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Cultural Diversity and Folklore Studies in Japan

A Multiculturalist Approach

Abstract

Under the heavy influence of the ideology of the nation-state, Japanese folklore studies has been largely incapable of examining the cultural diversity that exists within the Japanese archipelago. There have been some exceptions, but even then the research has suffered from problems of cultural essentialism, of taking the concept of “Japan” as axiomatic, stopping at the level of independent research, or lacking synthesis or theorization. “Multiculturalist folklore studies” is a reconfiguration that attempts to overcome these problems, and to raise research on cultural diversity in folklore studies to the level of a methodological system. This is a new folklore studies paradigm that, in treating folk tradition as human culture, attends to universal differences associated with class, region, gender, and individuality, and aims to achieve the kind of analysis that fully considers the politicality of culture. This development is anticipated as a folklore studies paradigm that is suitable for a new era in which the nation-state is relativized—a so-called “New Middle Age” society—and that is attuned to the social conditions of this era.

Keywords: multiculturalist folklore studies—critical multiculturalism—post-nation-state—cultural studies—new Middle Ages

IT IS BECOMING increasingly accepted within the academic realm that such categories as “pure races,” “pure ethnic groups,” and “pure cultures” do not exist anywhere in the world.* Of course, Japan is no exception. In comparing Japan with other societies, it is possible, perhaps, to point out differences as matters of degree. It cannot be denied, however, that, from past to present, Japan has come into being as a multicultural society through the complex interaction of various cultures (KASAI 1998).

In spite of this reality, there still exists in contemporary Japanese society a widespread belief in a pure-blooded, essentialistic nationalism that fails to acknowledge the cultural diversity that has actually developed. One representative expression is the ideology of Japan as a racially homogeneous nation.¹ This kind of ideology is manifest not only in the everyday sentiments of the general public, but also perhaps in the minds of some researchers. For example, within the vast accumulation of *Nihon bunkaron* 日本文化論 (theories relating to the essence of Japanese culture), not a few have been myths created by researchers under the influence of such an ideology (BEFU 1990; SUGIMOTO, MOUER 1995; YOSHINO 1997).

How, then, has the discipline of folklore studies, which maintains a close relationship to *Nihon bunkaron*, treated cultural diversity within the Japanese archipelago? In this article I examine the problem through a historical analysis of previous research. I then present my own opinions on future orientations and issues to be addressed in folklore studies.

SCOPE AND PROBLEM OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY

1. From “Mountain People” to “Rice Cultivation Monism”

It was Yanagita Kunio (1875–1962) who systematized folklore studies in Japan. Yanagita’s academic career may be divided into three periods: the beginning, the foundational period, and the later years (FUKUTA 2000). It was the research he conducted in the beginning that primarily addressed the issue of cultural diversity in Japan. His major works during this early period

include essays on the “mountain people” (*sanjin* 山人) (YANAGITA 1911–1912, YANAGITA 1913a) and research relating to wandering religious practitioners (*hyōhaku shūkyōsha* 漂泊宗教者) and discriminated villagers (*hisabetsu burakumin* 被差別部落民) (YANAGITA 1913–1914, 1914–1915, 1913b).

“Mountain people” were those who lived in the mountains and made their living through activities such as hunting and swidden cultivation. Wandering religious practitioners, such as *miko* 巫女 (female shamans) and *kebōzu* 毛坊主 (temporary priests), went around the villages conducting religious activities. Discriminated villagers were groups of people who were placed in a discriminatory position in the early modern status system. They were involved in such occupations as butchering animals, making leather products, and the performing arts. Yanagita speculated that these were all descendants of an aboriginal people having an ethnic background that was distinct from the people of the lowland plains, and he developed theories about their respective histories and lifestyles.

However, during the foundational phase of his academic career (from the late 1920s to the mid-1930s), Yanagita’s interest in these various groups of people was displaced, and his major research interests shifted to the realm of the *teijū inasaku nōkōmin* 定住稲作農耕民—people who resided permanently in one place and engaged in rice cultivation (TANIGAWA 1987, AKASAKA 1994, NAGAIKE 1989). This work can be described as a kind of monolithic folklore, known as *inasaku ichigenron* 稲作一元論 (rice cultivation monism), that focused on settled rice cultivators. Moreover, during this period, Yanagita proposed his own methodology of cross-verification (*jūshutsu risshō hō* 重出立証法) and concentric theory (*shūken ron* 周圍論), and attempted to systematize the discipline of folklore studies (YANAGITA 1930, 1935). This methodology was also constructed on the premise that the culture of the Japanese archipelago was enveloped in a homogeneous rice cultivating tradition.

Jūshutsu risshō hō is a method which attempts “to clarify the processes of transformation of folk phenomena by collecting and categorizing relevant cases of a particular phenomenon from all over the country and examining their differences and similarities as well as their geographic distribution” (SANO 1999). *Shūken ron* is a hypothesis suggesting that, in a series of concentric circles representing the geographical distribution of a specific folk phenomenon around its point of origin, “the more peripheral the location of the folk phenomenon, the older the form it retains” (SANO 2000). Both concepts are based on the logic that the various phenomena in question derive from “one original” form that later fragmented, and thus by collecting and overlaying the fragmented remains, the “one original” form can be recovered. Needless to say, the cultures of people not recognized as having derived

from the “one original” group (that is, “the Japanese” as “*teijū inasaku nōkōmin*”) did not enter into the argument.

Several attempts have been made to explain why Yanagita inclined toward “rice cultivation monism.” One possibility is that, in researching the “mountain people” (who were classified as a “different ethnic group” or an “indigenous people”), Yanagita, at that time employed as a government official in imperial Japan, was trying to contribute to the development of colonial policies in Taiwan and the Korean Peninsula. However, due to the March First Movement in Korea, Yanagita’s research encountered a political setback by being denied a practical application. This became a turning point and his study of “mountain people” was abandoned (MURAI 1992). Another possibility is that, through firsthand exposure to the desperate conditions of villages stricken by world crisis, Yanagita began to focus on the pressing question of “why farmers (read ‘rice cultivators’) languish in poverty” (FUKUTA 2000).

It is difficult to determine Yanagita’s real intentions. It is clear, however, that during the middle phase of his academic career, when he established his own particular approach to folklore studies, his central focus moved away from any serious consideration of cultural diversity. Thus during the foundational stage of his career, Yanagita failed to realize the potential inherent in his early academic work—establishing the kind of folklore studies discipline that attends to cultural diversity.

In his later academic years (the late 1940s), expanding upon the systematization of his approach begun during the formative period, Yanagita seemed more inclined to search for the identity of “the Japanese,” imagined as a homogeneous people (FUKUTA 2000, 28–32).² Needless to say, his concept of “Japan” at the time made no allowance for heterogeneous others. It becomes difficult at this point to locate Yanagita’s perspective on cultural diversity.

