COMMUNITY STUDIES IN JAPAN

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STUDIES of Japan and the Japanese have tended to deal in large proportion with phenomena and problems of the nation as a whole rather than with its component parts. In contrast, community studies focus upon some of the smallest social units of a nation. Community studies have been attempted as an approach to understanding Japan and the Japanese only recently and by relatively few foreign scholars. Moreover, even though a recent survey of work done by the Japanese lists 126 localities from which data at the community level have been gathered,¹ no fully rounded community study has yet been finished by Japanese social scientists. Western scholars, following beaten paths, simply have not ventured into communities for small scale studies, whereas in the case of the Japanese the partial intellectual isolation which delayed the arrival of some of the concepts basic to community studies seems largely responsible for the low returns from so much field research.

This raises the question of what distinguishes a community study from other studies conducted at the community level. As developed by Americans, the community study attempts to present a fully rounded description and analysis of the life and organization of the inhabitants of a community (however defined), including material and economic aspects, patterns of social and political relations, and the beliefs and values which give meaning to life. Such a study has the advantage of dealing with a genuine, clearly defined, natural socio-cultural unit large enough to display the full range of aspects of culture just mentioned, yet small enough to permit close observation of these aspects and their interrelations.

Except for a few enthusiasts, advocates of the community study approach recognize that it complements rather than substitutes for other approaches in the social sciences and humanities. The community is not a microcosm of the nation, but rather a component. Larger scale studies at a regional or national level uncover phenomena non-existent in a small community. Hence the community study method remains one among many tools of the research scholar.

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But in view of its almost unique capacity to penetrate into the lives of the people studied in the many areas of the world where it has been successfully employed, and in view of the special tradition of interest in understanding the Japanese people, it is remarkable that the community study technique should not have been attempted earlier in Japan.

I

THE RECORD OF COMMUNITY STUDIES IN JAPAN

As forerunners of such studies, we have not only Lafcadio Hearn's warm pictures of Japanese life but also several other essays written in the early decades following the mid-19th century Meiji Restoration. Isabella Lucy Bird Bishop, indefatigable lady traveler touring northern Japan as far as the Ainu settlements, wrote often of Japanese village life. Charming pen sketches as well as many descriptive details of daily life in village and city are found in the non-professional writings of the biologist, Edward S. Morse, an unpretentious but closely perceptive admirer of the Japanese. J. W. Robertson-Scott's *The Foundations of Japan* describes aspects of village life he encountered during an extensive tour through the countryside of northern Japan. However valuable these works may be for the quality of real life they breathe into the picture of Japan, none can be considered a community study or pretends to be such, for each one narrates merely the experiences which happened to come to its author and is not a systematic investigation of the full life of a community and the people in it.²

The first and best known systematic community study in Japan was John Embree's *Suye Mura*,³ dealing with a village in the foothills of western Kyushu. Though this book was favorably and even enthusiastically received, war broke out before similar studies could be attempted in other areas of Japan. In the wartime scramble for any scrap of information on Japan, probably no single work was more closely studied by more persons than Embree's account of this small Kyushu community. It came to have an authority that was never intended for it, often being looked to as gospel on the behavior and social arrangements of any and all Japanese. Only when the war was over did Americans begin to explore the real diversity of Japanese society and culture through additional community studies and related projects. Many are not yet fully published. The Civil Information and Education and Natural Resources Sections of the Occupation Forces sponsored two studies: one covered thirteen

³*Suye Mura, a Japanese Village* (Chicago, 1939).
villages located in different parts of the four main islands, and one dealt with a community in Ibaragi Prefecture. Research along the lines of community study has also been supported by the United States armed services in Okinawa, Amami Ōshima, and other parts of the Ryukyu Islands, where anthropologists, geographers, and others have done the field work. Andrew Grad, independently of his work for the Occupation, undertook a study of the town of Fukaya, located northwest of Tokyo. As part of a research program which is also quite separate from the work of the Occupation, the University of Michigan Center for Japanese Studies has supported studies by faculty and graduate students since 1950 in four communities in the Inland Sea region. One of these studies, in Okayama Prefecture, is a joint project of the majority of Michigan research workers; the remaining three are one-man projects.

Although the studies by Japanese in past years fall short of the community study ideal at one or several points, the large amount of community data collected by Japanese field workers calls for some attention in this survey. To hazard a generalization drawn from acquaintance with studies with many distinctive interests and problems, most of the Japanese research fits within either a sociological or a folkloristic frame of reference. In the former case, social organization and social problems have been the main concern; in the latter, the aim has been to record customs, beliefs, and oral traditions which are disappearing from the contemporary scene.

