertson 1998a). This book is not a book on a general American image of Japan either (see Raz and Raz 1996; S. Johnson 1988; N. Glazer 1975). Rather, my aim is to trace tendencies that reveal themselves to be gate-keeping elements of anthropological studies of Japan. Often, the hegemonic effects of these tendencies go unnoticed by the practitioners of Japan anthropology, who take it for granted that we start our study of Japan from a set of given key notions such as "group model," "harmonious society," "household society," "vertical society," "non-assertive self," "interdependent self," "sociocentric self," and so on. I wish to take a moment to rethink what these gate-keepers do to our approaches to Japan and what kind of effects are produced by using these concepts as given.

An historical review tells us that some time after the initial postwar anthropology, and amidst rising interest in Japanese cultural uniqueness in the 1970s, the Japan field was nationalized. I mean by this the establishment of Japan as a nation-state as an a priori boundary of anthropological studies of Japan. Its national culture became the primary site of investigation – be it "vertical society" or "Japanese self." Ironically, this is wholly logical, since anthropological studies of Japan in the US started as part of the study of national character or, more precisely, the wartime enemy studies during World War II. In other words, an inquiry into the entity called Japan was, from the beginning, set on a national footing. The postwar US military occupation of Japan consolidated what is peculiar in retrospect – the integration of Japan as a national field, paradoxically, by way of international collaboration between Japanese anthropologists and western researchers that eventually updated the national character studies of the mid-twentieth century, entrenched in the culture and personality school, into national culture studies of the late twentieth century.

Such a collaboration in the immediate years after the war was made possible in part because Japanese anthropologists had to turn their attention to Japan proper, now that they had lost their colonies to do ethnographic fieldwork in. However, by the mid-1960s, with the re-emergence of Japan as an economic power in Asia and the world, Japanese anthropologists were no longer interested in Japan and, instead, they made their field trips to Southeast Asian countries, the Pacific islands, and the African continent, leaving Japan to western ethnographers. Helped by the poor linguistic proficiency with the Japanese language enjoyed by western anthropologists of the day, the ethnic division of labor in Japan anthropology between native researchers studying non-Japanese fields and western researchers studying Japan created an epistemological gap between, on the

one hand, the anthropological studies of Japan during the 1950s and early 1960s that abundantly documented Japan as a regionally diverse and richly complex historical entity and, on the other, studies of Japan from the 1970s onwards that emphasized Japan as a national unit with cultural and racial homogeneity. The reason why in the early 1970s a very limited number of books by native scholars translated into English, such as Chie Nakane's *Japanese Society* (1970) and Takeo Doi's *The Anatomy of Dependence* (1973), became so dominant in Japan field reflects this gap.

The approach to Japan as a national field continues today, producing texts that are oriented in search of a "Japanese" cultural core, a "Japanese" sense of self, a "Japanese" way of life, and the bounded pristine group of individuals called "the Japanese" who are supposed to have embodied quintessential Japaneseness; all the while, their fieldwork may have taken place in a remote enclave, thick in local custom and heavy in regional identity. This is not, however, a mere return to the wartime national character studies, although it is true that there is a similarity between the latter and today's anthropology of Japan. The difference is that today's anthropology of Japan reflects a high level of sophistication and a wealth of field data in representing Japan as a national-cultural entity, unlike the crude wartime enemy studies that simply labeled Japan and the Japanese by the use of very limited data. This makes it all the more appropriate for us to consider how it is that the Japan field has become so much more dependent, covertly and overtly, on the condition and presupposition of national boundaries.

One other reason for reflecting critically on Japan anthropology now is related to a more recent and powerful trend of representing Japan from a multi-ethnic, multicultural, and pluralistic angle, including ever-increasing research on ethnic and other minorities; foreign guest workers, Japan's untouchables, eccentric individuals, marginalized existences, and so on. It is all very well to celebrate this trend, but at the same time we must ask why it took five decades to open up a discursive field that deals with these marginalized groups and individuals. The delay is not coincidental with the demography of those minorities: ever since the prewar period Chinese and Korean minorities have existed in Japan, while it is no secret that Okinawans and the Ainu were culturally segregated and at the same time were forcefully assimilated into the Japanese mainstream. The wartime enemy studies were totally blind to this, but the post-1970s Japan field was aware, yet did not take up the task of exploring the peripheries of Japan as the major task, either. Rather, it effectively concurred with the mainstream and government-sponsored image of Japan as a nation of business-suited men with a ticket for lifetime employment and as the land of hard-working little capitalists with group-oriented selves that regard company as family. This book is a critical reflection on the kind of intellectual history that made Japan into the anthropological field we know today.

