

DIRECTIONS IN THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF CONTEMPORARY JAPAN

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The central fact here is that what anthropologists find, in this or that place, far from being independent data for the construction and verification of theory, is in fact a very complicated compound of local realities and the contingencies of metropolitan theory (5:360).

A third front has recently been opened in the assault on the edifice of ethnography. Having deconstructed ethnographic form and historicized the ethnographic subject, some have now turned to regionalizing its conceptual claims. Their presumption is that all ethnography is regional, a local transposition of general disciplinary concerns. It must be read critically for the problems it highlights through the mutual adaptation of anthropological discourse and locally prominent features and issues: prestige economy in Melanesia, marriage rules in Australia, lineage in Africa, caste in South Asia. "Localizing strategies" is Fardon's felicitous phrase (81) for the complicated dialectic of region and problematic, which was illustrated so effectively in Abu-Lughod's review (2) of "zones of theory" in Arab world anthropology.

Some of the work I consider in this essay may be so analyzed.¹ Yet I argue

¹This review is limited to social-cultural anthropology (for archaeology, see 77, 109; for linguistic anthropology, see 244; for primatology, see 9, 97:244-58). I deal only with English-language works. The disciplinary surveys in the periodic but misnamed *Introductory Bibliography for Japanese Studies* provide helpful English-language reviews of anthropology in Japan (114, 197, 261, 262, 288, 289; see also 17, 124, 183, and 157). Long (157) has surveyed family sociology.

that to date the anthropology of contemporary Japan has been shaped more by two other “local engagements” (81:21) beyond that of discipline and locality. The first is a broad range of competing national characterizations that reify Japan in contrast to equally totalizing images of the West. Second is a series of exchanges with fellow academic specialists on Japan, whose perspectives, especially on culture, have often set the terms of that engagement.

To be sure, anthropologists of many world regions have found themselves embroiled in charges and self-critiques concerning tacit or open complicity in the Orientalist “conceive-and-rule” projects of Western intelligentsia. Those of us who study the most geographically Oriental of the Orient cannot always extricate ourselves from a popular and scholarly rhetoric that for over 100 years has measured Japan against an idealized West and found it deficient, deviant, or just puzzling (170). At present, for example, Orientalist Japan is triangulated as a polity that lacks the “rights” tradition and whose imposed forms of Western democracy are thus manipulated by mandarin bureaucrats and political factions; a suffocatingly collectivist society of strong groups and weak egos; and an economy of Confucian capitalist principles that deform the discipline of free markets and fetter the spirit necessary to true enterprise.

We Japan specialists, however, are actually caught between rival polemics. We are dealing with a nation whose power in many respects equals our own: It has a more potent economy, a more literate citizenry, a massive culture industry, and a distinguished and independent academic establishment. It is also a country that has mounted its own national counter-polemic. A major postwar growth industry has been the production and marketing of a sprawling controversy known variously as *Nihonjin ron* (Who are we Japanese?), *Nihon bunka ron* (What is Japanese culture?), or simply *Nihon ron* (What is Japan?) (23, 120, 169). The output of commentary ranges from the popular to the scholarly, from the fiery xenophobic to the coolly objective. Some in the West have derided these controversies as simply an extended national identity crisis, the growing pains of a not fully mature society. In the aftermath of World War II, an occupied nation, economically devastated and spiritually desolated, didn’t know where to turn; by the late 1960s, the Japanese feared that Western-style material affluence was overwhelming indigenous values and traditions; now, the imitators have so successfully imitated the models that Japan has itself become the model and is without direction. *Nihonjin ron*, some conclude, is but the shifting ground of perpetual anxiety.

Such a dismissal is dangerously simplistic. *Nihonjin ron* is the Occidental-ist retort to our Orientalist illusions. Its underlying premise is the same—an essentializing, radical alterity—but the contrast is reversed. Now a singular, valorized Japan is set against the mirage of an equally unitary but radically different and devalued West (58, 125). For every James (“The Japanese are different from you and me”) Fallows, there has been an equally strident

Shintarō ("The Japan that can say no") Ishihara. Anxiety and arrogance, it would seem, are distributed in equal measure across the Orientalists and Occidentalists.

Although these exchanges are transparently shrill and partisan, it has still been hard for anthropologists to break free of the rhetoric of national characterization or to resist the urge to rebut its cruder claims. We have generally responded in one of two ways. Some have met it directly in its own terms; they have attempted to revise and reformulate such models as "vertical society" and "shame culture" in a search for more plausible principles of Society and patterns of Culture. Many others, however, have turned away from such abstractions towards denser forms of ethnographic description and institutional analysis. Yet in examining the multiple social forms of postwar life, we are often drawn into a second, uneasy engagement, this time with our fellow Japan specialists, both social scientists and historians.

Anthropologists everywhere enjoy such dialogues, although the numbers of our fellow Japan specialists are perhaps greater than those with whom our colleagues of most other regions must be concerned. A 1988 Japan Foundation survey identified 1,420 Japan scholars with positions in North America. Including subsequent PhDs and those in Europe and Australia, I estimate the current number at about 1,700, of whom some 70–80 are anthropologists. Interdepartmental programs, foundations, journals, and national associations as well as intellectual agendas draw Japan specialists together.

Despite much hand-wringing about the alleged parochialism of "area studies," our anthropology has been considerably enriched by our own forays into other disciplinary territories (e.g. 52, 223, 251) and by return visits. Several sociologists, for example, have contributed ethnographies quite the equal of our own (70, 96, 110, 277), and a few historians and literary scholars have begun some friendly, conceptual poaching (e.g. on mortuary rituals, 76; on spirit possession, 15). In one respect, however, we have been hindered by some of these exchanges in allowing ourselves to be drawn into debates that turn on a peculiarly anachronistic notion of culture.

That is, we share with many fellow specialists common interests in the same social patterns: employment practices, family form, political organization, legal attitudes, religious belief, etc. Yet underlying many of their analyses is a misleading question: Is "culture" determinative or epiphenomenal? Is it culture that accounts for lifetime employment commitments or judicial timidity or the endemic factionalism of political parties? The question is false because the formulation of culture is simplistic. Culture is reduced here not to national character but to residual tradition, and the issue becomes its staying power as against institutional imperatives or individual interests.

Modernization theory has been much flogged for its ethnocentric bias (as applied to Japan: 121, 161, 179); and no doubt its naive treatment of culture

as values—at least other people’s values—has widened this false dichotomy of the cultural and the institutional (254, 258). Perhaps too, as Smith (257) suggests, this misunderstanding is reinforced by the premium placed on theoretical parsimony, especially by economists, for whom culture remains the residual category of last resort. The effect is to deny the ideological construction and the historical embeddedness of meaningful action. This is, we shall see below, the critical response of anthropologists, but the exercise has a faintly anachronistic ring and an enervating effect.

Certainly since the early work of Embree and Benedict, much of the anthropology of Japan has been inspired by and oriented towards comparative and theoretical issues in the discipline (or as often, in recent social theory of industrial and post-industrial society). Still, it has also been implicated in and shaped by the “local” controversies about the nature of Japanese society that I have just described. Accepting the injunctions of Appadurai and Fardon to regionalize our work fully, the present review has two parts. It deals first with those whose ambitions fall within the rubrics of society and self and constitute a critique of culture as character. It then treats those whose work is more situated in particular arenas of postwar life, where they must frequently reformulate a static view of culture as tradition. The necessary mutuality of representing the whole and parsing the particular is the subject of concluding remarks.

REPRESENTING THE WHOLE: SOCIETY AND SELF

Social Analyses: Holism and Its Challenges

The best-known models of Japanese society were produced by two anthropologists who specifically eschewed the label of Japan specialist—Chie Nakane and Ruth Benedict. Nakane’s enduring research interests have been Tibet and northern India (105). For much of the 1950s, she conducted fieldwork in India and studied and lectured in the United States and England; she returned to her faculty post at the University of Tokyo in the early 1960s. It was then that she proposed her sociological model (182) of an exclusively corporate and rigidly hierarchical society: Japan as *tate shakai*, “the vertical society.” In the afterglow of the 1964 Tokyo Olympics and with world attention to “the Japanese economic miracle” growing, it proved a timely account of national achievement. Group social competition was her dynamic—between factions of an organization and between organizations of the society. Logically, she began with an abstract principle, verticality, which she posited to characterize predominant social relations in Japan as diffuse, hierarchical, dyadic ties. Vertical interpersonal relations shape social groups as exclusive, internally ranked activity units, and the structure of Japanese society is then based on the characteristics of its constituent social groups.