Two folkloristic organizations have been particularly active in community research. One is the Institute of Japanese Folk Culture (Nihon Jōmin Bunka Kenkyūsho), successor to the Attic Museum (Achikku Myūzeamu), headed by Keizō Shibuzawa. The second is the Institute for Japanese Folklore (Nihon Minzokugaku Kenkyūsho), directed by Tokuzō Ōmachi since the retirement of the founder and long-time head, Kunio Yanagida, from active leadership. Both organizations have tended to emphasize the study of traditional aspects of Japanese folk culture, but they have followed separate lines of interest. Material culture and economics, especially of fishing villages, have been of central interest to members of the Institute of Japanese Folk Culture; their surveys and collections of historical documents from specific communities fill most of the one hundred and more volumes of the Attic Museum Reports.

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5 Iwao Ishino, mimeographed report (Tokyo, 1951). This Ibaragi Prefecture study centers on labor boss organizations.
6 All these are reported to be unpublished as yet.
7 Andrew J. Grad, Fukaya, a Japanese Town (New York, IPR [in press]).
(Ihō) and Notes (Nōto). They have collected examples of the most rudimentary of all community reports: i.e., villagers' journals of their own lives and activities. On the other hand, members of the Institute of Japanese Folklore have tended to specialize in ceremonial activities, folk songs, and folk belief, also reporting in detail on social matters such as family organization and inheritance. Many of their studies have been published bit by bit in the journal Popular Traditions (Minkan Denshō), while others appeared as separate books. Two of the most widely read books published by this institute are Studies of Life in Mountain Villages and Studies of Life in Fishing Villages; material from 66 villages went into the first and from 30 villages into the second. The arrangement of each was rather severely criticized because it was impossible to extract the material on a particular village. In postwar publication, the folklore institute adopted a new plan and to date has produced a nine volume series of separate village studies.

A few of the many studies of a sociological bent may be mentioned as examples of typical or particularly interesting approaches. Notice should be taken of Seiichi Izumi's work among the stay-at-home residents of a Nara Prefecture mountain village and among the migrants from there to a new village in Hokkaido; of Toshio Furushima's study of social improvement in a village on the slopes of Mt. Fuji; of the cooperative research efforts of the Inland Sea Integrated Research Institute on a village of Okayama Prefecture; of the comparative study of social relations in eight selected communities in north, north central, and western Honshu published by Tadashi Fukutake; and of Takashi Koyama's study of the extended family and village organization in the villages of Shirakawa (Gifu Pref.) and Gokazan (Toyama Pref.). The studies just cited here, though only a fraction of those which might be considered, may serve to suggest the variety of work which is categorized here.

9 e.g., "Zushu Nakaura gyomin shiryo" (Historical materials on the fishermen of Nakaura, Izu Shizuoka Prefecture), Acibiku Myōseamu Ihō (Attic Museum Reports), 20, 24, 28, 1937-9; "Oga Kampū sanroku nōmin nichiroku" (Journal of a farmer at the foot of Mt. Kampū, Ōga), ibid., 16, 1940.
10 e.g., Omachi, Tokuzo, "Hachijō-jima" (Hachijō Island) (Tokyo, 1951).
11 Yanagida, Kunio, "Sanen Seikatsu no Kenkyū (Studies of Life in Mountain Villages)" (Tokyo, 1938); Kaisen Seikatsu no Kenkyū (Studies of Life in Fishing Villages) (Tokyo, 1949).
13 Aru Sansen no Monogurafu (Monograph on a Mountain Village) (Tokyo, 1951); Aru Ijūson no Monogurafu (Monograph on a Village of Migrants) (Tokyo, 1952).
14 Sansen no Kōzo (The Organization of a Mountain Village) (Tokyo, 1949).
15 Noson no Seikatsu: Okayama-ken Oku-gun Kasaka-mura Kitaike (Farm Village Life: Kitaike, Kasaka Village, Oku County, Okayama Prefecture) (Okayama, 1951).
17 Koyama, Takashi 小山隆, "Etchū Gokazan oyobi Hida Shirakawa ni okeru kazoku kōsei" (Family organization in Gokazan, Etchū [Toyama Pref.], and Shirakawa, Hida [Gifu Pref.]), Kenkyū Ronsō (Collected Studies), v. 6, no. 1 (Tokyo, 1933).
under the sociological approach as against the folklóristic approach. Current research programs which promise to attain the full status of community studies include the three year project begun by a group from Tokyo University, led by Gordon Bowles, in Sakai-mura, a secluded village deep in the mountains of Nagano Prefecture; and a three year project by Keiō University faculty and students in Katagai-cho, the main town of Kujūkuri Beach, Chiba Prefecture. These programs may open a new phase in Japanese work in communities, which up to the most recent times has differed markedly from American community studies in basic conception, and so also in objectives, techniques, and results. The following sections will review the work of both non-Japanese and Japanese scholars, in the attempt to evaluate the accomplishments of each, clarify the points of similarity and contrast, and describe the current trends in both groups.

