OHNUKI-TIERNEY, EMIKO. *Rice as Self: Japanese Identities through Time.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993. xiii+184 pages. Illustrations, tables, bibliography, index. Hardcover US$19.95; ISBN 0-691-09477-2.

Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney's book on the significance of rice in Japanese culture could not have come at a better time, given that the 1993 rice crop was the worst in postwar Japan, and given that the Hosokawa government's historic decision to open Japan's rice market to foreign producers gave rise to enormous controversy.

In her previous book, *The Monkey as Mirror* (1987), Ohnuki-Tierney illustrated the historical transformations of Japanese cosmology through an analysis of the monkey as a metaphor for the human being. In the book under review she turns her attention to rice, showing how this grain has helped form and transform the identity of the Japanese as they encounter other peoples.

Readers will notice that the "collective self" of the Japanese is spoken of throughout. Postmodernist anthropology, with its staunch opposition to totalization, might criticize the author's terminology, but such criticism would miss the point. As Ohnuki-Tierney states in chapter 1, her objective is to show how rice has become the dominant metaphor for the Japanese identity *despite* the diversity of life-styles that has always existed in Japan (6). Ohnuki-Tierney also criticizes the "individual-centered model of change" for failing to recognize cultural constraints on the meanings assigned to symbols (7, 80, 137). Taken together, her position is that although projecting a monolithic picture of a people is problematic, individuals may not be divorced from their sociocultural context, particularly when one is examining the formation of their identity as a dialectic process between the self and other.

Chapters 2 and 3 turn to historical and ethnological data to provide background information about rice in Japan. The author develops her symbolic argument in chapters 4 to 6, supporting her views with evidence ranging from everyday customs to imperial rituals to high culture like poetry and woodblock prints. According to Ohnuki-Tierney, rice agriculture, which was introduced from the Asian continent, was "selected" from competing traditions as the defining feature of Japan when the Yamato state created the complex of myths in which its own deity (the Sun Goddess) both grew the first rice crop and founded the Japanese nation. *Ōnamesai* 大嘗祭 (often pronounced *Daijōsai*), an imperial ritual performed after the accession of a new emperor, legitimizes this rice-ruler myth.

Rice, however, was not central to every segment of Japanese society in every historical period. Drawing on the burgeoning literature in Japanese that challenges the orthodoxy in Japanese cultural studies, Ohnuki-Tierney notes that until the end of the Middle period (1185–1603) there was a sizable population of nonsettled people called *hiteijūmin* 非定住民 (nonresidents), who neither owned land nor paid taxes. The elite class of these people, among whom were *etahinin* 穢多非人, even maintained ties with political rulers (including shoguns and emperors) as they had done in ancient times.

The situation changed dramatically, argues Ohnuki-Tierney, when a rigid social hierarchy was instituted at the beginning of the Early Modern period (1603–1868). The ideology of an "agrarian Japan" was strengthened as the structure governing the nonresidents was illegally subordinated to the structure governing residents. (Japanese historians emphasize the role of the rice taxation system in the construction of this ideology, since money was widely used in the previous period.) Rice came to symbolize the collective self of the Japanese, and a sense of community was created at

various levels of society. Furthermore, Ohnuki-Tierney maintains, rice paddies came to represent space (land) and time (history) in Japan. This happened, ironically, when the reliance on agriculture as a means of livelihood began to decline as Japan industrialized and urbanized. In the Modern period (1868 to the present), domestic rice has represented the purity of the Japanese people.

In chapter 7 Ohnuki-Tierney discusses how the metaphor of rice transformed historically as the Japanese defined and redefined themselves in relation to other peoples, particularly peoples that were strong and/or threatened them, like Tang China and the modern West. She maintains that a social group pitted against another group constitutes a collective self in which various individual identities become irrelevant (99). In this process of "collectivization," a dominant cultural symbol—such as rice for the Japanese—is selected as a rallying point to defend the self (111). At the end of the nineteenth century, for example, the Japanese saw their position vis-à-vis the Westerners as that of a rice-eating against a meat-eating people. A century later when the United States pressured Japan to open its rice market, the Japanese pointed to the chemicals contained in Californian rice and labelled it as "impure," and thus "foreign," even though this particular rice is grown from seeds originally brought from Japan. Ohnuki-Tierney considers foreigners symbolically equivalent to *marebito* (stranger deities), a concept, developed by Origuchi Shinobu, that is reinterpreted here as the "semiotic other" for the Japanese.