The ethnographic prototype from which she drew this line of reasoning was the *ie*, the stem-family of "traditional" Japan, which she explicitly contrasted with the Hindu joint family and the Chinese patrilineage (181).

For 25 years, Nakane's master principle of vertical integration and group solidarity has been a constant target and convenient foil. Another Japanese anthropologist, Yoneyama (287), took immediate exception, proposing an alternative that privileged horizontal ties over vertical ties and informal associations over formal, corporate affiliation. Several conference volumes (79, 136, 266) have contested Nakane's deemphasis on conflict, offering numerous cases of intramural and inter-group struggles that arise from incompatible goals and unequal power and status. They illustrate as well the predilection, pressures, and means for seeking personal and informal means of resolution.

However, the most indefatigable critics of Nakane have been Befu (23, 25, 26) and Mouer & Sugimoto (179, 267). To them, antagonism, not identity, defines the relation of individual to group. They pressed a theme of inevitable conflict in Japan: between individual growth and group solidarity; between self-interest and collective interest; between personal expression and social conformity. The former are gained only at the expense of the latter. Groupism, to them, is but an ideology pressed by the elite and only nominally accepted by most people, whose inner motivation remains the pursuit of private interests.

The conflicts of public ideology and private interest have led Mouer & Sugimoto and Befu in different directions. The former tend to emphasize stratification and collective protest, while Befu has preferred a social-exchange model of transacting individuals. He has applied this usefully to gift-giving (20), drinking (21), and university politicking (22). He does, however, leave himself vulnerable to the charge of ethnocentric utilitarianism that is commonly levied against formal exchange theorists. Such a concern has led others to focus on more emic accounts of the sociable habits of everyday life, including drinking (150, 174, 260), eating (158), bathing (46), cheating (186), and the especially suggestive essay by Hendry (106) on wrapping.

Personhood and Cultural Analysis

A second line of macro-analysis has followed cultural conceptions of the self in Japan, a topic that has been prominent among Japan scholars since Ruth Benedict, long before it became fashionable in the discipline at large. It is helpful to recognize three stages in this work, which correspond to the general trajectory in anthropology from the culture-and-personality paradigm to the recent ethnopsychological rubrics of cultural psychology.

NATIONAL CHARACTER AND MODAL PERSONALITY For both theoretical and political reasons, wartime Japan captured the attention of American anthropologists working within the culture-and-personality rubric. The best-known example, of course, is Benedict's *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, which the government commissioned in June of 1944 (29); it was published in 1946 and translated into Japanese in 1948, and continues to sell well in both countries. Hewing the cultural side of culture-and-personality, Benedict searched eclectically and imaginatively for patterns in Japanese culture by explicating key Japanese terms, which she wove together to explain Japan's contradictory image as docile and violent. She portrayed the Japanese as oriented to multiple social positions and thus caught in culturally marked, exclusive circles of obligation and duty that forced painful choices in normative behavior. Without a concept of an integrated and consistent individual, the "dilemma of virtue" was the conflict between the separate spheres of prescriptive conduct. This resulted inevitably in the wild swings in behavior suggested by her title and expressed in the stereotypes of the 1940s: the refinements of the gentle esthete and the atrocities of the savage samurai. In her concluding chapter, "The Child Learns," she suggested how indulgence and discipline combined to create this dichotomous Japanese character of "knowing shame" and not knowing shame. Ironically and unfortunately, it is this chapter, tacked on as a seeming afterthought, for which the study has been most remembered: Japan, the "shame culture."

George DeVos's work (62, 63) became widely known in the mid-1950s, as images of modernization replaced those of militarism and as the West was becoming deeply impressed by the resilience and recovery of the Japanese people. Drawn to the psychological side of culture-and-personality, he stressed the psychodynamics of personal achievement through disciplined role commitment. His cultural psychology of the Japanese was an ethic of "Oriental Calvinism," rooted in primary family dynamics and infant socialization. He used extensive projective testing and opinion surveys to build a model of parental sacrifice for children, who internalize an identification with parental roles and a deeply felt obligation to repay one's parents through dedication to social roles—especially, as an adult, that of committed parent. DeVos thus proposed an enduring cycle through the generations of parental sacrifice, internalized guilt, achievement motivation, and role dedication.

Growing up Japanese meant becoming motivated to achieve long-term goals rather than satisfy immediate pleasures. DeVos positioned this "samurai sense of self"—personal actualization through social roles—between Benedict and David McClelland. Contra his reading of Benedict, he has argued that the internalization of role standards activates guilt, not shame—a phenomenon nonetheless different from a Western conscience of standards. And against McClelland, whose association of achievement-need with self-re-

liance and independence was an essential reference point in the modernization paradigm of the period, DeVos argued that Japan demonstrated the compatibility of high achievement with high dependency-orientation (207).

SOCIOCENTRISM AND THE RELATIONAL SELF By the 1970s, the anthropology of Japan sounded a new theme, "engagement." The emphasis shifted to cultural idioms of "self-in-society" as a Japanese ideal of personal conduct and as the normative trajectory of maturation. There was clear recognition that to be fully in and of society requires a strong and resilient inner presence. This was the message especially of Rohlen's (82, 229) essays on the spiritual topos of adulthood as a stage of becoming rather than a plateau of being; Plath's unique experiment in life history as "the rhetoric of long engagements" (212; see also 215); T. Lebra's delineation (141) of normative components of "social relativism"; and Smith's Lewis Henry Morgan Lectures (254), which offered fresh views of hierarchy and harmony as norms in defining the social encounters through which selfhood is established and expressed.

One may read this work for the imageries by which the self is culturally conceived, for normative modalities of self-conduct, and for ideal life-trajectories. Two related self imageries were apparent: One centered on the self as energy field (*ki*) and as spiritual force (*kokoro*), and the other turned on a complementary opposition of facial surface and body cavity. Norms of self-conduct, to these analysts, were typifications of engagement in society, and they clustered around two modalities, roles and rapport. That is, commitment to filling a role fully and the capacity to respond openly and wholly to others are both compelling idealizations of satisfying engagement. These, in turn, are the basis for several marked perspectives on maturity and maturation. Leading a life properly is said to require following a path diligently—a path laid out "in the company of others," charted by cultural idioms of commitment and engagement, but cut through uneven social terrain that is constantly reshaped by potent political forces.

Several of these interpretations held that such an idiom of selfhood implied its own atrophy and transcendence; the ultimate promise of self-cultivation is self-negation. A path of personal growth leads eventually to a perception of a universal, unchanging reality, a destination of universal belongingness achieved in a sudden moment of spiritual awareness.

TERMS OF ENDEARMENT, TIES THAT BIND The last decade has seen a number of studies that follow these leads in elaborating cultural idioms of selfhood and specifying the contexts in which they have expressive power. Focusing on the dynamics of early socialization, for example, Kumagai (137, 138) expands Doi's arguments about indulgence relationships (65, 66; also

178); White & LeVine (284) discuss the descriptors for the "good child", all of which link self-development with social embeddedness; and Tobin (272) emphasizes the preschool pedagogy of teaching "distinction" (*kejime*), or the ability to discern and shift among behavioral modes.

Edwards (78) has attempted to infer self-constructs from the contemporary form of wedding ceremonies. Despite their rapid commercialization (over four fifths now take place in hotels and commercial wedding halls), he believes that the ceremony continues to symbolize and enact a Japanese core value of the relational self and an ideal image of a "complementarily incompetent" householder-pair.