II

WESTERN LITERATURE

In contrast to the work done by Japanese, the community studies by westerners, whatever their special biases or interests, have consistently aimed at one predominant objective. This primary goal has been to find common denominators at the grassroots level of Japanese culture. The research has thus included not merely description but also extensive analysis to find the common threads that run through community life. The researcher examines separately such matters as the nature of the community, its family and other forms of organization, its religion, and its modes of production, and then considers how they fit together to make a consistent pattern of living. The first such study, Embree’s Suye Mura, set a good pace in this regard; for example, its analysis of the ubiquitous cooperative groupings for work and ceremony establishes a theme which is echoed in each of the aspects of community life mentioned above. Later studies have aimed at perceiving similarly succinct and comprehensive principles. The analysis of culture change has tended to become a second important objective of the later studies, because they have been made in the turmoil of post-war years with instability and dislocation of patterns on every hand, but they have not dropped their concern with definitions of basic patterns.

It is not, perhaps, the initial responsibility of the person producing a community study to relate it to other communities or to the nation at large. The community study is a “case study.” It has the scientific virtue of being an actual, concrete example rather than a compilation of undocumented generalizations. It is also bound to be more or less unique. Yet most workers have shown some concern about representativeness, on the principle that the “case study” ought not to present too aberrant or unique an example. There are many
factors which affect community character and create a variety from which it is very difficult to select a "case study." Among these factors are the size of the community, its settlement pattern, its economic characteristics, social structure, and ceremonial tradition and its relation with other communities. These vary in such intricate and overlapping ways that it is vain to think of arranging them along any single axis and, by striking an average, to select the one typical Japanese community. Only the study of a series of different types of communities can give any approximately representative picture of Japanese community life. The problem of defining community types, like that of defining regions, is no simple matter to be tossed off as an incidental by-product of other work. It is a long-range project which will require much close study and hard thought from many points of view. But community studies face a paradoxical situation, whereby, although they may contribute as much as any approach to the ultimate definition of regions and types, they nonetheless must rely on some conception of types before an approximately representative community can even be selected for study. Although studies by Japanese scholars have seldom if ever taken up the matter of representativeness as a problem, it has been a consistent concern in American studies. This preoccupation, of course, has given added impetus to the persistent search for basic definitions.

The search for basic definitions or themes, the analysis of culture change, and the gnawing at the persistent problem of representativeness are primarily issues of abstract or academic interest, relatively removed from the world of action and policy problems. It is therefore worth calling attention to the Raper report on thirteen different villages, which brings to the fore an additional objective quite different from the foregoing, although the study shares as well the aims just mentioned. As a study focussed on the changes brought about through agricultural land reform carried out under the Occupation, it is an evaluation of the effects of administrative policy, and so serves as the only example of applied anthropology in the list of Japanese community studies.

The discussion of change in the Raper report was based on two surveys made only eighteen months apart, and so suffers from shortness of perspective. A clearer estimate of the prodigious changes which have affected even remote Japanese communities over the last generation and more should be provided by the follow-up study being undertaken by Roger Yoshino in Suye Mura fifteen years after Embree's pioneer work there. From the methodological point of view, this study also gains interest in being one of the very few occasions in which the accuracy of one trained worker's view of a community has been tested by separate and independent observation.

Before turning to the internal characteristics of these community studies, we may give a moment's attention to representation of the regions of Japan in the studies to date. Regional coverage has not been very thorough. In addition
to Embree’s study in southwestern Kyushu, there are now four studies in the vicinity of the Inland Sea, of which one is on Shikoku and three on Honshu; one more is completed in north central Honshu and one is under way there. Except for communities briefly covered in the Raper report,\(^1^8\) there are no data at all from the Japan Sea side of Honshu, the north of Honshu, or Hokkaido. Without more information from the geographical regions known as San-in, Kinki, Chubu, Nihon Kai, Tohoku, and Hokkaido, it is difficult or impossible to specify the degree to which they are distinctive cultural regions, though the Japanese studies discussed below help to fill some of these large gaps.