The problem of Yanagita’s frame of reference following the formative period is not confined to Yanagita alone; most of the folklorists who succeeded him accepted his paradigm as self-evident truth and proceeded to occupy themselves with specific issues within it.³ Few bothered to question the nature of the paradigm itself “Rice cultivation monism,” too, was uncritically accepted by many folklore scholars.

This does not mean, however, that cultural diversity went completely unrecognized in folklore research. Though their numbers were small, and philosophical and theoretical problems divided them, some folklore studies did address the issue of cultural diversity. These rather exceptional studies will be critically examined in the following section.

2. Kodai Kenkyū (*“Antiquarian Studies”*)

Orikuchi Shinobu (1887–1953), whose stature as a folklorist rivals that of Yanagita Kunio, conducted his research by relating classical literature to the ethnographic data, an approach he referred to as *kodai kenkyū* 古代研究 (“antiquarian studies”). He made many scholarly contributions, especially on the subject of religious festivals and performing arts.

From beginning to end, Orikuchi’s folklore focused on the issue of cultural diversity. He dealt mainly with wandering religious practitioners and artists, referred to as *ukarebito*, and *hokaibito*, as well as with the social outcasts in medieval and modern times called *gorotsuki* and *hisabetsu burakumin*. Orikuchi’s folklore was in direct opposition to the monolithic ethnology of Yanagita’s later career, which focused only on sedentary rice cultivators. In seeking to explain this scholarly orientation, SUZUKI (1991, 167) suggests that Orikuchi spent his early childhood and youth in the downtown area of Osaka, where people were “constantly aware of the existence of discriminated villagers,” and that this became a major influence on his personality and thinking.⁴

Even so, though Orikuchi’s folklore maintains a perspective on cultural diversity, it presents an inherent theoretical problem in that it relies excessively on religious explanations and tends toward essentialism. The origin and character of various cultural elements are deductively attributed to belief in *kami* (deities) and *ikyō* 異郷 (the world of the deities). Some of his arguments deductively explain that the elementary forms of wandering performers and outcasts can be found in some ancient *marebito*, spirits or deities who periodically visit humans from another world.⁵ Although the credibility of these arguments cannot be totally denied, it is also necessary to examine related social attributes, which may not be fully explained by reference to religious elements alone. Orikuchi’s position suggests that cultural diversity essentially derives from the existence of *kami* and *ikyō*, and he often develops such an argument. This kind of explanation by itself is insufficient for fully understanding actual social dynamics.

If “essentialism” is understood as the belief in some cultural core or essence that persists over time regardless of superficial changes, this is exactly the tone of Orikuchi’s arguments. He asserts, for example, that although “knowledge of the past” can be changed and forgotten, “such a thing unexpectedly reappears in people’s minds,” and that “once a phenomenon appears in a folk culture, it can be expected to reappear” (ORIKUCHI 1934, 489–90). Consider also the following observation:

Ten years ago, while traveling through Kumano, I found myself standing at the edge of Cape Daiō, which jutted out to the brilliant afternoon

ocean. I could not help but feel that our spiritual home lay far out at sea. Even now, I cannot dismiss that feeling as the sentimental reaction of an amateur poet. Was not that feeling a sudden reappearance of the nostalgic heritage that once leapt through the breasts of our ancestors?" (ORIKUCHI 1920, 5)

What these statements suggest is that "even if it emerges only now and then, 'antiquity' persists forever in the soul of an ethnic group; it is thus a presence that transcends history" (ITŌ 1988, 316). This is pure essentialism. The problem with essentialism is that it privileges what researchers consider to be intrinsic qualities on the one hand over what they consider to be superficial phenomena on the other; thus it cannot grasp the complex cultural dynamism that actually exists. "Cultures" are, after all, constructed. In the present day, as the notion of intrinsic "cultures" is coming to be recognized as an unverifiable myth, it is necessary to subject Orikuchi's theories to critical scrutiny.

3. *Stratified Pluralism*

Attention to cultural diversity in Japan can also be found in the work of Akamatsu Keisuke (1909–2000). Akamatsu was a Marxist researcher who distanced himself from mainstream academia throughout his lifetime. From this perspective, he strongly criticizes the fact that "ethnological studies of ordinary people" are really tools for ensuring the success of academic cliques and careers. By contrast, he asserts that his own approach takes up the folk customs of groups of people at the bottom of the social hierarchy, discovers the importance of these people as fellow human beings, and thereby reveals a new system of thought" (AKAMATSU 1995, 100–101).

For example, in his fieldwork in places like downtown Osaka he participates in the lives of the residents in the impoverished areas called *nagaya* 長屋 (houses partitioned into several units), factory workers, servants of merchants, criminals, and people who are attracted to newly-developing religious groups. Akamatsu refers to these groups of people collectively as *hijōmin* 非常民 (non-ordinary people). His work reveals evidence of cultural diversity based on a stratified class system (IWATA 1998, 14). The scope of cultural diversity can surely be seen in this.

Even so, his own research has been criticized for generating little more than descriptions and discussions of various research techniques; it has not been fully developed into a systematic methodology (FUKUTA 1990, 159). Another problem is that Akamatsu seems intent on relating his detailed observations of contemporary society back to the culture of the Jōmon period (from about 300 BCE to 300 CE). He claims that "the free-wheeling sexual

customs that remain in impoverished neighborhoods” are “an eruption of the sexual relations of the Jōmon period, which is the basis of our culture” (AKAMATSU 1991, 488–90). Such a claim is based on dubious and unsubstantiated historical reductionism and essentialism, and is subject to strong critique.

Yet, in terms of fieldwork, nothing has yet surpassed Akamatsu’s descriptive studies of actual events and conditions. Nor have any other folklorists after Akamatsu undertaken a critical examination of the majority by incorporating the perspectives of the people further down in the social hierarchy.

4. *Itinerant Fishermen*

Until the 1950s, there were groups of fishermen who lived on their boats and did not have permanent residence on land. Nowadays, however, they are adopting fixed places of residence in increasing numbers. Noguchi Takenori (1933–1986) conducted intensive fieldwork among these so-called itinerant fishermen (*hyōhaku gyomin* 漂泊漁民) who lived on houseboats (*efune* 家船) in the Nishisonogi region of Kyushu, and later in the city of Itoman in Okinawa. His work, too, draws attention to the diversity of folk cultures in Japan. On these houseboats, for example:

Expressions of politeness are few. Therefore, people do not know how to use such expressions, or, if they use them, they do so improperly. When they stay at farmers’ or ship carpenters’ houses, they may wake up suddenly, claiming that they are scared by the ceiling. They do not put toilets in their houses after they settle down on the land. When they work as housemaids, they hate cleaning up rooms, and all quit their jobs in a few days and return to their homes. They go around barefooted. They fear rice paddies.” (NOGUCHI 1987, 139)

Noguchi claims that these fishermen are characterized by patterns of behavior that are distinguishable from those of settled farmers. He also states that, by pointing out these behaviors, the “ordinary people” around them engage in discrimination (NOGUCHI 1987).