Kondo (134) has recently provided a more complex analysis of multiple constructions of self in and around a small confectionery company in a working-class Tokyo ward. Producing a "traditional" product in "modern" facilities, the company requires significant status distinctions in pay, benefits, and job security between the management and employees and among the full-time, artisanal male workers and part-time female workers. Most routines and interactions mark this hierarchy, but other aspects (group excursions, standardized clothing, certain linguistic etiquette) enforce collective feelings of "our company." Indeed, it is the subtle manipulations of the markers and moments of hierarchy and equal treatment, formality and informality, routine and diversion, and front-stage and back-stage that make the forging of self-identity a political and equivocal act.

Rosenberger has proposed that self-expression shifts among and attempts to balance four modalities: "group productivity, personal accomplishment, harmony or affection, and pure impulse or gratification" (234). Social pressures, personal circumstances, and the historical moment define the appropriateness of such situational shifting, which is often interpreted with the hydraulic idiom of *ki* energy. She shows this to particular effect in interpreting the life history of a middle-aged woman (237).

Several other recent works begin from more rigorously linguistic perspectives. Ohnuki-Tierney, for example, has pursued her formulations of selfhood through a distinctive and provocative historical semiotics. She identifies the monkey, in particular, as a shifting, reflexive commentary on the self (195). Because the monkey embodies the ambivalent powers of the sacred realm, it has traversed and transgressed rigid symbolic oppositions throughout Japanese history. Her argument here is part of an even more ambitious set of proposals about the interpenetration of analogic and discursive thought (193, 196).

Bachnik, in a series of publications (e.g. 11, 12, 14), has developed an indexical perspective on what she considers to be the mutual construction of self and society in Japan. Through studies of deixis and verb use, and through ethnographic observations of a rural household, she has tried to interpret this

relationship as the intersection of self-modalities of discipline and spontaneity and a societal cline of distance and intimacy.

Moeran, by contrast, was inspired by Parkin's keyword analysis to advance a semantic model of selfhood, centering on "spirit" or *seishin* (172). He suggests that this term embraces two seemingly antithetical clusters of characteristics: hard qualities of endurance, discipline, loyalty, and "no heart"; and soft qualities of freshness, spontaneous feeling, and heart. At the same time, heart (*kokoro*) is associated with individuality (*kosei*). Thus, Moeran concludes, the flexibility of terms in the *seishin* lexical domain, especially heart, permits both a questioning of the self-negation inherent in the indigenous concept of *seishin* and an appropriation of certain aspects of Western individualism. In several respects, then, his model is similar to, though less situated, than Kondo's. In effect, what he describes are the twin modalities of self-conduct: spontaneity, and discipline (see also 175).

It is hardly surprising to find resonances, as many of these studies do, among notions of self-constitution, self-conduct, and personal growth (see also 100, 119). At the same time, it is highly misleading to conclude from them a single, seamless model of "Japanese selfhood." Particular associations of concepts like "face" (as influence or deceit) can be contradictory. Binary domains of the disciplined and the spontaneous may represent a balanced complementarity at the level of code ("feeling follows form"), but they often present intractable tensions in practice: Whose feelings follow what forms? Filling role commitments and satisfying personal relationships fully can often prove incompatible. And, the specific enactments and relative valorization of idealized pathways of life have shifted considerably with societal transformations (212). Selfhood is a field of argument among multiple, competing, and shifting cultural representations, and the best of these recent studies underscore this. Where they have stressed the ideological construction and institutional nexus of self-expression, they succeed in problematizing the relation between cultural construct and social praxis. Where they remain cast in broad and ahistorical terms, they are dangerously essentialist and suspiciously Orientalist.

INSTITUTIONS AND ARENAS OF POSTWAR JAPAN

Family Form and Formation: Articulating Generations and Genders

Not surprisingly, the character, origins, and changes in the family—especially the *ie* and its alleged replacement by a nuclear unit—have long been central themes in the anthropology of Japan. The *ie* is the Japanese ideal of the stem family: co-resident, multi-generational spouse pairs, with norms of a single heir and out-marriage for other siblings (103, 181). The form

probably originated with medieval warrior houses, spread selectively through early modern society, and was legislated by the late-19th-century Meiji state as a national patrilineal template. In the early postwar period it was reviled for its authoritarian overtones, but it is now making something of a sentimental comeback in popular media as yet another distinctively Japanese accomplishment.

Social science writing has generally followed two lines of inquiry. Some begin with the significance of the family as kinship unit and are led from there to ponder the lineality of the *ie*, both as a putative descent rule and as possible descent groups based on inter-*ie* ties of head-families and branch-families. This has provoked debates on such matters as the patrilineal or bilateral nature of kinship terminology and the significance of regional variations of *ie* form (18, 19, 36, 37, 203, 246). The frequent adoption and inclusion of nonkin has influenced others to emphasize the household as corporate residential group, defined around its stewardship of agricultural, commercial, and/or status capital. Succession is thus seen as passing through a ladder of positions (e.g. heir, household head, retired head) that need not directly correspond to a grid of kin terms and relations (13, 131). While this literature occasionally follows folk inclinations to reify the *ie* as the “traditional family,” there is growing awareness of the historicity of this family form as a figuration of turn-of-the-century statemaking. The Meiji state in effect legislated a family system for an Emperor-led family-nation, selectively codifying and universalizing certain class-specific practices (30, 88, 122, 255).

Postwar Japan is strong confirmation of the paradox of mass longevity that Hareven (102) and others have noted. While one might anticipate that rising life expectancy and other features of the modern demographic profile would increase options and produce more variation in life cycles and transition points, they have instead resulted in greater homogenization and synchronization across the population. This is especially true for Japan. As Coleman (50) has shown, marriage is nearly universal and comparatively late for both male and female, clustering around a societal notion of “appropriate age” (*tekireiki*). After a brief but important postwar baby boom, fertility fell quickly and has remained at the replacement rate for 40 years. There is a tight link between marriage and childbirth: Premarital and extramarital childbirth is rare, and parents aim to produce two children soon after marriage in a bunched pattern. With poor communication between spouses in sexual matters and a reliance on condoms and rhythm methods, the burden of contraception falls almost entirely to the woman. Legally available abortion (49) is a necessary resort for most women—and for most of them, more than once.

Exigencies of the workplace have driven some of these family features: Women are encouraged to quit after short careers; male pay scales are kept initially low, with family allowances and raises delayed; and early retirement

ages have pressured couples to produce children quickly so their schooling is finished before the father must retire (often to a lower-paying second career). These changes have been widely characterized as family nuclearization, but this is too simple an interpretation. It is often claimed, for example, that the postwar has seen a shift from "arranged marriages" to "love marriages." However, this ignores both a more complicated recent history of marriage and certain contemporary practices—practices that combine personal initiative with introductions, recommendations, and approval from significant elders and that are expressed in idioms of both romance and responsibility (78).

In addition, the ambivalent policies of the postwar state give pause to a simple family sociology. On one hand, the 1947 Civil Code rejected the patriarchal *ie* and promoted the nuclear family. This had obvious economic benefits: A nuclear ideal helped make the work force more mobile, and the multiplication of family units increased the base of consumption units. Yet the state has often hesitated, afraid that a nuclear norm would entail massive commitments of public resources. Caring for the children would require day care and preschools, caring for adults would require more housing stock, and caring for the elderly would strain medical facilities. Thus, the state has subtly shifted the characterization of extended families from the *ie* to *sansedai kazoku* ("three-generation families") to encourage cross-generational private care in a euphemistically termed Japanese-style welfare state (214). Day care facilities remain inadequate; two-generation mortgages, with certain financial and social entailments, are being promoted; and senior citizen hospitalization benefits have been contained through programs of "home care." In effect, there is a new "life cycle of the Japanese family" (139), with repeating phases of nuclear and multiple-generational forms. Meanwhile, a generalized familial idiom—both as lines of obligation and "spheres of attachment" (134)—remains pervasive, especially in organizing and legitimizing workplace relations.

Work and Workplaces

The intense interest in the postwar growth of the Japanese economy and in the strength and apparent distinctiveness of Japanese large corporations has generated powerful stereotypes around which anthropologists of work and workplaces have had to maneuver. These include an image of "Japan, Inc." as a ruling iron triangle of ministry bureaucrats, conservative politicians, and corporate executives; a uniquely "Japanese company" model (1) of lifetime commitment, bottom-up recruitment of school-leavers, promotion and pay primarily by years of service, and enterprise unions; and a "dual economy" of a modern, large-firm sector dominating a traditional, small-firm sector. The ethnography of work relations has done much to question such uninformative modeling.