As to community size, the large cities of Japan have not yet been touched; one study deals with a town, the remainder with villages. Studies have tended to concentrate on small communities, either the administrative village (mura) or its component elemental communities (buraku), both because of the a priori assumption that villages better characterize traditional Japan than do larger communities, and because of the amenability of tiny communities to the basic community study techniques of first-hand observation and interview.

A three fold division of villages by economic orientation into farming, fishing, and mountain villages is recognized in common parlance as well as among scholars in Japan. The focus of economic production is respectively on irrigated cultivation, on shore or deep sea fishing, or on lumbering and similar forestry industries. Field workers have chosen what they take to be representative examples of these three divisions, leaving for investigation at a later date the tangle of other sorts of community types set up by Japanese geographers, historians, sociologists, and others. The most notable exception, perhaps, was Embree’s selection of Suye Mura, an isolated, half-farming and half-forestry village. Embree chose it after considerable searching, not in disregard of the conventional village types of Japan so much as because the isolation of Suye Mura, which provided clear physical demarcation of the community limits, served his primary interest: i.e., community structure as a universal sociological problem. In the Inland Sea, however, the University of Michigan Center for Japanese Studies has accomplished community studies of a lowland rice-growing hamlet (Niiike), a fishing hamlet (Takashima), a mountain hamlet (Matsunagi), in addition to studies of other sorts. Mountain communities and forestry activities are the subject both of Ishino’s study in Ibaragi Prefecture made during the Occupation and of the current study led by Gordon Bowles out of Tokyo University. In all, American community studies in Japan now provide several samples each of rice-farming villages and moun-

\(^1^8\)The thirteen communities of this report were selected from widely scattered spots in all four islands, to avoid distorting generalizations on a national scale by a regional bias. The report is in no way a study of regional variation, but by presenting the data for each village apart from the generalizing sections it does give some indication of the differences among communities.
tain villages, but have rather neglected the fishing villages and other recognizable types such as the mining village or the truck-gardening village in the city suburbs, for which the Raper report gives our only information.

Turning now from the kinds of communities to examine the studies themselves, we observe that each was produced after about one year of field work. This period permits observation of the total annual cycle of seasonal activity and ceremony so that the ideal target of encompassing the "whole culture" seems more within reach than through a shorter period of study. The Michigan studies in the Inland Sea have been made in communities of quite small size (buraku), of 200 population or less, in order to have the greatest intimacy of contact. Of course, hamlets of this size have certain drawbacks such as the lack of a shrine or temple of their own, limited range of social ranks, and other matters, so that supplementary check studies run on other communities in the vicinity have been favored. But in larger communities, such as the town of Fukaya (40,000 pop.) or even Suye Mura (1700 pop.), the researcher has to deal with variations which go beyond the direct experience of the researcher himself and of the small number of persons that he can interview exhaustively. Embree, for example, seems to have worked in the field unaware of some of the important factors involved in class or rank distinctions and spent relatively little time with persons of the upper stratum. The section of his report which deals with class, by contrast to the rich detail and insights of most other portions of the book, is relatively barren and untrue to the social realities of Suye Mura, as Japanese critics have noted.

Two methods of overcoming the problems posed by larger communities have been put to use. One is to enlist members of the community as research assistants, as Grad did in Fukaya. He assembled groups of students and others to discuss questions set by him and record the results; he employed teachers and students to carry through surveys; and he encouraged townsmen to submit autobiographies or essays on contemporary problems. The second method is to resort to quantitative data. Questionnaires and counts tabulated by the researcher or already available in census and village records fall into this category. The real core of the Raper study of thirteen villages is made up of quantitative data collected at each village office. Only a few days were spent by the team of Japanese and American researchers in interviewing and observing conditions at each village. This method, though particularly enticing in Japan where any government office has a wealth of statistics on many different subjects, has very serious limitations, since many statistics touch on matters of taxation and government control, on which the government statistics

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10 One questionnaire was carried out in the hamlets immediately adjacent to the farm village of Niilke; another went to thirty villages statistically selected by random sampling from the entire drainage area of the Inland Sea, and a third was given to 1100 persons in the prefecture of Okayama.
collector finds it almost impossible to learn the true state of affairs. Careful check of the records against independent surveys of land ownership, occupation, and population in the small communities studied in the Inland Sea has invariably shown discrepancies; sometimes, indeed, the figures bear very slight resemblance to reality. Unreliability of census and other quantitative data already on hand does not alter the fact that quantitative techniques are indispensable in larger communities. They do have absolute limits of usefulness, however, for the information at the heart of a community study is in large part not quantitative but qualitative. It shows what kind of community exists, now how much.

