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'Natives' as dialogic partners

Some thoughts on native anthropology

TAKAMI KUWAYAMA

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Fig. 1. Kunio Yanagita (1875-1962), known as the founder of Japanese folklore studies, in front of his private residence, Tokyo, 1957.

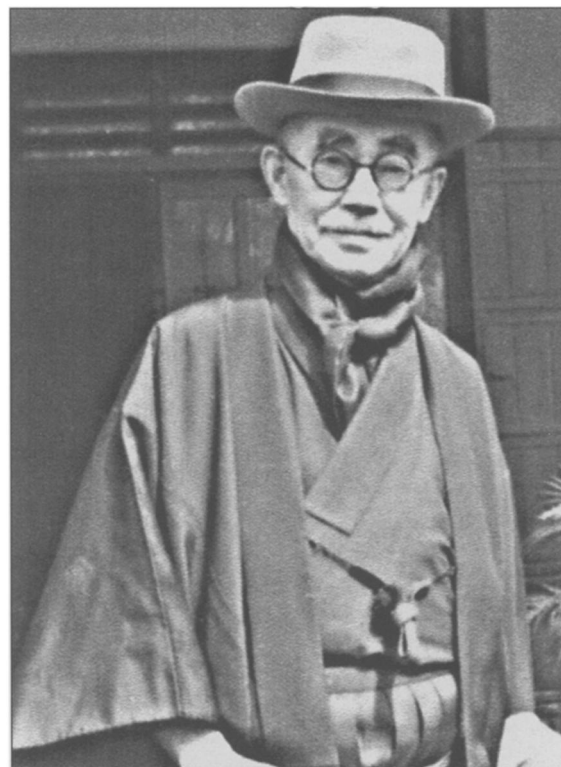
'Native' anthropology is one of the major concerns among contemporary anthropologists in Asia and the Pacific region. Here I define it as the attempt by 'natives' (henceforth used without quotation marks) to represent their people, usually in their own language, from native points of view. Native anthropology challenges existing anthropological practice in two respects. First, it takes objection to the position customarily assigned to natives as objects of representation, which has excluded them as active agents in ethnographic reading and writing. Natives have played important roles in the construction of life histories and ethnographic films, but the final authority usually rests with outside researchers, and natives have at best been acknowledged as collaborators. With some exceptions, they have seldom been credited as co-authors.¹ Second, native anthropology represents efforts in many parts of the world to overcome Eurocentrism or Western academic hegemony. In the post-colonial world, the emergence of native anthropologists marks a blurring of the boundary between colonizer/seer/describer/knower and colonized/seen/described/known.

Why native anthropology today?

Native anthropology is not a new issue. In 1978 a large symposium entitled 'Indigenous anthropology in non-Western countries' was held in Austria, with the sponsorship of the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research (Fahim 1982). At that time, the question of whether or not indigenous social science was possible caught the attention of many scholars in the Third World. In the process of nation-building, new countries in Asia and Africa had encountered a range of problems that could not easily be solved within Western intellectual frameworks, demonstrating a serious gap between Western theory and the reality of the Third World. The search for 'alternative discourse' has a long history.

There are, however, two major factors contributing to the current interest in native anthropology. The first has to do with changing relationships between the describer and the described in ethnography. In the past, 'primitives' (natives) were merely objects of representation, but with the spread of literacy, many of them are now able to read ethnography written about their culture and history. As the Mexicans' criticisms of Oscar Lewis's 1961 *The children of Sanchez* show (Brettell 1993), they have gained the power to protest against outsiders' representations if they find them objectionable. Native protest is taken seriously today, for it is related to the wider issue of indigenous people's rights. Furthermore, as anthropology has spread to former colonies, native intellectuals have learned to write about their own people from their own viewpoints. Their accounts often conflict with those of outside anthropologists.

The second factor in the current interest in native anthropology is the growing awareness of the imbalance of power between the researcher and the researched. This awareness has been fostered by the works of critical theorists, mostly notably by Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), which revealed the close connection between power and knowledge in cultural representation. Since then, anthropologists have increasingly had to concede more influence and control to native voices. However unrefined by Western academic standards, native discourse can no longer be dismissed as 'noise'.