Chapter-by-chapter outline

Chapter 1, "Anthropology and the war," discusses the origin of anthropological interest, mainly in the US, in close relation to World War II. Reflecting the lack of familiarity with the Japanese and triggered off by Japan's unconventional offensives such as Pearl Harbor, the Office of War Information (OWI) and other government offices involved many anthropologists (Japan specialists and non-specialists alike) in research into the character of this most unfamiliar and formidable enemy, the Japanese. Anthropological studies of Japan specifically started within the framework of the culture and personality school and national character studies. It was in this process that Ruth Benedict's now classic *Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (1946) was conceived. *Chrysanthemum* is a pivotal text in understanding the subsequent postwar development of anthropological studies of Japan: it initiated two dominant trends – studies of Japan as a cultural whole and studies of the Japanese self in stark contrast to the western self.

In light of *Chrysanthemum*'s importance, Chapter 2 explores the controversial reception it received, notably tracing the process by which what Benedict suggested as an internal cultural logic of Japan, leading to the destructive war, subsequently came to be understood as the positive traits of the Japanese, reflecting Japan's re-ascent into the world's foremost economic power. I start with the postwar reaction to *Chrysanthemum*, which shows a complex reading offered by a number of Japanese scholars. I then examine how the initial postwar reading shifted from descriptive knowledge to an explanatory tool for Japanese cultural traits in the 1980s. I make a specific critique from the position of the former colonized people under the Japanese Empire, since *Chrysanthemum* completely omits this aspect. It is no coincidence that *Chrysanthemum* became one of the longest-selling books in Japan, whose government has, just like *Chrysanthemum*, consistently ignored the legacy of its colonialism.

Chapter 3 returns chronologically to the postwar period, focusing on what I call Occupation anthropology. During the US military occupation (1945–52) many texts with an anthropological orientation were written by both anthropologists and non-anthropologists either working directly for the Occupation or in close relation to it. I focus on key texts that were produced in the immediate years after the war, although their publication may have been postponed until the 1960s; some of them I call "new ethnographies," as opposed to John Embree's *Suye Mura* (1939), the only English-language ethnographic study of Japan that existed in prewar time. We can see in these texts that Japan was first seen as a follower of the US, the territory that the US needed to guide into modernization and democratization, eradicating its feudal remnants. Then, by the early 1960s, it became increasingly clear that Japan was the US's most important ally in Asia in the Cold War. More importantly, Japan from the 1960s demonstrated to the west that its economy was growing strongly, while its culture remained "Japanese," not westernized. This enigma set up the new mold for the Japan

anthropology of the 1970s onwards – the enigma that Chapter 5 will take up more fully.

Chapter 4 deals with postwar anthropological studies of Japanese kinship. The attention to kinship gives us a useful window to learn how anthropological scholarship on Japan developed during the postwar years. From prewar years, Japanese sociologists and ethnologists documented and analyzed a striking variety in pattern of kinship and household organizations in the Japanese archipelago. One of the most renowned in this area is the corpus of study by Ariga Kizaemon, a sociologist of family, who I shall introduce in Chapter 4. Ariga's study is important, because with the Occupation's family law reform scholars reopened a lively debate over what the Japanese household was about and should be about, and Ariga's study provides a foundation for this debate. In postwar kinship studies during the 1950s it was clearly recognized that Japanese kinship was regionally diverse, complex, and transformed historically. Such diversity and complexity, however, were eventually obscured, and by the late 1960s Japanese and western scholars collaboratively suggested that the Japanese kinship system was unlike any other systems documented in anthropology and was nationally more or less unified. With such a turn, the assumption about Japan's cultural uniqueness and national homogeneity became the norm in the Japan field.