The essence of community study is not statistical technique, which must be regarded as a subsidiary tool, but a sensitive and alert observer with his notebook, living as much as possible in the community itself. In all except the village series studied by the Raper teams the participant observer has been the essential element. The simplicity of this field technique is apt to mislead or even frustrate social scientists with laboratory method background or training in working from models, for they see in it no method at all. But it is hard to devise a method more successful than this participant observer technique in getting certain information. For example, villagers are sometimes unwilling or simply unable fully to describe their methods of child rearing or of making decisions and resolving disputes, their household routines, their attitudes and orientations. A competent observer sees much for himself, knows the community in every day dress, and is admitted to or stumbles upon intimate as well as public matters. A husband and wife team has a chance for still better results than one person; Suye Mura and two of the Inland Sea villages were studied by husband-wife teams. Of course, the participant observer does not merge with the people, but carries a distinctive role; in Japan he has usually been given distinguished status as an American and a scholar. He must be prepared to recognize the bias or limits this role gives to the data he gets from social contacts in the community.

Interviews often develop out of ordinary conversations; but formal interviews with particular persons on particular subjects are also usual practice. Structured interviews, with questions prepared beforehand, were used by the teams gathering data for the Raper study, by Andrew Grad in Fukaya, and by University of Michigan field workers. Simultaneous interviews of a large group, who meet with the interviewer and respond on individual forms, have been used only rarely. The teams compiling data for the Raper report conducted such mass interviews as one of their standard techniques, and most other workers have held occasional group meetings on particular subjects, but the sometimes dubious results may more than offset the saving in time and effort for the researcher.
Any of these techniques is fallible, and requires some check or validation. The lengthy residence of the participant observer usually gives him time and opportunity to verify his interpretations and to check informants against each other. More formal validation is desirable for mass interviews, structured interviews, and questionnaires, however. In the case of the Michigan questionnaires and structured interviews familiar to the present author, their compilation, pre-testing, coding, and validation followed latest public opinion survey techniques; both Japanese and Americans participated, so that translation difficulties were minimized. It must be said, however, that even with the exercise of great care it has not been possible to avoid a certain number of unreliable responses, as these are checked against participant observer data.

Validation of materials is one of the advantages offered, also, by the multi-disciplinary nature of the approach undertaken in the University of Michigan study of Niiike, the Inland Sea rice-growing community. Persons specialized in each of the usual social science fields (except social psychology) have done field work in this hamlet, with the result that the study has more-sided expertness than the usual one-man study. Moreover, overlapping interests have provided many cross-checks on basic information, as well as drawing the attention of each researcher to facets of community life or external relations which otherwise he might have overlooked.

By the use of these techniques, the community study approach has been able to make certain unique contributions to an understanding of Japan and, in the still unpublished studies, promises to add more. For example, a number of disciplines were brought into the study of Niiike not merely to enrich the coverage of this small buraku, but to provoke broader analyses of rural life in Japan for which this particular buraku provides only one sort of exemplification.

The results of community studies will be useful to an increasing number of scholarly fields. They are central to ethnology, of course, but sociologists and social psychologists are showing keen interest in these materials from a complex society with traditions and circumstances so different from those of the West. Economists and political scientists are beginning to turn from formalized institutions at the national level to find stimulating insights from the grass-roots approach to economic and political behavior as offered by community study. Every bit of additional data will be grist to the mill of cultural geographers, especially those whose interests comprise such matters as land use and regionalism. In addition to the social science benefits, the intimacy of community study imbues this approach with special possibilities for the humanities. The light it throws on the formation of cultural orientations and
values and their relation to daily life creates a reservoir of factual material for study of the problem of relative values. Thus community studies are in no sense the exclusive property of any of the customarily distinct disciplines, but constitute a field of common interest for many areas of scholarship.