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On the concept of native

The English word *native* is derived from the Latin *nativus*, meaning 'born' or 'innate'. In the etymological sense of the word, we may say that everyone is a native of one place or another. During the early colonial period, however, anthropologists tended to use *native* in a pejorative sense. This usage placed subjects in the early stages of social evolution as represented by Lewis H. Morgan, who classified human 'progress' into three successive stages – 'savagery', 'barbarism' and 'civilization'. We may say that the unequal relationship between the colonizer/civilized and the colonized/primitive is thus inscribed in the word *native*. The study of one's own culture in Europe or the United States is ordinarily called *insider* research, whereas the same type of study elsewhere is called either *native* or *indigenous*.

The distinction between *native* and *indigenous* is ambiguous and complex. Generally, scholars in the Third World prefer the latter because it is more or less free from the colonial implications of the former (Fahim 1982). Although it is possible to substitute *local* for *indigenous*, *local* is a neutral word that merely points to a particular place. It therefore conceals important power differences. I have decided to use the term *native* for three reasons. First, it is a testimony to the colonial roots of anthropology. Second, it draws attention to the 'intrusion' into the academic space of former colonial powers by their subjects. And third, this intrusion signals a radical change taking place in the structure of anthropological knowledge.

Who, then, are natives? By definition, natives are members of the community under study. Since, however, anthropology developed mainly as the study of primitive society, the term tends to be used to refer to people in peripheral places far removed from the metropolitan

I wish to thank the editor and anonymous AT referees for their insights and comments, and the AT editorial team for their care in preparing this article for an international readership.



Fig. 2. Traditional houses preserved at a local theme park, Tōno, Iwate Prefecture. Since Kunio Yanagita wrote *The Legends of Tōno* (1910), Tōno has been studied extensively by Japanese ethnographers.

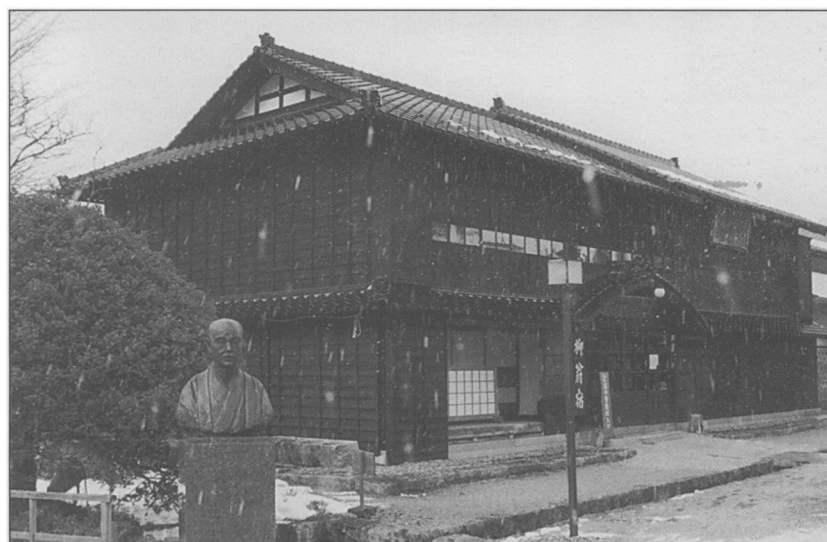
1. For criticisms on this point, see Brettell (1993) and Shahrani (1994).

2. If properly trained, natives can write about their culture and history in ways useful to professional anthropologists. In Japan in the 1930s, Kunio Yanagita organized a national network of amateur researchers who studied their own community.

3. Although Trask is an 'activist' native who is not an anthropologist by training, her arguments are directly related to the issue under discussion.

4. For criticisms of the core-periphery dichotomy, see van Bremen (1997).

Fig. 3. An old inn preserved in the Tōno Folk Village, which opened in 1986. The bust of Yanagita is displayed (left foreground).



Native anthropology: An epistemological issue

In major collections of articles on native anthropology (e.g. Fahim 1982, Messerschmidt 1981), much space has been devoted to discussion of the merits and demerits of native/insider research. It has been argued, for example, that native anthropologists have few language problems and that they can quickly establish a rapport with their informants. It has also been argued that this advantage has its own problems because the cultural proximity between the researcher and the researched makes it difficult to attain objectivity. Another disadvantage of native anthropologists, according to scholars from the Third World, is that they are often mistaken for government agents. There is, therefore, general agreement that native/insider research has both advantages and disadvantages.