The term dual economy, for example, poorly reflects an economy that is girded by the double hierarchies of an industrial structure of large and small firms and regular and nonregular employment statuses (43). The former is a continuum from large corporations and government bureaucracies to sub-contractors, entrepreneurs, independent artisans, and small retailers. The latter ranges from male managerial and professional "salarymen" and skilled blue-collar workers to female clericals, part-timers, and seasonal and casual labor. The hierarchies intersect at their higher ends with the privileged, permanent, and mostly male regular employees of the large firms and ministries. The "Japanese company" model originally suggested that a bedrock of traditional values upheld the organizational features of this core. Labor historians, however, have taught us that the elements of large corporate organization were forged during several contentious periods of struggle in this century (90). As a result, there has been a considerable white-collarization of male blue-collar workers in large firms. At the same time, to protect this core and to minimize corporate exposure to downturns, these companies remain flexible by externalizing their expansion and contraction with nonregular workers and chains of subsidiary affiliates.

Several ethnographies of large companies have revealed how centripetal and centrifugal forces play against one another in core workplaces (notably 228 but also 45). Rohlen's regional bank, for example, can be depicted as three organizational overlays. It is at once an inclusive circle of relatively undifferentiated regular employees; a vertical rectangle of employee age-grades up through which all pass from entrance to retirement; and a pyramid of status, as competition for fewer and fewer senior positions eventually pushes many in each cohort to the margins of authority and responsibility. Rohlen shows how shifting routines within office sections and branch and senior-junior dyads can mediate such structural contradictions. Ben-Ari (27) has subtly analyzed the multiple messages of annual spring labor offensives in large companies, which dramatize confrontation but coopt both workers and management into mutually agreeable settlements (see also 273).

Work groups are also the key to interpreting the alleged work ethic of postwar economic organizations. Cole's comparative analysis of the "commitment to work" (48) indicated little cross-national difference in job satisfaction (low) but significant differences in worker commitment to small work groups and to company objectives (low for the United States, high for Japan). Contrary to American management presumptions, he argued, large Japanese organizations cultivate commitment by mobilizing shop floor, assembly line, and office work groups. They carefully delegate autonomy to such groups, rotate jobs, and attend to worker morale through "spiritual education" and other programs.

We now have a clear view of the cushions within the core with McClen-

don's portrait of truncated careers of female clericals at a major trading company (163), Noguchi's study of side-tracked employees at a National Railroads station and the ideology of industrial familism (187), and the accounts of female factory labor subordination by Lo (151) and Roberts (222). Recent anthropological work has also forced a reevaluation of the viability and importance of what in Japan is called the *chūshokigyō* sector, the sector of medium and small firms and businesses that form the cushions around the core and that employ the great majority of working Japanese (200). Skinner, for example, describes how the public ministries exploit their satellite agencies as sites for training their young elite and for pasturing their older non-elite (248, 249). Dore (71) and Cole (47) offer contrasting appraisals of the corporate chains of subcontracting and sub-subcontracting that extend from large manufacturing firms through subsidiaries and independent parts makers and assemblers to industrial homeworkers and casual laborers.

Yet anthropologists have done much to dispel the image of most medium-sized and small firms as simply indentured subcontractors. Especially important have been Ito's research (115) on significant entrepreneurial activities of urban women and their strategies for daughter-in-law recruitment and employment; Hamabata's ethnography (96) of elite family businesses; Bestor's account of the "old middle class" shopkeepers (31), who continue to control neighborhood politics and define local status in a Tokyo ward; and Kondo's complex analysis of occupational identity and work relations in a small Tokyo confectionery firm (134). Kondo shows skillfully how the idioms and social forms of family and business intersect, and how these interpenetrations serve the interests of management but also provide the leverage for subversion of these interests.

Ethnographers have also shown us the tenacity of artisans in adapting to an expanding world of dealers, buyers, and critics. Haak (93) has profiled a canny, irascible weaver who jealously guards an independent sphere of production in the face of widespread mechanization. Studying village potters, Kleinberg (132) and Moeran (173) have shown how the changing techniques and new popularity of folk pottery have reconfigured household labor and authority and have redefined local status. Plath & Hill have shown the depth of expertise required of women shellfish divers as well as their subtle and strategic control of technology (216, 217). Based on such evidence of flexible production, innovation, and entrepreneurship, Friedman (83) has even argued provocatively that economists have misunderstood the real source of the postwar economic miracle—not the corporate core, but the small-firm sector. Most anthropologists would find this view as naively one-sided as the orthodox judgment it targets. The lessons for us are, rather, the broad structural and functional range of this sector, which is variously a shock absorber, a training ground, a dumping ground, and a refuge.

Education and "the School Credential Society"

For virtually every Japanese, formal education has become the link between home and work, youth and adulthood. Postwar Japanese education has managed to combine mass schooling of a literate citizenry with a rigorous culling for elite positions in society. The rigor and quality, the broad, uniform curriculum, and the equitable funding of the overwhelmingly public elementary and secondary schooling have been rapturously described by journalists and academics alike (278). At the same time, the funnel of the "school credential society" (*gakureki shakai*) narrows quickly. Postwar Japan has been a rather strict meritocracy, but merit is largely measured by educational achievement. Educational prestige is in turn determined by school reputation, which is indicated by entrance exam competitiveness. And increasingly, exam success requires extracurricular private study in the shadow sector of the infamous cram schools and prep academies (230; see also 89 and 155 for pathologies and social controversies generated by such a funnel).

Entrance examinations are required in most public high school districts and for most colleges and universities. Thus, as he did with his study of Ueda Bank, Rohlen has provided the essential starting point for understanding contemporary schooling with a comprehensive and comparative study of five high schools within the Kobe metropolitan area (231). Nonetheless, fortunately or unfortunately, competitive exams are an experience for only a minority of students, and many feel that sole attention to these pressure points in the system distorts our appreciation of the distinct levels of education in Japan. Cummings's study of Kyoto elementary schools highlights their broad curriculum and egalitarian and noncompetitive ethos (54), and a recent review of technical schools argues that they have been much more central and effective in labor force training than previously assumed (73). Nor can the importance attached to adult education by individuals, organizations, and the state be overlooked. In-company training is prominent in most large companies, even for nonregular employees; and what is now tagged "lifelong learning" is touted by the proliferating Culture Centers (110). These are both commercial and local government adult education centers, offering cultural and physical recreation and also training for reemployment. Thus entrance exams only begin to suggest the fuller dimensions of the postwar "school credential society."

Fascination with the exam system also inhibits our appraising the more implicit aims of education. Schooling is not only credentialing, nor is it merely the teaching of subjects and skills; it is also the "hidden curriculum" of socialization (72:Ch. 5 & 11; 232). Indeed, one of the most significant areas of recent research has been preschool education and the transition from family to school. Despite the popular literature, little academic skills training occurs at the kindergarten level. Rather, the important lessons there are social: to

learn distinctions (*kejime*) in formal and informal modes of behavior and to adjust to small group dynamics and demands (*shūdan seikatsu*). Several investigators (202, 271) have noted how time, space, speech, and activities are structured in a way that dichotomizes the formal and informal, the planned and the spontaneous, and provides encouragement and experience in adjusting behavior appropriately between these. Hendry (104), Peak (202), Sano (241), and Tobin (271) observed little direct teacher intervention and much delegation of authority to children (both individuals and fixed small groups); children regulate children. Teacher-student ratios are deliberately high. Teachers do not abdicate authority; they simply keep a low profile, avoid setting firm guidelines, but maintain a constant, unobtrusive presence (much as Rohlen observed of the Ueda Bank managers, 228). Lewis's (148) findings, one might add, cast doubt on the common notion that in Japan understanding follows compliance; that is, identify with the forms (*kata*) and the heart (*kokoro*) will follow. The techniques for fostering cooperation among the children suggest that in nurturing the compliant child, social congeniality is felt prior to—and the basis for—ethical judgment (cf 284).