As to results, an interesting outcome in one study after another has been the demonstration of the neat dovetailing of work cycles with cycles of social and ceremonial activity in these tradition-molded communities. The interrelations of economic life, social organization, and calendrical ceremonies pictured in a community study build up, as it were, a third dimension of understanding, giving greater solidity than is provided by separate study of any of these alone. In the realm of social organization, Embree's *Suye Mura* formulated a pattern of cooperation and reciprocal obligations among the members of the community that has served as a model of equal-level social relations. Ishino's study of an Ibaragi Prefecture forestry community, on the other hand, has shown the intricate vertical structuring of social relations in a community dominated by distinctive hierarchical patterns. All these studies, particularly the postwar ones which deal with change, have begun to lift the cover concealing the present ferment of Japanese society, revealing on the one hand the increasing influence of industrial-commercial economy and corresponding attrition of folk-culture characteristics; and, on the other hand, the tough root-stock of the old, traditional way of life, secure despite its slender economic resources. Onto this durable stock higher living standards and increased personal freedom are being grafted without yet destroying the ancient roots.

Each field worker's own distinctive interests, background, and objectives have given his report certain unique characteristics. The general orientation of the majority, however, has been similar enough to produce broadly comparable results. The coherence of the present picture, which shows most clearly the economics and ceremony of farming villages and the various social units that characterize such communities, will diminish, perhaps, as future studies cover communities of radically different types and strike from new angles to study historical development, ecological relations to the outer world, psychological problems, and other matters. However, the general concept of community study which they all share probably will keep future studies unified to a degree which is not apparent in the Japanese studies to which we now turn.

III

JAPANESE LITERATURE

The Japanese in their work on communities have had diverse approaches and objectives. None of these quite paralleled the American search for com-
mon denominators of culture until the postwar years. But Benedict's controversial *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, in particular, drew attention to common denominators, and community study won increasing interest as one of the new American social science methods for discovering basic characteristics. Since studies along the newer lines are only beginning to reach publication, this survey will deal primarily with studies which only partly meet the demands of community research, though they may be excellent within their own frame of reference. The Japanese scholars have tended to take universal or typical features of Japanese culture for granted and to seek out communities which are unique or aberrant in some respect. Many are in backward areas away from prosperous or urbanized localities. In this respect these men follow folklore study in Europe and ethnological research in America up to three decades or less ago, for serious attention has been given to up-to-date communities and to problems of modernization by Western scholars only in recent decades. A distinct shortcoming of past Japanese studies has been the tendency to set narrow objectives, such as the study of certain customs or modes of organization in the chosen communities rather than the whole culture. However impossible of full attainment the wider objective may be, it is nevertheless a *sine qua non* of community study, in the sense that no aspect of culture should be consciously excluded as irrelevant to an understanding of the community.

Materials at the community level have been collected by various kinds of scholars. The orientations and methods of the folklorists are epitomized in the work of their renowned leader, Professor Kunio Yanagida. Yanagida turned from law to folklore in the late nineteenth century in reaction against indiscriminate westernization of Japanese institutions. He sponsored much work at the community level in his search for the traditional ways of Japanese life on which to base a non-Western civil law code for the nation. The collection of traditions became a life work in the course of which he drew many followers.\(^{20}\)

On the other hand, workers in community research who followed the lead of Mr. Keizō Shibuzawa, founder of the Attic Museum, started with a museum orientation which emphasized items of material culture. His followers were drawn from material culture to economics and to social organization. Like the folklorists, they gravitated toward the "unusual," i.e., conservative and laggard communities, but they had little interest in religious custom and belief except as these affected material culture and economy. Hence their publications carry a flavor distinct from those of the folklorists. Apart from the collections of data by these two schools, there are studies made at the community level by sociologists, who have been interested in "the family system," "feudalism," migration, and other special questions; by agricultural

\(^{20}\)Oka, Masao 岡正雄 "Shakai chōsa" (Social research), *Minzokugaku Kenkyū* (Japanese Journal of Ethnology), (1952), 1:5.
economists, who have been concerned with irrigation, crop management and the like; and, of late, by a few political scientists and others who are swinging away from institutional problems to functional and behavioral problems.

Though field investigation has characterized Japanese as well as American research, the Japanese have used radically different techniques. Their techniques harmonize with their limited objectives, with the result that the final report on any single community has serious gaps, in spite of the fact that the researchers themselves have very extensive knowledge of Japanese communities built up from years of experience. Usually the community is selected on the basis of someone's report that it shows this or that interesting feature. Considerations of travel and expense also enter. The field researcher, or occasionally a group of researchers organized as a task force, visits the community for a few days intensive work and then returns to his institution to sift his materials for a report. Several weeks of field study is a rare occurrence, although Koyama, for example, worked in Gokazan village for a year while teaching school nearby. In addition to personal observation and interviews, the field worker often acquires many materials in documentary form such as household records or village office records. The experienced worker, by knowing to some extent how to gauge statistical inaccuracies, can make effective use of current documents and can also sometimes sift out valuable historical material. The use of documents has been exploited in the past generally by Japanese rather than foreigners. Their availability in the reports compensates somewhat for the incompleteness noted both in field work and subsequent analysis which has characterized Japanese research in communities.