Yet, in discussing such groups of people, Noguchi suggests that “it is among minority groups such as itinerant people and social outcasts that the essence of Japanese culture can be found. Whatever the case, these groups of people must at least be considered important participants in Japanese culture.” He also claims that “it is an undeniable fact that both the *efune* fishermen in Kyushu and the Itoman fishermen in Okinawa belong to the Japanese cultural area” (NOGUCHI 1987, 16). These statements suggest that

Noguchi considers “Japanese culture” to be a self-evident reality, and that he refrains from a critical examination of essentialistic approaches. While he devotes some attention to cultural diversity in Japan, the problem with Noguchi’s works is that they tend to lump this diversity together into “Japanese culture.”

In addition, the assimilationist tendency of Noguchi’s arguments needs to be critiqued. He compares *efune* fishermen with Itoman fishermen and examines the different degrees of discrimination against them from the surrounding communities. He claims that the interactions between the fishermen and the “local people” proceed far more smoothly in Itoman than on the *efune*. He asserts that in order to explain this difference it is necessary to consider “social, historical, and economic relationships, as well as similarities and differences in the culture (or lifestyle) of the fishermen versus that of the people in the surrounding community.” He also maintains that “internal problems of new settlers (such as their attitudes) need to be considered as contributing factors.” More specifically, in their behavior toward relatives, Itoman fishermen conduct themselves according to the logic of the communities in which they are settled. They do not display conspicuous ties to Itoman as their native place. They do not bring their own annual observances into their new residential areas, and they try to learn and use the local language. By contrast, he claims that these “efforts and attitudes cannot be found among *efune* fishermen,” and that this is one of the factors that accounts for the differing degree of discrimination against them (NOGUCHI 1987, 283–84). He further asserts that this is also applicable to “Japanese emigration in modern times” and that “most Japanese exhibit an attitude that is similar to the *efune* case.” He claims that learning from Itoman fishermen and reflecting upon ourselves holds “the key for Japanese emigrants in the future in adapting smoothly to different cultures” (NOGUCHI 1987, 287). These claims are based on thinking that encourages assimilation only from one group of people when different cultures come into contact. This is not acceptable from the viewpoint of multicultural studies.

5. Hatasaku (*dry-field farming*) Culture and Folk Culture Pluralism

Next, let us look at the research of Tsuboi Hirofumi (1929–1988), who asserts “the pluralism of Japanese culture.” Under the influence of ethnologist Oka Masao’s *shuzoku bunka fukugōron* 種族文化複合論 (theory of Japan as a multi-ethnic conglomerate, OKA 1979), he proposes *hataşaku bunkaron* 畑作文化論 (theory of dry-field farming culture) by examining *mochi nashi shōgatsu* 餅なし正月, the tradition of people who do not eat *mochi* 餅 (glutinous rice cakes) during the New Year holiday (TSUBOI 1979). As members of units such as household, family, or village, people who maintain this tra-

dition do not make rice cakes even on New Year's Day. They do not offer rice cakes to the deities, nor do they eat them themselves. Tsuboi's argument regarding *mochi nashi shōgatsu* can be summarized in two basic points: (1) This tradition originated from among slash-and-burn cultivators, whose main crops were root vegetables and cereal grains other than rice; it does not belong to and is different from the culture of rice cultivators; (2) "Japanese culture" does not consist only of the tradition of rice cultivation. The tradition of slash-and-burn cultivators is also an important component (TSUBOI 1979, 1982).

Later in his career, to these two cultural groups ("the world of rice cultivators" and "the world of slash-and-burn farmers"), Tsuboi added "the world of fishermen" and "the world of city dwellers." He thus ended up claiming that culture in Japan consisted of these four component groups, and on this basis proposed a theory of *Nihon minzoku no tagensei* 日本民俗の多元性 (Japanese folk culture pluralism, Tsuboi 1986).

Within Japanese folklore studies after Yanagita, the clear assertion of Japanese cultural pluralism can finally be seen in Tsuboi's studies. Yet, examined from today's point of view, his arguments hold many problems.

For example, while he recognizes cultural pluralism, he ends up assuming the existence of a single Japanese culture and does not fully examine diverse cultures within Japan. Tsuboi supposes that a culture is derived from a single origin and considers "cultural pluralism" as the conglomeration of these derivatives. Yet, to consider any culture as a single, homogeneous, organic whole is itself deductive and empirically undemonstrable. As Sakai Naoki maintains, in conceptions of cultural pluralism, including Tsuboi's, "it makes no difference whether one refers to language or culture in terms of singular or plural, so long as one persists in seeing these concepts as collections of component units. It only means the one has become many" (SAKAI 1996, 140). In the arguments of Tsuboi and others on cultural pluralism "because the principle of monism remains as one of the structural elements, there is assumed to be an organic entity, such as 'the language,' 'the people,' and 'the culture' which consists of several distinctive units having a single origin" (SAKAI 1996, 278).

In addition, Tsuboi fails to disentangle himself from essentialistic ideas. For example, while examining cultural diversity, he states that the aim of folklore studies is "to investigate the intrinsic qualities of the culture of the ethnic Japanese" (TSUBOI 1986, 15). He does not critically examine the concepts, "the culture of the ethnic Japanese" and "the folk world of the Japanese." He claims that "Japanese culture" is composed not of one but of several elements. Yet, whether he refers to singular or plural expressions of these elements, he retains the concepts of "the Japanese," "the Japanese lan-

guage,” and “Japanese culture;” they are “the bases of empirical examination, and, logically speaking, already assumed to exist” (SAKAI 1996, 136). This, too, is a limitation in Tsuboi’s arguments.

6. *East and West*

Studies of regional differences in terms of east and west within the Japanese archipelago also underscore the cultural diversity of Japanese society. Miyamoto Tsune’ichi (1907–1981) provides several examples of these differences: *irori* (hearths) in the east versus *kamado* (kitchen ranges) in the west, use of horses in the east versus cows in the west, and carrying baskets in the east versus carrying poles in the West. He also examined the nature of *ie* 家 (household) and *mura* 村 (villages), concluding that the east can be characterized in terms of a patriarchal society centered on the *ie*, and the west as a matrilineal society centered around the *mura* (MIYAMOTO, ŌNO et al. 1981).

There are also many sociological and social anthropological studies of different types of villages and households, which empirically and closely examine regional differences in Japan (FUKUTAKE 1949, GAMŌ 1960, UENO 1992). Based on a critical examination of these studies, Fukuta offers an ethnological argument for distinguishing east and west (FUKUTA 1984b, 1997). There are also studies of folk religions that investigate the structural differences between the two regions (MIYAMOTO ed. 1992). Comprehensive, collaborative studies on regional differences have been published as well (KOKURITSU REKISHI MINZOKU HAKUBUTSUKAN 1992, 1993). Thus a fair number of studies have addressed this theme.