Gender and Patriarchy

The historical trends in gender ideology in Japan follow a depressingly familiar trajectory: declining female status (201), dimorphizing images of the nurturing mother and sexual object (57), and the gradual universalization of such images across the female population (279). Many have noted the paradoxes of women's contemporary status: an orthodoxy of female domesticity but high female labor force participation (242); numerous legal rights but severe practical obstacles to advancement and equal treatment (38); and frequent reports of satisfaction and accommodation in the face of such limitations and inequities (143, 256, 279).

It is not difficult to account for such paradoxes in terms of historical circumstances and current realities and rationalizations: the legacies of grueling factory work for early 20th-century women and the harsh memories of the generation of the 1920s (259); postwar legal reform undermined by enterprise structure (163, 276); the attitudinal adjustments in self-image to limited reward structures; and an ideology of personhood that valorizes both perseverance in role performance and the virtues of care-giving.

Patriarchy is not a term used much in the anthropology of contemporary Japan, but if it refers to institutionalized patterns of male dominance and female subordination, it aptly characterizes postwar Japan. Women are significantly restrained (however fulfilled) by ideals of domestic nurturing, including care-giving for children, husband, and elderly (85); they bear the responsibilities for reproduction and, through abortion, for reproductive restraint; and they face sharply differential opportunity structures at all levels

of employment (33, 34, 84). In both home and work, explicit discourses of role complementarity serve to legitimize and link this gender division of labor (78, 134). The tracking of boys and girls at the secondary and tertiary levels of education reinforces and reproduces this gender ideology, as do the gender inflections of speech (243, 283).

Women's problematic status and varied postwar experiences are delineated in several fine ethnographies, as surveyed by Asano-Tamanoi in these pages last year (7; since then 143, 151). However, these have not generated sustained debate, such as that about "domestic power" in Mediterranean peasant societies (74, 87, 226). To be sure, interpretations tend to focus on precisely this issue of power or on reports of personal fulfillment. For example, is the considerable daily autonomy of urban housewives a lever of independent power or is it an imposed and highly circumscribed autonomy? Is it an ethnocentric misreading to discount professions of satisfaction with existing roles or is it a recognition that fulfillment is not a direct function of dominance relations? But these are particularist issues. Despite some critical feminist analyses (39, 154, 156, 235), and some understanding of 20th-century dynamics (30, 84, 255, 274, 275), we still lack a theoretically informed and ethnographically centered analysis of the particular intersections of capitalism, class, and the state that have preserved this broad gender inequality.

Metropolitan Tokyo and the Transformation of the Urban Neighborhood

Urban studies in anthropology have had a checkered reputation; they might benefit from greater attention to the Japan literature, through which one can track 40 years in the transformation of a metropolitan region. Urban ethnography began in Japan with Ronald Dore's portrait (69) of a Tokyo ward in 1951, struggling with the dislocations and shortages of the war and its aftermath. Vogel's subsequent study (277) of a Tokyo fringe neighborhood took measure of the societal transformation of the 1950s. Vogel saw occurring in Mamachi of the late 1950s both a population displacement and life-style displacement. A new middle class of white-collar employees was emerging amidst the shopkeepers, small-businesspeople, and professionals of the old middle class to alter the character of Mamachi from urban fringe town to metropolitan "bedburb."

In the 1960s, Kiefer's research dealt with the social and psychological dynamics of the then fast-spreading public high-rise complexes, built to accommodate the now exploding middle-class salariat (129, 130). Linda Perry followed up this work with a study of the housewives of such a high-rise complex in the early 1970s (204). Then Imamura reported on a year in the late 1970s in a western Tokyo suburb, whose population had recently tripled with

an influx of corporate and government employees (110). She described the complex pattern of housing alternatives and their role in shaping local community relations, especially among non-employed housewives. In the 1980s several impressive works on metropolitan society have appeared, including Bestor's study of a Tokyo neighborhood (31), Robertson's work on the ideology of "community building" in the Tokyo fringe city of Kodaira (224), and Nussbaum's 1985 ethnography of a large, planned "new town" (190), also within Greater Metropolitan Tokyo.

These represent a valuable succession of views of evolving metropolitan life. Many of them display a sophisticated understanding of class dynamics and community form. Bestor's Miyamoto, for example, was a rural area incorporated as an increasingly urban ward of an expanding prewar Tokyo. He demonstrates how a local elite—formerly propertied cultivators, now small shopkeepers and landlords—attempt to protect their status and define Miyamoto as a neighborhood by monitoring participation in ward activities and managing expressions of "tradition" in the local festival and elsewhere. This is not an overt struggle of old and new middle classes. Rather, it is the assertion of the legitimacy and dignity of local difference. The ethnography is an account of these differences, of their subtly oppositional effect, and of their bases in class and gender dynamics within the neighborhood.

Regional Japan: Farm, Fishing, and Factories

Japan also warrants more serious attention than now paid by analysts—including anthropologists—of the regional, as well as metropolitan, dynamics of state societies. Japanese and foreign scholars have extensively documented its premodern state peasantry, its early 20th-century agrarian capitalism and tenancy, the world's most successful land reform in the late 1940s, a postwar farm mechanization that subverted its policy intentions, and now a population of farmer-workers who form an essential, though subordinate, ingredient of Japan's industrial strength.

Village community and farm family studies are no longer the ethnographic staples of the Japan literature, but as has been the case with urban ethnographies, we have certainly been well served by a long succession of engaging and broadly conceived portraits. They belie the charge that community studies are necessarily myopic, ahistorical descriptions of a narrowly local and illusory order. This is even true of the first such study; Embree's 1939 anatomy of the social institutions of Suye Mura (80) has now been fleshed out and animated by the publication of his wife's field diaries (259) to form a rare stereoptic view of prewar village life.

In the early postwar years, Beardsley organized a major research program in western Japan, and joined with a historian and a political scientist in producing *Village Japan* (16). Like Dore's *City Life*, it was painstakingly set

in regional and historical context; if it had been more widely read by non-specialists, anthropology would have been spared two decades of arid debate about “community studies.” Among Japan specialists, however, it set high standards for rural ethnography. Ten years later, Plath (206) took a central mountain basin as his locale, and highlighted among the region’s diverse lifeways those of the farmer, the shopkeeper, and the wage-earner. His book was both an ethnography of those lifeways and a demonstration of the growing attractiveness of the life and leisure of the urban *sarariman*. Dore (70), Norbeck (188), Shimpō (247), and Smith (253) have all written longitudinal village studies that document substantial postwar change in rural society.

Recent work on regional society has moved in two directions. Following Norbeck, several researchers have tried to correct the agrarian bias of rural studies by turning to the coastal societies of maritime Japan. These include the studies of artisan divers mentioned above (149, 164, 216, 217), Kalland’s historical perspective on sea tenure and the social organization of coastal fishing (118), and Befu’s commentary (24) on the effects of industrial development on Inland Sea fisheries. Befu’s article also suggests the second new theme, the mutual effects of agrarian change and industrialization in regional development.

Postwar farming policy and practice have been contradictory. The legacy of the land reform has been the protection of small-proprietor rice farming. At the same time, postwar state policy has aimed to promote large-scale, mechanized, and diversified agriculture (140). For this, the state has sometimes used the carrot of easy credit and subsidies and at other times has swung the stick of mandated rice acreage reductions. Not surprisingly, competing aims have had paradoxical results: the part-time, small-scale, overmechanized production of the one crop for which demand is declining but profit is assured—rice.

This is not, however, a product solely of agricultural dynamics. Recent work has shown a close connection between postwar agriculture and industrial development (127, 177). The first rice transplanters, tractors, and combines in the 1960s freed much of the farm population to migrate to metropolitan factories. By the 1970s, however, the factories were going to the countryside, and part-time farming with full-time nonfarm employment rapidly became the rural norm. The regional population is a labor reserve, another important cushion around the economic core. This, in effect, has created a composite identity for rural individuals and households as small-holding proprietors and manufacturing or service proletarians. These suggest intriguing parallels, yet to be explored, with the farmer-workers of western Europe (e.g. 6, 108).