In chapter 8 the author discusses "foods as self and others" in cross-cultural perspective, and in her final chapter she concludes with theoretical observations about the "polytropic" nature of symbols, the double layering of symbols as metonyms and metaphors, and the marginalization of internal others (e.g., *hiteijūmin*) in the process of what Pierre Bourdieu calls the "naturalization" of a dominant cosmology. Anthropologists, whether Japan specialists or not, will profit greatly from Ohnuki-Tierney's insights.

One thing that it might be important for readers of this book to keep in mind is that certain scholars in Japan have begun to challenge the dominant position occupied by rice in the discourse on Japanese history and culture. In the lead article of the first volume of *Nihon tsūshi* [Complete history of Japan] (1993), Amino Yoshihiko, the central figure in the new movement, calls the rice-agrarian view of Japan an "illusion" and seeks a thorough reexamination of Japanese historiography from other perspectives, such as the country's marine and mountain cultures. Although support for Amino is not unanimous, in the past two decades Japanese scholars have increasingly come to question the automatic assumption of the centrality of rice seen in earlier studies. In postmodern language, "detotalization" is taking place in recognition of the "multiplicity" of Japanese culture. Ohnuki-Tierney is certainly aware of this development, as shown by her references to Amino and others of his persuasion, but the point tends to get lost in her emphasis on rice as a metaphor for the Japanese identity.

Despite this caution, *Rice as Self* is an impressive book. It provides deep insights into the meaning of rice in the Japanese identity, and, indeed, into the significance of food as a metaphor for the identity of a people whatever their cultural background may be. To dismiss this book as an expression of cultural reductionism—a likely response from American officials frustrated with Japanese trade practices—would be to miss a splendid opportunity to probe into the minds of the people with whom they are negotiating.

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SŌGAWA TSUNEO 寒川恒夫 editor. *Sumō no uchūron—Juryoku wo hanatsu rikishitachi* 相撲の宇宙論——呪力をはなつ力士たち [The cosmology of sumō: Wrestlers that radiate magical power]. Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1993. 255 pages. Plates. Hardcover Yen 2,200; ISBN 4-582-48405-0. (In Japanese)

In *Sumō no uchūron* Sōgawa Tsuneo of Waseda University has brought together six articles on the ever-popular subject of sumō wrestling. Taken together they illuminate a number of different aspects of this fascinating sport.

Two articles in particular deserve mention. Tanigawa Akio's "Edo no sumō to gangu" [Edo sumō and toys] deals with the relation between the growth of Edo and the popularity of sumō dolls and toys. The growing population and increasing commercial importance of Edo was crucial in the formation of an "Edo-ite" spectator mentality that made possible the definitive establishment of sumō in the city. This growing popularization, in turn, influenced the world of children's games in many ways. The author makes a number of interesting observations on the role played by sumō toys (specially *sumō-ningyō* 相撲人形 and *doro-menko* 泥面子) in Edo children's life.

Kaneda Eiko's contribution concerns a topic that has never received monographic treatment: "Onna-zumō—Mō hitotsu no ōzumō" [Women's sumō: The other sumō]. Though in existence until the middle of this century, *onna-zumō* has always been neglected in discussions of sumō in Japan. This irreverent but important part of popular sumō culture was relegated to obscurity by efforts to make sumō a national and respectable sport.

Kaneda later raises the question of the classification of the different types of sumō in her discussion of *kōgyō-zumō* 興行相撲 (spectacle sumō), *chihō-zumō* 地方相撲 (regional sumō), and *amagoi-zumō* 雨乞い相撲 (sumō as a petition for rain). The problem of classification, arising from the scarcity and ambiguity of the historical records, crops up repeatedly throughout the book.

One example is Sōgawa's article "Sumō no kigen to tennō [The emperor and the origins of sumō], which proceeds through a domain of dangerously shifting sands, multiple possible interpretations, and enormous historiological difficulties in an attempt to trace the genealogy of sumō. A concern with the origins of sumō is not recent. In the late Edo period, for example, sumō—at the time a popular but clandestine sport—tried to reconstruct its past in order to make itself acceptable to the bakufu's political elite. One offspring of this attempt was a fictitious bridge with the court sumō (*sechie-zumō* 節会相撲) practiced centuries ago. Dodging the question of whether different types of sumō can also have different roots, Sōgawa claims a