Yet, it is the research of AMINO Yoshihiko (1982, 2000) that goes furthest in deconstructing the methodological and ideological concept of “Japanese culture.” He is influenced by Miyamoto and expands upon Miyamoto’s work by following a historical approach.

Amino reexamines “the Japanese” by incorporating “women,” “non-farmers,” and “the sea” into existing arguments about east and west. He claims that “there were sufficient differences in cultural, linguistic, and other practices that, under the right circumstances, might have rendered eastern Japan and western Japan into distinct ethnic groups (AMINO 1982, 126). He also thoroughly deconstructs various examples of “common knowledge” and “myths” relating to the self-recognition of “the Japanese.” The arguments are meant to serve as “a recapitulation of the thirteen-hundred-year history of ‘the Japanese nation.’” As a natural consequence, he declares his disobedience to the Japanese national flag and the national anthem (AMINO 2000, 8–28).

Are highly critical arguments such as Amino’s, which aim to deconstruct Japanese nationality, found among folklore studies on the regional dif-

ferences between east and west? The answer is no. While these studies make some progress in terms of data collection at the empirical level, they fail to extend this into an effective multicultural paradigm. This is a task left for the future.

7. *Regional Folklore Studies and the Independent Analysis Method*

Regional folklore studies also attends to cultural diversity in Japan. It was proposed by Yamaguchi Asatarō (1891–1987) before the Second World War and was later expanded by Miyata Noboru and Fukuta Ajio in the 1970s. Two years after the publication of *Sanson seikatsu no kenkyū* 山村生活の研究 (Studies of the lives of people in the mountains) in 1937 (YANAGITA ed. 1937), Yamaguchi, an independent folklorist working on an island near Nagasaki, contributed an article to the journal *Minjū denshō* (Folk Tradition; YAMAGUCHI 1939, 8) in which he makes the following assertion:

Each phenomenon of village life is isolated from the actual experiences of villagers and its value as data determined without the consideration of village character. Folk phenomena are placed in the test tubes of research institutes, away from the locus of village life. [Instead I propose] something called regional folklore studies [which] considers the character of individual villages and examines the data according to village life.

After the Second World War, Yamaguchi presented his critique to Wakamori Tarō, who had claimed that people throughout the Japanese archipelago “originally had lifestyles that were similar to the general Japanese,” yet through historical development, regional differences came into being (WAKAMORI 1949, 4–5). Yamaguchi responded by saying, “at any-time in the past, it is impossible to find that people, as Japanese in general, had more similar ways of living than at present” (YAMAGUCHI 1949, 17).

Yet Yamaguchi’s arguments have limitations. While he claims that cultural diversity can be recognized in the regional differences of folk cultures, he assumes the rigid framework of an “original Japan” and the existence of a single racial and ethnic group comprising the Japanese. For example, he says that “to understand all regions is to apprehend the life of the original Japanese,” and “although the inhabitants of the Japanese archipelago are racially and ethnically homogeneous, it is obvious that its culture received influences from the south, the Korean Peninsula, and the north” (YAMAGUCHI 1949, 17).

Claims similar to Yamaguchi’s appear in the works of Miyata Noboru (1936–2000) and Fukuta Ajio—more specifically, in Miyata’s regional folklore studies and Fukuta’s independent analysis method. Regional folklore

studies “aims to analyze folk cultures within a bounded local society” by “completing monographs of village communities and incorporating and describing various types of folk cultures,” and “[it] clarifies the outlines of the localities and analyzes the patterns of folk cultures” (MIYATA 1974, 231). The independent analysis method “investigates folk cultures in the areas where they develop and clarifies the significance and historical character of these folk cultures within their specific locations” (FUKUTA 1984a, 175).

The development of these arguments was influenced by the functionalism of social anthropology and additional research on local history. Yet regional folklore studies and the independent analysis method were proposed to overcome the problems of Yanagita’s cross-verification method and concentric circle theory, and provided some insight into the realm of Japanese folklore studies at the time.

However, these arguments were not fully elaborated by later scholars. While “the new orientations that are characterized as ‘regional folklore studies’ suggest the independence of the ‘post-Yanagita’ generation, it is questionable how much ‘contribution’ they make beyond writing for the ‘folk culture’ sections of ‘local community histories’ that are continuously being proposed” (ŌTSUKI 1992, 164).

Originally, regional folklore studies had to do with multicultural studies rather than focusing simply on a particular “region.” This should be an exciting and attractive field of study because of its possible linkage to broader issues such as the deconstruction of national identity. Yet, so far, this has not been the case. The primary reason is that many researchers consider regional folklore studies a method of analysis and description of folk cultures, so they do not seriously examine its ideological implications.

8. Hisabetsu buraku (*discriminated villages*)

Due to the discrimination they face and the poverty surrounding them, the *hisabetsu buraku* may be seen to have developed a distinct sense of community along with their own autonomous cultures. Studies of these villages further demonstrate the cultural diversity of Japan. Although folklore studies of *hisabetsu buraku* were stagnant following Yanagita’s research in the 1910s, several investigations have been conducted since his death.

MIYATA Noboru (1977), for example, examines historical documents handed down within the discriminated villages and extracts from them a cosmology of death and rebirth held by the people who live there. Yet, his approach is based on structural analysis of historical documents and does not involve fieldwork on the actual lives of the discriminated villagers themselves.

During the 1980s, however, research was conducted using actual fieldwork, resulting in a considerable number of published works (NAGANO-KEN

DŌWA KYŌIKU SUISHIN KYŌGIKAI 1982; NAKAMURA, TSUBOI, TADA 1992; BURAKU KAIHŌ DŌMEI TOCHIGI-KEN RENGŌKAI DŌ JOSEIBU 1995; BURAKU KAIHŌ KENKYŪJO 1995). These studies focus primarily on villages in agricultural districts, and their methodological approach consists of using standard interviews of the type previously developed in other regions to gather data on subsistence, social organization, religious beliefs, annual observances, and rites of passage. They are still intended primarily to document folk techniques and performing arts that are fading away. The effort to grasp the totality of contemporary cultural developments within the context of social change is left as a topic for future research.

It is important now to examine large-scale *hisabetsu buraku* in cities, such as the ones in western Japan that are referred to as *sandai buraku* 三大部落 (the three largest *hisabetsu buraku*), and not only to follow the established framework of traditional folklore studies but also to pay attention to contemporary situations. In spite of the fact that in *hisabetsu buraku* there are various interactions and conflicts with other minority groups, such as *zainichi* Koreans (Korean nationals residing in Japan), few studies have focused on these issues. The future calls for a more dynamic research investigation that incorporates relationships with other minorities.