What is true for ruralites is true for their regions as a whole. A critical dimension of national consciousness and nation-state building in the 20th century has been the countryside’s simultaneous incorporation into and dif-

ferentiation from the larger society. The Japanese state has invested enormous subsidies in regional infrastructure, creating material prosperity and recharging local political and social life (176). At the same time, this is a perilous affluence which has only heightened the fiscal dependency and ideological subordination of the regions to the center (127).

Festivals, Heritage, and Cultural Tourism

The symbolic valence of "tradition" (*dentō*) has oscillated continually between celebration and denigration in Japan's modern century. For much of the postwar period, it has been a key element in national character-building, and an ideological counterpoint to visions of modernization. Historical sites, local festivals, and folk-art performances have become icons in a rich and well-traveled landscape of national heritage.

With strong parallels—and some historical links—to the European folklores, folklore in Japan has emerged as a discipline to discover, define, and defend this heritage. Established by Yanagita in the early 20th century, it is in many ways Japan's national anthropology—a conservative, anti-establishment, as Koschmann has put it (135). Recently, however, its parochial and protectionist barriers have been breached by a creative synergy among some of these folklorists and certain historians and anthropologists, especially those with symbolic and structuralist interests, such as Amino, Miyata, and Yamaguchi. Little of this has been translated into Western languages, although the recent *Current Anthropology* supplement (180) suggests some of this innovative convergence (despite its misleading title, "An Anthropological Profile of Japan"). One of their new common themes is a cultural construction of Japanese historical experience as a dialectic of containment through marginalization, and subversion through transgression. This is evident in Yamaguchi's semiotics of emperors and outcastes as structural pairs and ritual opposites (285, 286), in Amino's recovery of marginal roles and spaces in medieval society (4), and in Miyata's studies of early modern popular religions of redemption and renovation (171).

Another important theme of special relevance to their festival studies is the energistic cosmology of *hare-ke-kegare* (111, 184). To many analysts, *ke* and *hare*, the ordinary and the pure, constitute alternating states of everyday routine and extraordinary ritual; with the notion of pollution or decay (*kegare*), they inscribe a perpetual cycle of vitality, decline, and renewal. To this is added the ambivalent nature of deities in early Shintō belief as represented by the twin aspects of spiritual beings: the pacific and the violent, the benevolent and the malevolent. In popular belief, these were transposed to bipolar conceptions of strangers and outsiders as boon or bane, able to bring health and prosperity or to visit disease and misfortune (291). The rich lore about possession, metamorphosis, and transmutation of spirits, humans, and

animals (like the fox, badger, and tengu) lend further ambiguity to form, permeability to boundaries, and dynamic to life-process (290). It is, in short, a cosmology of continuous reality, bipolar forces, circulating energy, and alternating states, a version of which Ohnuki-Tierney has delineated (194).

Anthropologists outside Japan have been more concerned about the politicization and commercialization of heritage. Robertson (224, 225), for example, showed how oppositions of old-timer/newcomer were dramatized in an urban civic festivity to constitute a local community identity. Occurring at a time when such "community building" was officially encouraged, the festivity was both collaboration and contest between local memory and state promotion. Bestor (31) also depicts the multiple struggles within the neighborhood, and between local groups and the ward office, to control the designation of the traditional (see also 91, 149, 164).

The most provocative study of the vicissitudes of tradition is Ivy's examination of oral lore, shamanic possession, and itinerant proletarian theater (116). In her formulation, such marginal productions dangerously threaten the stable conventions of the literate mainstream society. They are collected, viewed, and celebrated as vanishing "traditions" of the folk; showcased in this way, their subversive potential is contained. Ivy also deftly follows the shifts in advertising promotions of heritage; in her example of the Japan National Railways poster campaigns, a 1970s modernist nostalgia has been replaced by a 1980s postmodernist exotic (117).

My own work on rural festivities has emphasized their place in the simultaneous though contradictory efforts of state policy and metropolitan media to rationalize and sentimentalize regional lifeways (123, 126). The countryside of postwar Japan are in a familiar double bind. As the backward "boonies," they are enticed to assimilate into modern society, but as the celebrated national "folk," they are to be hermetically preserved as "the world we have lost." To the people of regional Japan, therefore, the cultural politics of heritage require maneuvering between these divergent languages of the larger society in order to maintain an autonomous sense of local identity and improve upon the terms of their inclusion. A similar lesson might be drawn from Moeran's study (173) of the rural potters of Onta, who must negotiate the meanings of "authentic folk art" in terms of local status, department store clients, and a national connoisseurship.

Law and Crime, Politics and Protest: Reluctant Litigators and Cautious Protesters?

Ethnographic studies of formal arenas of postwar politics are few. This is surprising and disappointing, in view of the potential intersection of such studies with case analyses by political scientists on party politics and the local electoral process (55, 56), on policy-making (41), and on the significant

collective protests of the postwar decades—labor, consumer, environmental, and student. The recent funeral of Emperor Showa and installation of Emperor Heisei have received some anthropological attention (53, 167), but aside from the semiotic and symbolic studies of Yamaguchi, Miyata, and others (e.g. in 180), and Gluck's brilliant work on the prewar "emperor system" (88), we have ignored this politically marginal but ideologically central figure. A partial exception is Lebra's present work (144, 145), which applies her large-sample oral history methods to a unique study of the modern aristocracy.

Anthropologists have tended to concentrate in the areas of crime and law. Ames (3), for example, has described local police organization, and Stark (263) offers a parallel account of a local *yakuza* gang underworld; Steinhoff (a sociologist) has shown how the organizational and interpersonal dynamics of Red Army fanatics mimic those of mainstream society (264). In both crime and law, Japan in international perspective presents a distinctive profile: Incidence of all crimes is low, and rates have generally fallen in the postwar decades; clearance rates are quite high, and sentencing relies heavily on fines rather than prison terms (which are given in only 5% of sentences). The volume of civil litigation is very small. Many are tempted to explain these statistics in characterological terms, portraying a nation of orderly citizens who are responsive to group sanctions, and of reluctant litigants who prefer private settlement and avoid open conflict.

Others claim that institutional factors are more compelling. Crime enforcement is effective because of the streamlined yet decentralized police organization, from National Police Agency at the top to neighborhood mini-stations across the country; strict gun control; a national citizen registration; and wide procedural latitude in pursuing investigations. In civil law, the institutionalists argue, there are both structural barriers and effective alternatives to litigation (94, 218). On the one hand, legal education is highly restrictive, and the courts have fewer powers of enforcement and higher case loads than most other OECD countries. On the other hand, a number of mediation channels are available (informal, company, and judicial) through which most cases are resolved before reaching a court docket.

However here, too, an argument that pits cultural values against institutional constraints creates a false dichotomy (254:40–46); this is evidenced in the exchange between Wagatsuma and Haley on the importance of apologies in Japanese courts (95, 281). Perhaps the two studies that best reveal the postwar legal system as a historical figuration of culturally constituted interests are by Bryant (38), an anthropologist-lawyer, and Upham (276), a legal scholar. Bryant pursues the issue of the negligible divorce rates of the past few decades by focusing on how the family court system has developed and operates. Through a series of poignant cases and revealing interviews, she

concludes that the weakness of the court (e.g. its inability to rely on legal precedents and its lack of means to determine alimony and enforce payment) together with the conservative “pro-family” pressures of the court-appointed mediators discourage and disadvantage most women who seek divorce settlements.

Examining four cases of collective protest (including those of pollution victims and working women), Upham characterizes legal culture in postwar Japan as one of “bureaucratic informality” (276). The bureaucracy orchestrates social change and contains social conflict through discretionary and enlightened (re)action. One is struck by both the defensiveness and the effectiveness of state response. In each case, the government is reacting—grudgingly, though eventually decisively—to reclaim its “ability to set the social agenda.” At the same time, when it does respond, it is remarkably successful in containing such threats to its hegemony by forcing claimants to argue for fair treatment in ministry councils rather than for legally binding rights in the courts.

Bureaucratic informality thus describes the common outcome of collective agitation in postwar Japan. Yet it does not characterize the course of the agitations; litigation and an activist judiciary were critical in all four cases. The result was to reassert bureaucratic prerogatives; but the process, in each case, revealed contending premises about the role of law in sanctioning change. Bureaucrats may prevail over law and judges, but postwar Japan has been marked as much by the process as by the result.