Chapter 5 takes up this issue further. It highlights the texts that are responsible for actively disseminating the practice of Japan anthropology as a nationalized anthropology, reinforcing the assumption of Japan's cultural uniqueness and ethnic homogeneity. The rise of this approach to Japan as a national whole is related to the flourishing literary and scholarly genre emphasizing Japan's cultural uniqueness, or *nihonjinron*, as mentioned above. The Japanese enigma, or what Ezra Vogel called the Japanese miracle, that emerged in the form of Japan's re-modernization, unaccompanied by the westernization of its culture, was explained (away) by a stroke of holistic brushwork of "vertical society" or "*ie* (household) society" (Nakane 1970). I argue in this chapter that such a trend, which was a long-term by-product of the way Benedict's *Chrysanthemum* was consumed in the Japan field, reinforced the marginalization of non-mainstream populations, while rendering Japan a land of homogeneous people called "the Japanese." The unit of study is often, in a facile manner, taken to be Japan as a whole, or the "nation," as opposed to the very localized fieldwork that ethnographers actually conduct. The Japan that emerged from within these texts is not simply an anthropological field, but a national anthropological field.

In addition to studying Japan and the Japanese from a holistic point of view, Benedict's *Chrysanthemum* opened a new territory – the study of the Japanese self. Chapter 6 reviews the process by which the now flourishing studies of Japanese self were formed. We briefly go back to the postwar years when Japanese psychiatry and psychoanalysis were reorganized under US influence instead of the hitherto dominant German influence;

the origins of studies of the Japanese self are closely connected to the culture and personality school, on the one hand, and native Japanese psychiatry's reaction to western psychiatry, on the other. The celebrated notion of *amae*, or passive love, indulgence, or dependency, was promoted in this process by Japanese psychiatrist Takeo Doi, and kindled the enthusiasm of numerous western anthropologists, who proffered this notion as the key to the Japanese personality; it continues to be a fundamental category for scholars who are interested in grasping Japanese culture and the typical personality or self, albeit in the guise of a more fashionable wording. Although inquiry into the Japanese self is an important and fascinating area of Japan anthropology, which can also be potentially subversive, its practice today comes with drawbacks not unlike those of the approach that takes Japan as a national anthropological field, and I show this by analyzing the selected texts.

Three holisms are involved in the process of the emergence of national anthropology, each aiming at depicting Japan as a national cultural totality, as a household-like society, and in the form of a Japanese self with an implicit gaze of national self. The first holism, cultural totality, is best captured in Ruth Benedict's *Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, which will be discussed in part of Chapter 1 and more fully in Chapter 2. The second holism, Japan as a household-like entity, derives from history and transformation of kinship studies in the anthropology of Japan. This will be the focus of part of Chapter 3 and Chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 5 also deals with other forms of essentialism that emphasize Japan's cultural uniqueness and its superiority, thereby erasing regional, local, and class differences. The third holism, the emphasis on the Japanese (national) self, will be taken up in Chapter 6, by way of looking at studies that argued for Japan's unique national psyche. The critique will be carried on in the Afterword, as this genre of research is very much a contemporary trend.

Holism, needless to say, is not unique to Japan anthropology. The intellectual premise of anthropology is indeed holism (Goody 1995: 8). But while, say, African anthropology took the so-called small-scale society or face-to-face society as a community to be depicted as a whole, Japan as a nation became the object of such inquiry in Japan anthropology, as I shall argue in the pages to follow. A book like this cannot have a conclusion, as my aim of writing it is not to close but to open the paths for discussion. In the Afterword, though not exhaustive, I summarize the existing trends and attempts to show possibilities of de-nationalizing Japan anthropology and incorporating more diverse and heterogeneous elements into future studies of Japan.

As such, the purpose of this book is not to diagnose the current health of the anthropology of Japan, let alone make a prognosis of it. As I emphasize in the Afterword, new directions of research are emerging in the anthropology of Japan – in fact, new directions of research are always emerging, yet it remains to be seen which directions are most effective in changing the