9. Multiple Japans

The theory of *ikutsumo no Nihon* (multiple Japans) proposed by Akasaka Norio in the late 1990s also addresses the cultural diversity of Japan. Through a careful reading of Yanagita's works, Akasaka recognized the potential for folklore studies inherent in Yanagita's "mountain people" work. As a concrete application of the perspective he found there, Akasaka sets out to rediscover the culture that existed in the Tōhoku region (northeastern Japan) prior to the appearance of rice cultivation. Akasaka calls his approach "*Tōhokugaku*" 東北学 (northeastern Japan studies), and through the folk culture of Tōhoku attempts to explore the various cultures of the Japanese archipelago (AKASAKA 1998, 1999, 2000).

Yet there are many problems in Akasaka's arguments, as is apparent in the following excerpts:

The history of slash-and-burn agriculture started before the spread of rice-cultivation. People actually used this farming method in the Jōmon era. *Kano*, the land made arable by the slash-and-burn method, clearly provides an important clue for investigating the rich cultural basis of Tōhoku (AKASAKA 1999, 47).

While visiting the mountain villages, I frequently encountered scenes

that were reminiscent of the Jōmon period. I felt that the most vivid traces of Jōmon, for example, were to be found in the tool-making techniques that employed tree bark and vines, and that even now are passed on to people as a means of livelihood (AKASAKA 1999, 439).

The problem here is that Akasaka conveys a sense of direct continuity between cultural phenomena found in contemporary Tōhoku and those of the remote Jōmon era.

In addition, the fact that Akasaka does not use the phrase *musū no bunka* 無数の文化 (“numberless cultures”) but instead uses the term *ikutsumo no Nihon* (multiple Japans) to describe cultural diversity in Japan can be criticized. To be sure, the term *ikutsumo no Nihon* can be used as a catch phrase for a popular audience. However, there is a concern that repeating the word *Nihon* (Japan) may contribute toward reifying this concept. For example, he says, “the country called *Nihon* and the people who are Japanese, are invited to be involved in the continuous process of trial and error to make their own portrait.” Does not what he describes as the desire for their self-portrait also contribute to making the concept of *Nihon* real? Are not readers likely to accept these phrases as established fact, leading to a situation in which the concept of *Nihon* gets out of control? It is necessary to deconstruct the concept of culture thoroughly in examining multiculturalism.

In addition, in Akasaka’s theory of “multiple Japans,” there is no mention of Koreans and Chinese in Japan, of Japanese Brazilians and Japanese Vietnamese in Japan, nor of children of “mixed” ancestry who are born to these people and “Japanese.” Nor does he mention the residents of impoverished areas and the criminals that Akamatsu focused on. These people seem to be excluded from Akasaka’s arguments as if they were irrelevant.

Similar to Yanagita, who excluded the mountain dwellers and Ainu in systematizing his folklore studies, Akasaka excludes the aforementioned groups. Self-portraits of “the Japanese” and the country of “Japan” which treat these people as if they were non-existent are fairly distorted views.

In light of these problems, Akasaka’s theory of “multiple Japans” might be considered more like myth than academic research. Akasaka claims that the regions in which “multiple Japans” exist will become the loci of resistance to globalization (AKASAKA 2000, 198). Yet his theory ends up being a myth for challenging globalization or for comforting those who are defeated by the logic of globalization in which the weak are victims of the strong.

10. *Nihon Minzoku Daijiten (The Dictionary of Japanese Folklore)*

In 1999, for the first time in thirty years in Japanese folklore studies, a dictionary of folklore studies was published. This dictionary contains more

than six thousand headings. Although there are several notable characteristics of this dictionary, one in particular is that it aims to be a book for “folklore studies on the Japanese archipelago beyond the limit of traditional Japanese folklore studies.” It establishes its headings to include “folk cultures of the Ainu” and “resident Koreans and Chinese” so that it “can be a reference book for understanding the diverse folk cultures of the Japanese islands (FUKUTA et al., eds. 1999, 1–3). In fact, this dictionary addresses several issues such as *zainichi gaiokujin* 在日外国人 (foreigners who reside in Japan) that are not taken up by traditional folklore studies at all.

In explaining the arrangement of subject headings, the introduction to the book describes folklore studies as “a discipline that is based on the understanding that our culture exists not as a single but as a variety of forms, and that this understanding of cultural diversity lies at the base of this discipline.” While “in the process of this discipline’s development, the emphasis was placed on folklore studies in Japan being a national ethnology based on the unit of the ethnic group,” “contemporary folklore studies abandons such a rigid framework. It studies folk customs on the one hand at the level of local societies, which are the units of people’s everyday lives, and on the other hand from a wider perspective beyond the level of country and ethnicity” (FUKUTA et al., eds. 1999, 1–2).

These citations provide valuable insights into the orientation of future folklore studies. Yet there are several problems to be pointed out. First, there needs to be a more thorough review of whether contemporary folklore studies fully renounces the rigid conventional framework as the introduction claims. Although the explanation in the introduction seems to claim that the disciplinary emphasis of “the national ethnology” was a transient phenomenon, it is questionable whether this is in fact the case. In folklore studies journals and annual meetings there are many folklorists who still present their studies within the framework of “the national ethnology.” Folklorists’ involvement can also be found in nationalistic administrative policies on the protection of cultural assets.⁶ What the introduction says is still an idealistic argument. There needs to be critical examination of the present situation of folklore studies.

Although this book includes headings on the lives of foreigners who reside in Japan,⁷ these descriptions are just added to the overwhelming number of headings on *Nihonjin* 日本人 (the Japanese). The book does not consider these “others” within their descriptions about *Nihonjin* and their lives, nor does it attempt to reexamine the concept of *Nihonjin* itself.

Consider, for example, the following statement under the heading of *Nihonjin*:

Their [the Japanese] ethnic character is based on that of farming people. In principle, they have established communities based on permanent residence and have lived harmoniously with each other. Likewise, within their families, people were required to help each other for irrigation and farming.... That this national character stems from the farming lifestyle is clearly seen in their contemporary society (HAMAGUCHI 2000, 281).

This is nothing but *Nihon bunkaron*. There is little consideration of cultural diversity and no attempt to deconstruct *Nihonjin*. To begin with, it does not include gender issues and the perspectives of non-agriculturists. No matter how often it attests to the importance of cultural diversity in its introduction, the book fails to challenge the notion of majority that so obviously prevails thereafter.⁸

So far this article has provided an overview of the developing focus on cultural diversity within Japanese folklore studies. It suggests that while Japanese cultural diversity has received increasing attention within the discipline, research up to the present has suffered from various problems. These problems may be summarized as follows:

1. The meanings of concepts such as *Nihon*, *Nihon bunka*, *Nihonjin*, and *minzoku* 民族 (ethnic group) have not been critically examined. Some arguments even contribute to reifying these concepts.
2. Some arguments derive from cultural essentialism and others from non-empirical historical reductionism.
3. Some arguments are based on an assimilationist view of other cultures.
4. Some researchers understand cultural diversity as the organic conglomeration of cultures that derive from a single origin.
5. No analysis has been directed at the complex relationships among minorities and other cultural groups.
6. Some arguments end up simply appending minorities, without critically examining the concept of majority.
7. There are no cross-references among the various studies and no efforts to develop an encompassing methodology.