The collection of historical materials from particular communities has been a policy followed especially in the Attic Museum Reports and Attic Museum Notes. In some cases the local orders, letters, and reports are continuous from the early 17th century to the present. During so long a period changes in government and local circumstances have greatly affected population, organization, and other characteristics of the community. The Attic Museum records suggest the depth to which one can reach into the past of a single community. But they are printed in toto without any accompanying analysis and one feels that adequate analysis could bring much richer insights into the development of the contemporary nature of the community. Most historical studies of small communities have done little more than picture the growth of population and cultivated area and the migration of younger sons to the cities since the late Tokugawa era. In contrast, a good generalized history of the farm village as a type, such as Ono's, has many examples to show the great historical depth of factors which may determine the physical shape or the social characteristics of these communities. The currently unfinished study by Keio University.

21e.g., Ono, Takeo 小野武夫 Nibon Sonraku-shi Gaisetsu (Outline of Japanese Village History) (Tokyo, 1936).
teams working in Katagai, the largest town of Kujūkuri Beach in Chiba Prefecture, on the Pacific Ocean side of Tokyo, has historians working on the processes by which dispossessed samurai, acquiring the capital to buy fishing boats and nets, were able to lure farmers as boat crews out to the shore where the latter remain in almost complete subjection to the few net owners at the present day. Proper historical treatment of this community will surely be of interest to a number of fields.

In the aggregate, the Japanese studies have done much toward accumulating data for future use but little toward advancement of theory. In part, this is due to conscious policy such as that set by Yanagida, whose concern lest the traditional culture of Japanese villages be swamped by Western influence before it could be recorded urged him and his followers to continue their collections of data rather than stop for analysis. But the relative lack of theoretical conclusions of a basic sort must be traced also to the shallowness of the theory from which the studies started. The initial stimulus to many of these studies was as often practical or emotional as it was theoretical. The sociologically-minded researchers started with the assumption that conditions of the community needed improving. Conversely, the folklorists held to the axiom that traditional ways and values should not be lost. Both groups were concerned slightly, if at all, with general problems of community organization or the nature of culture and society in the world at large. Their contributions, therefore, are more descriptive than analytical. But from the point of view of common denominators of Japanese culture, the following observations are of particular interest.

The organization of communities around a landlord-tenant or main house-subordinate house system of relationships is described by Furushima and Koyama in the works listed earlier. Yanagida’s synthesis of mountain village society shows the persistence of similar hierarchical relationships in communities with marginal land resources, whereas Fukutake, in a comparison of northeast Japan with west central Japan, shows that the hierarchical patterns of the north give way to egalitarian modes of organization in the southwest. Both sociological and economic interests are served by two comparative studies of immigrants and their home villages: Izumi’s monographs on a Hokkaido community and its mother village in Nara, and the recent multidiscipline survey under Fukutake of a Wakayama fishing village in comparison with its overseas counterpart in Steveston, British Columbia.

22 Compare the nostalgia of Yanagida, Kunio and Miki, Shigeru 三木茂, Yukiguni no Minzoku (Folklore of Snowland) (Tokyo, 1944), for example, with the reform-mindedness of Furushima, Toshio 古島敬雄, Sanson no Közō (Organization of a Mountain Village) (Tokyo, 1949).

23 Izumi, Seichi, Aru Sanson no Monogurafu (Monograph on a Mountain Village) (Tokyo, 1951), and ibid., Aru Ijiu-son no Monogurafu (Monograph on a Village of Migrants) (Tokyo, 1952); Fukutake, Tadashi, 福武直, Amerika-mura (America Village) (Tokyo, 1953).
parisons the features of Japanese life which persist with great tenacity as well as those which alter under radically different economic conditions are well displayed, although it is largely left to the reader to draw general or theoretical conclusions.