Minorities and Other Marginals: The Categorically Stigmatized

A homogeneous population is one of the ideological homilies of cultural nationalism in 20th-century Japan: one people, one polity, one language. Japan is unusual for a two-millennium history in which ethnic, political, and linguistic boundaries have been largely coterminous, but it is a dangerous fallacy to conflate boundary isomorphism with internal homogeneity.

Investigators have had a difficult time conceptualizing the categorically stigmatized within Japanese society. At one point, caste was borrowed from the South Asian context, especially to analyze the *burakumin* as untouchables or outcasts, but most Japan specialists have found the concept inappropriate (51, 269). Japanese researchers have not fared better (168, 238, 280). “Minority people” has been translated literally into Japanese as *shōsūsha*; scholars thus talk of Japan’s *shōsū minzoku*, or ethnic minorities, but this is offensive to the organized associations of the two largest stigmatized categories, the *burakumin* and the Koreans in Japan; for different reasons, none of these highly politicized associations consider their people a racial or ethnic minority.

Despite the conceptual problems, there are a number of important works on those who are missing in the national portrait of "We Japanese." The *burakumin* are some 3 million so-called "former outcastes," descendants of ritually "unclean" people (butchers, grave diggers, etc) and itinerants of the early modern period. The special designation was legally abolished in the late 19th century, but they still face considerable discrimination through private listings and subtle tracking. A portion are politically organized as the Buraku Liberation League, which is known for its political strategy of aggressive and intimidating "denunciation sessions" (276). There have been several studies of *burakumin* neighborhoods (64, 67, 68, 245; see also 195).

The 700,000 or so Koreans resident in Japan who have not been able to repatriate after being coerced to Japan as forced labor during the colonial period constitute a second group relegated to a stigmatized status. Lee & DeVos (147) provide a comprehensive introduction to their situation, and Hardacre (99) has written on their religious organization. Day laborers, homeless, and other members of an impoverished underclass in Japan's major cities—a class that overlaps the former two categories—have received occasional attention (40, 44, 166, 268).

Japan's aboriginal ethnic minority are the Ainu, hunters and fisherfolk of Mongoloid or Caucasoid origins who predate other surviving populations. They were pushed to the northernmost island by the early state, and were decimated when state colonization of that island began in the late 19th century. Present-day population estimates run from 24,000 to 100,000, to which must be added other groups in Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands. Ohnuki-Tierney has written two books on Ainu world view and health practices (191, 192), and Watanabe (282) has detailed Ainu ecology.

At the other end of the archipelago, the peoples of the southern Ryukyuan Islands (including Okinawa) bear a rather more complicated relation to mainstream Japanese society. Long an important and autonomous link with south China, they were subjugated by the early modern state and remain today a disadvantaged regional periphery. At the same time, Yanagita's hypothesis of a southern origin for Japanese society appropriated them culturally as Ur-Japanese. Although the hypothesis has few supporters today, there are many who still look to Ryukyuan language, material culture, and religious life for evidence of early Japanese patterns. While not committed to such contemporary ancestor thinking, the major theme of Ryukyuan studies in the West has been religion and ritual, especially local shamanistic practices. These include the older but still valuable study by W. Lebra (146) and several more recent works (198, 199, 270). Especially important among Japanese researchers has been Mabuchi, who has directed a number of group projects in the Ryukyus (159, 165).

Religion and the Reenchantment of a Secular World

The end of World War II was devastating to the orthodox forms of Shintō and Buddhism. The hierarchy of Shintō shrines that the prewar state had constructed around its cult of the divine emperor was demolished, and major Buddhist establishments lost much of their propertied financial base in the Land Reform (61, 101). Some Buddhist temples have recovered by successfully promoting themselves as pilgrimage sites or their deities as efficacious in curing through special prayer, amulets, and faith healing (194, 205, 219). Of special note is the recent commercialization of memorializing aborted fetuses through special Buddhist services, tablets, and statues (35, 250). This is an efficacious—and profitable—use of a Buddhist idiom to offer consolation at an increasingly private moment of intense sorrow and anxiety. However, much of the postwar religious life that has been richly documented is only loosely attached to the institutional establishment. Such activities include the religious aspects of local festivals (see also 8, 239, 240) and present-day shamanism (in addition to the Ryukyuan literature, see 32, 116); but especially important are ancestor worship and the so-called New Religions.

Ancestor worship in Japan is centered in the household. It expresses a concept of a life continuum in which the household comprises a circulation through, and mutually dependent relationships among, the yet-unborn, the recently born, the “fully” living, the recently deceased, and the long departed (252). Yet ancestor worship as a term is doubly misleading. Despite prescriptive stem-family tenets that have restricted “ancestors” to the direct line of household succession, both Plath (208) and Smith (252) found actual practices to be much more inclusive. “Worship,” too, fails to capture the ways in which the enshrined deceased are both conscience and comfort, and in which the living and deceased are linked in reciprocal flows of assistance and dependence.

The “New Religions” have been the subject of even more extensive ethnographic description (60, 75, 92, 98, 100, 142). The term was a journalist’s phrase for the several hundred exclusive, sectarian, and often fundamentalist movements on the fringes of the Shintō and Buddhist establishments. Some 300 are presently registered with the government, claiming memberships totaling about 6 million. Many originated at times of widespread societal unrest in the mid-19th and early 20th centuries, and in immediate post-World War II years. Such origins prompted early interpretations that trivialized New Religions as fanciful responses to crisis and relative deprivation.

Ranging from the sober to the millenarian, the New Religions are full of paradoxes. Founded by charismatic visionaries, often women, they develop tightly structured hierarchical organizations, with men assuming most top

positions. They combine mass marketing and small-group dynamics. They feature highly elaborated and inventive cosmologies and doctrines that syncretize Shintō deities, Buddhist sutras and ancestor services, shamanistic rites, Confucian ethics, and elements borrowed freely from other world religions. However, most people seem to join on the practical impulse of this-worldly problem-solving. Above all, the sects appeal through claims of the miraculous—e.g. faith healing by laying on of hands, testimonials, mantra recitations, etc.

Both social efficacy and cultural plausibility have been used to explain why these “churches of magic” (60) survive—indeed, thrive—in such a secular society. Davis (60) argues that they ritualize a pragmatic optimism about the ability of the follower to secure some modicum of control over the daily irritations and pressures of life. Earhart (75) emphasizes their resonance with past practices; they are, in his terms, “renewed religions.” Hardacre (100) locates their cultural plausibility in their ability to present a unified world view to adherents. However diverse the sources of practice and belief, and however creatively they are transformed, the more successful of the New Religions seem able to fashion them into a compelling and integral system.

On the border of the narrowly religious and the broadly spiritual are a number of communes (265), utopian communities (209), and ethics training programs (134, 227) that resemble not only the New Religions but also other, more aesthetic paths, such as the tea ceremony (133). Davis (59), for example, has shown how Ittoen, an intentional community on the outskirts of Kyoto, attempts to enforce an idiom of stewardship to finesse the potential contradiction between its ideals of personal renunciation and its successful rice seed business, which insures its fiscal viability. His study raises the perennial issue in interpreting communes: To what extent are they radical alternatives to mainstream society or do they reaffirm the central values of a society that has lost its commitment. Davis tends to the latter view, as does Lebra (142), for whom utopian visions are the hyperbole of the mainstream. Such a view may be applied to many of the New Religions as well. Recent analyses of religion-state relations in the early 20th century have demonstrated how effectively state repression shaped sectarian doctrine and practice towards moral orthodoxy and political conservatism (86, 101). Those New Religions that were not extinguished represented not only renewed religions but also restrained religions.