The challenge now for folklore studies in addressing cultural diversity is to overcome these problems.

2. TOWARD A MULTICULTURALIST FOLKLORE STUDIES

1. *Definition*

Considering the history of previous studies and the tasks that are left for future research, what would a cultural diversity-related folklore studies entail? In this section, I will delineate a new paradigm called “multiculturalist folklore studies,” which can be defined as follows:

Multiculturalist folklore studies, which seeks to understand contemporary society through its affinity with “tradition,” is based on a new paradigm that thoroughly attends to the politics of difference associated with gender, class, group affiliation, region, individuality, or any other factor, and to the various relationships among such differences. This paradigm challenges the reification, institutionalization, and essentialization of “culture” or any other kind of categorical boundary, and is premised on the indiscriminate deconstruction of all ideology (including whatever the paradigm itself may engender).

In coining a name for this new approach, I choose to incorporate the term “multicultural.” In this context, “multicultural” basically suggests an attitude and a way of thinking that accepts diverse ways of life and cultural differences. Yet this does not mean the same as “cultural pluralism,” “liberal multiculturalism,”¹⁰ or “corporate multiculturalism,”¹¹ much less “symbolic multiculturalism.”¹² Multiculturalism here refers to “an approach that tries to recover and spread the revolutionary significance that the concept of ‘multiculturalism’ had originally, while it also implies the danger that this concept can be manipulated in order to maintain current institutional orders such as nation, capital, and patriarchy” (YONEYAMA 1998, 50). The term multiculturalism is based on this kind of “critical multiculturalism.” In addition, I emphasize that the folklore studies it informs does not view a “culture” as a “unified organic whole.”

Among the various discussions on multiculturalism, one of the concerns that is discussed is that multiculturalism may see a “culture” as a fixed and real entity. To be sure, as MORRIS-SUZUKI (1996, 45) claims, the concept of “a culture” was invented by nineteenth-century anthropologists and was based on a static and unchanging model. As SAKAI (1996) states, it was based on a view that sees “a culture as an organic whole.”

These criticisms of the concept of “culture” have their validity. Yet, it is questionable that these criticisms negate the broadest interpretation of a “culture.” That is a “culture” is “the whole of human activity” and “in principle, it does not necessarily have a coherence to individual people” (KAWADA 2000, 497).

In addition, there are scholars who respond to these criticisms by using the adjective “cultural” instead of the noun “culture.” From the viewpoint of non-essentialism, Tai Eika astutely observes that “we should explore the possibility of a multiculturalism that accepts diverse ‘cultural’ differences instead of various differences among ‘cultures’” (TAI 1999, 60). I use the term “multiculturalism” in this sense.

2. *Subjects of study*

Let us examine the kind of topic that multiculturalist folklore studies explores. There is no limit on the subject of the study in this discipline, because multiculturalist folklore is defined by its perspectives rather than its subject matter. In addition, as stated earlier, cultures that are studied in this discipline are not fixed organic entities.

While it is necessary to create a name to clarify the area of study, the act of naming involves power relations (NAWA 1992; CHUNG 1996). Names should be used under limited circumstances for the description of particular objects; they are no longer appropriate if they come to be used apart from their referents. In addition, the act of naming should not confer reality upon the referents as a category.

Based on this understanding, examples of topics that multiculturalist folklore studies might address include those that have been touched on in previous research, such as “dry-field farmers,” “hunters,” “fishermen,” “people without permanent residences,” “regions,” and “performing artists.” In addition, it also includes gender issues, *hisabetsu buraku*, “*zainichi* Koreans, Chinese and other recent foreign residents,” “Japanese emigrants,” “people who cross national borders,” and “‘Japanese’ cultural phenomena in foreign countries.” Again, none of these should be taken as fixed entities; they are merely images to which names are attached. There can be subtopics depending on existing differences and boundaries. It is also natural that any given person will belong to several of these categories and that membership will fluctuate with the situation.

As long as there are differences and diversity, multicultural folklore studies explores these issues by paying full attention to cultural politics. Every issue that can be examined through this approach can be included within the discipline. The subjects of the discipline are in this sense unlimited.

In addition, it should be noted that, within this approach, it is insufficient to only examine individual cultural phenomena. Although individual case studies are important, they eventually should be examined holistically through various cross-references. The actual cases can be subdivided, but the problems that are examined through these cases should not be subdivided.

vided. The “holistic” approach is aimed at solving issues—such as the deconstruction of “modern” folklore studies. This approach itself may become the target of deconstruction. The holistic approach involves both constructive and deconstructive processes.

3. Relationship to Cultural Studies

Because the influence from cultural studies on this approach is undeniable, the relationships between multiculturalist folklore studies and cultural studies should be examined. There is a reason why the term multiculturalist folklore studies is specially used. It is difficult to define cultural studies, which originated in Britain, spread to the United States, and eventually crossed over to Japan in the late 1990s. Yet, “cultural studies” generally means “an approach that examines everyday cultural situations from the viewpoint of political relationships” (YOSHINO 1998, 60). The key concepts within cultural studies include “difference,” “class,” “ethnicity,” “nationalism,” “politics,” “media,” and “representation.” There are many overlaps between the subjects of cultural studies and those of multiculturalist folklore studies.

Although there may be relative differences between these two disciplines, in the case of folklore studies, problems are approached by thorough fieldwork and examination of dialogues and negotiations among actual people. (This does not mean that folklore studies naively claims that fieldwork is the best approach; it recognizes the importance of alternative approaches as well.) In contrast, the extent to which the importance of fieldwork is acknowledged within cultural studies is debatable and uncertain. To be sure, before the import of cultural studies to Japan, there were several notable researches in cultural studies that incorporated the results of competent fieldwork. One example is *Learning to Labour* by Paul Willis, which depicts an industrialized city in England (WILLIS 1996 [1977]). Yet many examples of cultural studies in and about Japan, where I conduct my own fieldwork, end up being arguments on the level of speculation, although they may provide some insights to others. Thus, for now, there seems no necessity to locate this new folklore studies approach within the discipline of cultural studies.

4. Relationship with Cultural Anthropology

It may be possible to identify a number of discrepancies between cultural anthropology, which focuses on “human cultures” or “other cultures,” and the kind of multiculturalist folklore studies described above. As for the distinction between cultural anthropology and folklore studies in general, the traditional view has been that folklore studies is confined to Japan, while

cultural anthropology is directed at overseas locations. Even now this is a commonly held opinion among those who specialize in neither of the two disciplines. It is not unusual in the present day, however, to find folklorists conducting research in Africa (SHINOHARA 1998) or cultural anthropologists studying Japan, making it impossible to divide the two fields into domestic and foreign. This does not mean, however, that they are one and the same, or that the differences between them are confined to their respective developmental histories. Distinctions also lie in the characteristic features of the two disciplines.