These may serve as samples of the material of primary interest to social scientists. In spite of the preoccupation with tabulations of demographic, geographic, economic, and social data which makes the reading of some of these works arduous, there emerge at times illuminating observations on psychological and social orientations which would be difficult for non-Japanese workers to achieve. The strength of the attachment of the Japanese villager to the soil of his own village, in the face of economic deprivation and the temptations to move elsewhere, is concretely exemplified, for instance, in the immigrant village studies. One learns from other reports how the imperative injunctions to work hard, to sacrifice personal interests to those of the family and community, and to devote oneself to one's parents, which are so much a part of formal philosophy, are put into effect in actual life. One wishes for much more than is generally provided in these relatively factual, descriptive studies, to compare, for example, with the novels of village life by men such as Yōjirō Ishizaka. But in the delineation of Japanese character, these specific observations on the aims and motivations of Japanese villagers do not stand alone; thoughtful consideration of the material facts of community life gives point to the aspirations and defeated ambitions, the loves and dislikes of the people of Japan which are recorded so abundantly in the folk-songs, poems, and sayings collected in the works of Yanagida and other folklorists.

The human appeal of community life is an elixir all too easily distilled away by the time the field work is boiled down to the printed word. One of the simplest and most rewarding solutions to this problem of presentation is a photographic report. The art of the camera was enlisted in 1937 by Kunio Yanagida and Shigeru Miki in a book describing village life in northeast Japan entirely through captioned photographs of extreme beauty. An equally successful photographic study of his own village in Nagano Prefecture was published in the following year by a young photographer, Motoichi Kumaya. These studies, and similar ones done in Formosa and elsewhere, run ten to fifteen years ahead of the American camera studies which have recently won much praise from critics in various fields. Although low printing costs and wide spread passion for candid photography help to account for the early use of this technique in Japan, credit must also be given the Japanese for perceiving the aesthetic values derived from an unpretentious approach to an intimate subject. Pictures supplemented by adequate description preserve the immediacy and

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24Yanagida, Kunio and Miki, Shigeru Yukiguni no Minzoku (Folklore of Snowland) (Tokyo, 1937); Kumaya, Motoichi 熊谷元一 Ochimura (Ochi Village) (Tokyo, 1938).
full detail of the actual scene and delight the artist's eye while they satisfy the scholar's demands for accuracy.

IV

SUMMARY AND PROSPECTS

Community research by Japanese scholars has created a treasury of comparative data which never will be duplicated by the studies of outsiders. But often the studies have so little theoretical justification as to only underscore the futility of work unsupported by theory. The biases which have crept into the work, over and above the consciously imposed limits of interest, have brought about one-sided collections with very unfortunate gaps. Moreover, interests have changed with the passage of time to such an extent that the data already collected may never be analyzed. Theoretical interests, however, are increasing among Japanese sociologists and others. Not a few of these are directly inspired either by Marxist precepts or by opposition to them. But many currents of European and American thought other than dialectical materialism are flowing more freely than previously into Japan, stimulating in particular an increased appreciation of functional approaches to the study of society and culture.

The American work has consistently started from definite theoretical positions, generally relating to the nature of society and culture at large. The focus of interest has most often been social organization and social relations, so theoretical formulations most often concern these aspects of community life. Even here, only a partial appreciation of the full complexity of Japanese society is available to those who must depend on the published reports for their information. To name one critical example, there is a crying need among social psychologists for factual data on child rearing and personality formation, for which broad sampling is essential; where this sampling is linked to a community study, the researcher is provided with concrete information about the socio-cultural environment of his subjects. Again, to name a different field of potential research, Japanese communities offer intriguing possibilities for social research in problems of urban change and industrialization, providing not only innumerable instances of adjustment to contemporary industrialization but also relatively full historical documentation of urban development in past centuries. Many of these avenues for research will be most profitably handled by multidisciplinary teams rather than by individuals.

The new problems and research possibilities, in short, go beyond the matter of examining more communities of different types and locations, which is a continuation of the same sort of thing even when fortified with added sophisti-
cation and new techniques. Problems now on the horizon involve the relating of community research data most fruitfully to other research levels and interests. Of the various disciplines concerned, the worker most squarely faced with this challenge, perhaps, is the anthropologist, whose constant use of the community study as a primary approach to primitive societies has given him special concern in development of the approach. The social universe of many primitive peoples scarcely rises above the level of a community or group of similar communities, so that community study is a natural and almost self-sufficient tool for anthropologists working in primitive cultures. But the study of a modern nation's many social and cultural levels, particularly when these have a richly documented historic past, raises issues of new dimensions. From the anthropologist's point of view, these call for substantial borrowing and reciprocal help from social sciences and humanities, in order to make the necessary chain of connections from village to city, from custom to constitution, and from folk to national citizenry, without abandoning the fundamental whole-culture approach which has made the community study a respected instrument of social research.