Curing and Coping: Medical Therapies and Psychotherapies

Perhaps more than other advanced industrial societies, Japan maintains a strong medical pluralism of several institutional complexes. In addition to the Buddhist prayer and talismanic idioms of curing and a large, Western-derived biomedical establishment, there is a thriving Chinese-derived “holistic” heal-

ing system (*kanpō*) of acupuncture, natural medicines, and moxibustion (152). In each case, Japan has adopted foreign beliefs and practices but heavily inflected them with indigenous conceptions (see the articles in 189). Ohnuki-Tierney (194) has given us an excellent overview of this pluralism as well as an extended account of three cultural attitudes and values that give form and valence to these health-care complexes: a distinctive germ theory rooted in a dualistic world view, a cultural predilection to indulge minor illnesses and endemic physical weaknesses, and a preference for somatizing etiologies of illness (compare 42, 152:217–28).

Following her study of *kanpō* healing, Lock has published an important series of studies on the medical labeling of stress and anxiety complexes, especially those of anxious students and women frustrated with female adult role strictures (153–156). In this work she tries to distinguish the real and often acute frustrations from the medical and mass media labeling of conditions such as “school avoidance syndrome,” “high-rise apartment neurosis,” and “moving-day syndrome.” The cultural construction of such pathologies is a conjunction of the medical establishment and a conservative political agenda. It reasserts a Confucian “socio-somatics,” whose imperative to lead a well-ordered life produced a healthy body and insured a harmonious social order. Rosenberger (233) also explored the wide variety of women’s responses to menopausal symptoms, relating acceptance or denial of the significance of menopause to the woman’s sense of her place within the household.

In addition to multiple medical practices, a variety of indigenous psychotherapies have become popular in postwar Japan. Reynolds (220, 221) has described a number of what he calls “the quiet therapies,” which include regimes of guided personal recollection, bed rest, simple manual labor, and breathing exercises. Some, like Naikan and Morita, are personal programs of religiously inspired medical practitioners; others are secular therapies modeled closely on conventional religious practices, like Okada’s quiet sitting program of *seiza* (220:78–90). Their striking parallels with the New Religions are hardly coincidental, especially their penchant for simultaneously blaming and empowering the patient-client. All presume the essential benignity of the human condition, and share certain idioms such as “focusing on the moment,” “unblocking the flow,” and “accepting the world as it is.” What they offer are coping strategies for learning to live with oneself, rather than radical therapies to change the self one lives with or the society in which one lives.

THE POSTWAR SOCIAL ORDER: COOPTIVE, CONTESTED, COMPLICIT

I argued at the outset that the anthropology of contemporary Japan has been powerfully influenced by the polemics and counter-polemics of national

character-building and by the efforts of other Japan specialists to accommodate their very Western theoretical perspectives to this most non-Western of industrial societies. These engagements outside our discipline have been salutary because we anthropologists have been pushed to think hard about broad conceptions of the society and to explore a wide range of arenas and institutions of postwar life. At the same time, these engagements have been distracting because they have forced us into two spurious debates: about consensus or coercion as the order of postwar Japanese society, and about culture versus institution as alternative explanations of patterns of behavior and organization.

The common danger of these debates is that they disembody cultural meaning from any conception of the social order. Consider again, for example, Reynold's "quiet therapies," which give expression to and draw meaning from a homeostatic concept of *ki* energy, from role commitment, from a notion of self-in-society, from the need to follow a path. The postwar popularity of these psychotherapies, however, is not merely testimony to the continued salience of these general self-related concepts. As Plath has noted (211), the methods and promises of Morita and Naikan are especially attractive to those at key social transition points, facing new constraints or diminishing futures: exam-driven students, women approaching their late 20s still unmarried, housewives hemmed in by the high-rise apartment complexes, white-collar workers whose further advancement is blocked. The patient/clients are not unlike those who patronize the traditional healers and the faith-healing New Religions.

All of the quiet therapies stress tasks and work, roles and positions, and obligation and responsibility to others. This represents an implicit valorization and selective emphasis of particular idioms of selfhood. Without reducing an interpretation of these therapies to a social profile of their patient/clients, one can find in them selfhood in the service of resocialization to New Middle Class norms. To be sure, they empower the patient/client to self-help, provide feasible designs for living, and revitalize healing traditions. But they also individualize problems, shift attention from structural constraints, and defuse radical consciousness by "ritualizing optimism" (60). The message is optimistic, pragmatic, and conservative; in quieting the individual, it gentles the social order.

Idioms of self-in-society here legitimate adjustments to a structural status quo. In this sense, the quiet therapies are soft control, and they remind us of the need to spell out the interests that impart ideological force to cultural ideals. In this regard, too, they resemble the contemporary commercialized wedding (78). What is fascinating in Edwards's accounts of the ceremonies is how they uneasily juxtapose themes of romance and responsibility, suitability and sobriety, dependence, independence, and interdependence. There is a

hegemonic process, at work in the ceremonial order and in the texts and subtexts of the speeches, etc, by which a preferred resolution is dramatized—"the marital ideal."

In both historical and comparative context, postwar Japanese society is characterized by a wide subscription to ideological and institutional standards and by the perpetuation of significant, antagonizing differences. I have argued elsewhere (128) that a loose set of typifications about social relations and personal goals in the home, at school, and in the workplace has given a cultural reality to claims of postwar Japan as a "New Middle Class" society. These typifications are expressed in slogans like "my-home-ism," in narrow definitions of achievement in the "educational arms race" (230), in role stereotypes like the large organization "salaryman" and the "good wife, wise mother," and in corporate ideologies of "harmony and strength" (228). There is a wide salience to such mainstream typifications despite persistent economic inequalities and social diversity (112, 162, 185). It is a salience, however, of shared vocabulary, not shared values or common achievement.

Consensus and coercion poorly describe such a social order, which is better formulated as cooptive, contested, and complicit (128). It is cooptive, in that predominant ideologies and institutions have been remarkably inclusive, embracing much of the population and regularizing their lifeways. In so doing, they have defused much potential conflict, and infused widespread commitment. Nonetheless, the ways in which public rhetorics and societal institutions shape and constrain ordinary lives are neither direct nor mechanical. There are no ideologies of sameness masking a reality of differences, with coercion and false consciousness preserving the former while masking the latter. The tensions that have strained workplaces, schools, and families in the postwar decades render institutional order a problematical and not inevitable achievement. Within and between these arguments and tensions, the people of the postwar decades have acted, effectively and creatively, to construct and lead their lives.

Take, for example, Tokyo life as studied by Dore around 1950 (69) and by Bestor around 1980 (31). Most striking is the fact that in the 30 years that separate their neighborhoods social differences have not disappeared but have taken new forms. Residents experienced a remarkable widening of opportunity and an evening-out of material benefits over those three decades. Yet there remains an equally striking diversity of lifestyles and divergence of life chances between the genders, the generations, and the occupations—in particular, between the old middle-class shopkeepers and artisans and the new salariat residents. "Traditionalism," to use Bestor's term, has proven a useful idiom in which to blunt the disruptive potential of this diversity by casting it as a more innocuous historical contrast of old and new. Yet even as traditionalism takes the edge off these differences, it encourages their per-

petuation because, as Bestor shows, it is an idiom equally useful to the local notables for laying claim to some measure of what Bourdieu would call "distinction." The clash of lifestyles, the rivalry for local status, the rifts between generations—all insure that life in these neighborhoods continues to be a product as much of contest as of cooperation.

The senior male employees of Kondo's confectionery company offer a related example (134). They saw themselves as traditional artisans, and understood "artisanry" as a life commitment to diligence and hard work, seeking the craftman's oneness of natural materials, tools, and product. However, such ethical-aesthetic verities have been shaped by—and have shaped—a contentious labor history that has rendered this an "interested" and increasingly precarious work identity in New Middle Class Japan.

Thus in the end it would be misleading to exaggerate the field of choices within which live Kondo's artisans, Bestor's shopkeepers, Rohlen's students, Imamura's housewives, and the rest of the postwar Japanese. There is much in their lives that works against questioning and towards acceptance. Like ideologies and institutions everywhere, those of postwar Japan "normalize," in two senses. It is the thrust of ideological representation both to generalize and to naturalize; to claim for specific interests a natural universality. And the power of institutions is the power to normalize in the twin senses of idealizing and routinizing certain patterns of conduct. Much of the anthropology of postwar Japan may be read for the ways its ideologies and institutions have entailed distinctions that have reproduced and legitimated social differences, albeit in new forms.

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