I myself tried to articulate these distinctive features and to redefine the parameters of each discipline (SHIMAMURA 1996), but was unable to precisely verbalize their respective qualities. In the meantime, SUZUKI Masataka's (1994) presentation of their essential differences is probably the most reliable to date.

Suzuki suggests that while cultural anthropology employs a theory of causality in pursuing correlative analyses, folklore studies looks for the aggregate of folk knowledge as a unified whole. In this respect, he suggests that the keywords that define the special character of folklore studies include "practice," "body," "sensation," "sensibility," "action," "intuition," "experience," "place," "skill," "language," and "expression." The aim is to express the various data in terms of these keywords, and thereby conceptualize and relate them, and by means of a newly-created terminology discover new links. This kind of operation relates also to "the acquisition of a viewpoint that relativizes and critiques ethnology (cultural anthropology) with its tendency to rely on outside theory" (SUZUKI 1994, 161).

So, as to the distinctive character of folklore studies, which was previously thought to surely exist but nevertheless remained vague and obscure, Suzuki's description seems to have precisely clarified the issue. But I would like to design the kind of multiculturalist folklore studies I have suggested (incorporating a thorough deconstruction of nation-state ideology as well as the conventional ideology of folklore studies) as a way of discovering the genealogy of this special character.

In any case, when investigating the cultural anthropology of the past from a critical multiculturalist perspective, it is possible to identify many problem areas—one obvious example being that it developed in conjunction with colonialism and orientalism. The concepts of "ethnic group" and "humankind" also have deep ideological roots, and it is generally possible to see within this type of approach the processes of cultural reification and fixation as well as cultural essentialism. A needed self-critique of these problem areas is presently proceeding, and the effort to generate a new paradigm is underway, so that the kind of cultural anthropology toward which this critique was directed is already becoming a thing of the past.¹³ The point, however, is

that for both folklore studies and cultural anthropology the conventional paradigm has serious problems from the perspective of critical multiculturalism, and I want to reaffirm that as long as the absorption of folklore studies into cultural anthropology that Ishida Ei'ichirō¹⁴ recommended refers to the old paradigm it has absolutely no value. In my opinion it is important that both folklore studies and cultural anthropology be reconfigured according to a critical multiculturalist paradigm so that the special qualities of each can be developed.

5. *Toppamono and the "New Middle Ages"*

Miyazaki Manabu's *Toppamono* 突破者 ("breakthrough people," MIYAZAKI 1998a, 1998b) traces the author's life up to the present, including his upbringing in the household of a yakuza boss. The book has been subject to criticism, but the first half includes a spot-on description of downtown Kyoto where the author spent his youth. Miyazaki was born in Kyoto's Fushimi Ward during the Second World War. His natal household belonged to the Teramura branch of the Kaitaiya gang, and since the Teramura followed basic yakuza structure, he engaged in rough cooperative living with other young men of the gang. "Many of these young men had been born in the discriminated villages or were resident Koreans," but had therefore acquired "a capacity for living and surviving by their wits, having started from scratch without depending on status or pedigree.... There was a convergence of spirit among comrades who had learned well the lesson that they had nothing to fall back on except their own resourcefulness and survival instincts.... It was confused and direct, and sometimes vulgar, but even so the interpersonal relationships were deep and warm." He describes the environment in which the young men were raised as "a dark and dirty, dead-end world, but because it was dead-ended there was also a nothing-to-lose kind of brightness" (MIYAZAKI 1998a: 41). Most notable, however, is his use of the word *toppa* 突破 (breakthrough), which he applies to a kind of personality that this environment engendered.

Toppa is applied to "a reckless, aggressive person," who "when his mind is made up, throws himself wholeheartedly into action." This has positive and negative implications. "Such a one-way attitude is blind to its surroundings, but by the same token it enables one to fight on without yielding. In short, the word describes the kind of person who rushes madly into things even though he himself may not know where he is headed. From the perspective of social comportment and rationality, human beings are not meant to become *toppa*. But, though few in number, there are those who succeed by "breaking through." That group, while belittling other people, acquire for themselves a kind of esteem. The term is used in the following ways:

“That company president is *toppa*, so the company is bound to grow large,” “That fellow hasn’t been home in seven years—he’s *toppa*,” “I’m *toppa* too, but you’re really *toppa*.” The term is applied to the kind of company president who starts from scratch and succeeds in raising up his business; it is said, for example, that without *toppa* one will never be fit to be a labor boss in the construction industry (MIYAZAKI 1998a, 323–25).

Though the word *toppa* has nothing to do with folklore studies, it is clearly part of the folk lexicon in one segment of the Kansai area. In fact while listening to the conversation in a business establishment run by first generation Korean residents in Osaka, I myself have heard people explain their actions by saying “it’s because we are *toppamono*.”

In any case, what Miyazaki has to say about the significance of *toppamono* in his epilogue is quite interesting. He notes that while the *toppamono* and most of the people around them are destined to perish, he thinks that “in the end this group will go out with one more glorious blaze.” At present we stand facing the historical collapse of the structure of the modern state and of modernism, anticipating great changes in East Asia as exemplified recently by the disintegration of North Korea, the arrival of refugees in Japan, the rise of the Chinese economy and its influence overseas. He goes on to say that “along with the dissolution of the structure of the modern state, as seen in the quagmire of fighting in Yugoslavia, all over the world there has occurred the phenomenon of reverting to premodern, even medieval times. That being the case, there is nothing mysterious about the same thing happening in East Asia.” If that condition comes to pass, the bureaucratic system of the modern state will no longer hold sway.

“At that point the workplace of the group around me emerges,” says Miyazaki. “Just as the *Wakō* pirates once created a network with the Chinese and Koreans, then effected a fundamental transformation of the East Asian economy and in turn the economic system of Europe, the members of the group around me, within the chaotic situation of East Asia, create with the Chinese and Korean groups a fierce network that transcends national borders, and in a period of transition in East Asia proceed to transform whatever they like. Of course, most of them have no education, so their weapons are nothing but the strength of their arms and their courage, as well as quite literally the wits to survive.... They are a group that originally started from scratch without relying on status or pedigree. Their saving grace is their magnificent capacity for living and their survival instincts, as well as their defiant courage in ‘fighting to the end.’” In other words, “they face confusion and hostility as a natural course. Moreover, their virtue is that at base they have hardly any sense of nationality. They had neither the time nor the affluence to dwell on nationality. Fully exercising that lack of nationality, they run around with no

sense of borders” (MIYAZAKI 1998b, 312–17). “Breakthrough people” are border-crossing people as well.

In addressing the condition of the world in the post-nation-state era, various theories have been suggested recently, such as “revival of empire” (YAMAUCHI, MASUDA, MURATA 1997) and “return to the Middle Ages” (NODA 1998, 5–6), but international political scientist Tanaka Akahiko in particular envisions a period called the “New Middle Ages” (*Atarashii chūsei* 新しい中世). According to Tanaka, it is possible to understand the coming international order, in which the sovereign state and modern state are relativized, as corresponding to the kind of social conditions that typified the Middle Ages all over the world, especially in Europe (TANAKA 1996). In this regard, the characteristics that both have in common are the diversity among constituents in an international relationship (state and monarch being nothing more than selected examples of such diversity), the complexity of relations among constituents, and agreement on a general ideology (in relation to the “New Middle Ages” a liberalist ideology). Understanding a world system having such characteristics as “Middle Age,” is even more appropriately applied in the post-nation-state era. Moreover, in relation to the “Middle Ages” in the Southeast Asian ocean region and in East Asia, he argues that there is an even greater need to conduct our analyses in conjunction with this “New Middle Age” concept (TANAKA 2000, 16–30).

While this kind of “New Middle Age” theory addresses problems of the politics and economy of the world system, a theory that addresses the prospects relating to the realm of the everyday lives of the people has yet to emerge. However, in relation to the lives of the people in “New Middle Age” society, the articulation of a border-crossing, non-national, culturally diverse dimension is fully anticipated.

Actually, in Tokyo’s Shinjuku and Ikeburo neighborhoods, a large number of foreign laborers began to take up residence in the 1980s. In more recent years, instead of remaining solitary migrant laborers, some of them have established families and taken up lives that are rooted in the community.¹⁵ Furthermore, in these locations, a new kind of hybrid realm of life has entered the wedge that lies between themselves and “the Japanese,” and in creating their own personal networks among “the Japanese” it is reported that some people have even begun to wonder “Am I a Japanese or a foreigner?—I no longer know for sure. Either is okay with me” (OKUDA 2000, 24).

On the basis of such conditions, when imagining the future of Japanese society, the opinion of Miyazaki that we saw earlier is disturbing perhaps, but also quite suggestive. In a post-nation-state social situation, it cannot be said with certainty that the condition Miyazaki describes will never appear. If such a time should indeed arrive, the kind of folklore studies that is capa-

ble of grasping a border-crossing, non-national, culturally diverse society is none other than multiculturalist folklore studies. As a folklore studies paradigm that is based on the social conditions of a new era, the development of multiculturalist folklore studies is what seems to be needed.¹⁶

NOTES

* This article was translated by Scott Schnell.

1. OGUMA Eiji (1995) has conducted a detailed analysis of this myth of a homogeneous nation, including its origins and development.

2. See, for example, YANAGITA (1961).

3. YAMAGUCHI Masao (1962) offers a critique of this predisposition within folklore studies.

4. INUI Taketoshi (1992) has written a detailed account of Orikuchi Shinobu's folklore studies involving the discriminated villages.

5. See, for example, ORIKUCHI (1925, 1927, 1930). An enlightening explanation of the religious reductionism of Orikuchi, as well as of folklore studies in general, appears in UENO (1991).

6. An analysis and critique of the simplistic approach to the management of cultural materials by folklorists appears in IWAMOTO Michiya (1998).

7. In this regard, the writers who have addressed the topic of "foreigners residing in Japan" are all cultural anthropologists. Though it was inevitable that there would be nothing substantial on this issue in folklore studies, it goes without saying that there must be progress in research that addresses cultural diversity within folklore studies, and that folklorists must take it upon themselves to conduct it.

8. The author who addressed this issue was not a folklorist but rather a sociologist. In folklore studies there is a volume entitled *Nihonjin* (YANAGITA ed. 1976), which was written by folklorists and edited by Yanagita. Even so, the fact that folklorists have neglected to define "the Japanese" is incomprehensible.

9. "There is emphasis on egalitarian relations among all cultures, and a strong suggestion that an overwhelmingly powerful culture does not exist" (KAJITA 1996, 237). In relation to multiculturalism, pluralism has been described in the following terms: "a majority culture exists, but even outside of that a plurality of cultures is also present, and therefore from long ago there has been a suggestion that the dominant culture be relativized;... in short, there is a pattern that has various cultures inlaid around the circumference of the majority culture" (KAJITA 1996, 237). In American pluralism, for example, even though the existence of various cultures is recognized, the dominance of the majority Western European culture is preserved, indicating that pluralism also embraces an assimilationist leaning (TAI 1999, 43).

10. Liberal multiculturalism assumes the perspective that, "in terms of social integration, cultural diversity is tolerated and the existence of different ethnic groups is recognized, but in terms of civic life and public affairs the language of the mainstream national society is used, and people must comply with a civic culture based on liberalism and social custom.... [Therefore] there is a mindset that diversity is acknowledged in the realm of private life, but not in the realm of public life" (SEKINE 2000, 51).

11. As opposed to liberal multiculturalism, which has only to do with ensuring equal opportunities for minorities, corporate multiculturalism aims at "prohibiting discrimination by identifying impediments to the competitiveness of discriminated people, and offering them financial and legal assistance." To that end, "ethnic communities become the object of

government assistance which provides corporate status” (SEKINE 2000, 53–54). “Affirmative action” aimed at blacks and other minorities in the United States is an example of this kind of concrete effort (KAJITA 1996, 247). However, at present it is the modern nation-state that invests this kind of legal reality, and, needless to say, cultural and linguistic diversity is assured only under the administrative rationale of the state’s jurisdiction. Consequently, there is the problem that cultures and languages that transcend the state’s administrative rationale lie outside this assurance.

12. Symbolic multiculturalism relates to “the proliferation of ethnic restaurants and the opportunity several times per year at events like cultural festivals to dress up in ethnic clothing and perform traditional folk arts like dancing and singing, and while these are viewed positively, there is no further effort to affirm cultural and linguistic diversity.” Therefore “it is essentially no different from assimilation” and “little more than lip service.” It is said that “contemporary Japan may still be at this level” (SEKINE 2000, 51).

13. See, for example, ŌTA Yoshinobu (1998), as well as the June 1998 special issue of *Gendai Shisō* entitled “The Politics of Cultural Convergence: A New Stage in Cultural Anthropology” (文化接合のポリティクス—文化人類学の新しい階段 Bunka setsugō no poritikusu: Bunka jinruigaku no atarashii kaidan).

14. ISHIDA Ei’ichirō (1967, 165–77), while addressing some of the structural deficiencies in its range of vision, asserts that folklore studies should be positioned as a subdiscipline within the broader field of cultural anthropology.

15. Within the field of urban sociology there have been several published reports of surveys conducted in relation to newly arrived foreigners in Tokyo (OKUDA, TAJIMA 1991, 1993). However, research that addresses the experiences of the people who live there—“foreigners in Japan,” “Japanese,” and even “unconventional Japanese” (OKUDA 2000, 24) in terms of their “traditions,” their memories of the recent past (SHINOIARA 1999, 11), their “survival strategies” (KAWAMURA 2000, i–v), in other words their folklore—has been completely neglected.

16. For a preliminary report of the author’s own concrete case study in multiculturalist folklore, see SHIMAMURA (2000a, 2000b).

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