The importance of such arguments is obvious; they have even anticipated the current anthropological discourse on 'anthropology at home'. They relate, however, mainly to fieldwork methods, and the significance of native anthropology would be diminished considerably if the discussion were limited to that of methodology. Because the problems posed by native academics – what we might call 'professional others' – have the potential to restructure anthropology, it is important to address native anthropology as an epistemological issue, not simply a methodological one.

The ethnographic triad

The place of natives in anthropology may be clarified by applying insights derived from museum studies. Recent studies of ethnological museums have shown the importance of considering the relationship between three parties – the displayer, the displayed, and the viewer. Over the past few decades the debate on the politics of cultural representation and display has raised awareness that museums are forums for 'dialogue' between the displayer and the displayed, between the displayer and the spectator, and between the displayed and the viewer, rather than 'temples' where sacred objects are enshrined.

This observation may neatly be applied to ethnography as a genre of writing. Like museums, ethnography involves three parties – the writer, the described, and the reader – and they form what may be called the 'ethnographic triad'. Since this simple fact is frequently overlooked, it deserves some clarification. The first party in the triad is the anthropologist who does fieldwork, usually in other cultures, and writes up research results in the form of ethnography. Anthropology is 'homemade', in the words of Clifford Geertz (1988:145), because many of its activities are carried out at home after returning from the field. The second party in the ethnographic triad consists of natives who have been described in the ethnography. As I have already pointed out, native anthropologists are not usually immediate objects of study, but they are part of the wider society that is being represented.

The third party in the ethnographic triad has received little attention in previous studies. I distinguish four major categories within the ethnographic readership: (1) people who belong to the same linguistic and cultural community as the writer – in most cases, these people are the assumed readers of ethnography, and they consist of both professional scholars and readers at large; (2) natives who have been studied and described: they used to be recognized only as objects of representation, but many of them are now competent to read ethnographic accounts of their culture in the original or in translation;² (3) native anthropologists, who often work in partnership with anthropologists during fieldwork, but tend to be rivals in trade. Many of them have levelled harsh criticisms against Western ethnography, as I will discuss later; (4) people who are neither describers nor the described: anthropologists in third-party countries belong to this category.

Fig. 4. Inside the inn, folk tales are told by local citizens for tourists. The telling of folk tales is one of the major attractions in Tōno.



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5. With more than 70 research staff, Minpaku is one of the largest employers of anthropologists worldwide. See Knight (1996) for an interview with Minpaku's former director.

6. In 1994, Umesao was awarded *bunka kunshō* (the Order of Cultural Merit), the highest honour awarded to Japanese academics.

7. In terms of descent, neither Ohtsuka nor Shimizu is a native of Ainu. They do have, however, long-standing relationships with Ainu people. It is hoped that Kayano, who received a doctorate in anthropology in 2001, will respond to the debate from an Ainu perspective.

Keeping the ethnographic triad in mind, it becomes clear that the recent postmodern critique of ethnography has missed two important points. First, as is symbolically expressed in the title of Clifford & Marcus's canonical text *Writing culture* (1986), the postmodernists' concern with *reading* and *writing* has led them to pass over the question of what it means to be the subject of those writings. The second party in the ethnographic triad has been virtually ignored. Second, the assumed readership is effectively limited to the first category of readers identified above (i.e. people who belong to the same community as the writer). The absence of efforts at writing in the local language to engage in 'dialogue' with the people described clearly attests to this.

Moreover, little has been said about how to communicate with anthropologists outside the Anglophone world. In *Anthropology as cultural critique* (1986), Marcus and Fischer proposed 'experimental' writing styles suitable for conveying other cultural experience. As they pointed out, new styles such as narratives are useful in stimulating the assumed readers' imagination of other cultures. But the words and expressions used are culturally loaded, and their meanings are not immediately clear to foreign readers from different cultural backgrounds. Experimental writing styles are powerful within the same linguistic community, but they are not the best means of engaging in 'dialogue' with readers from other linguistic communities.

Natives and their discontent

This 'dialogue' is not the dialogue between anthropologists and their informants during fieldwork which has been debated among the proponents of experimental ethnography. They are interested primarily in composing ethnographic texts on the basis of the dialogue they have had with their informants. They are, in other words, interested in *writing*. By contrast, the dialogue I am proposing occurs *after* the ethnography is written, and it should ideally engage all the people concerned, including the describer and the described.

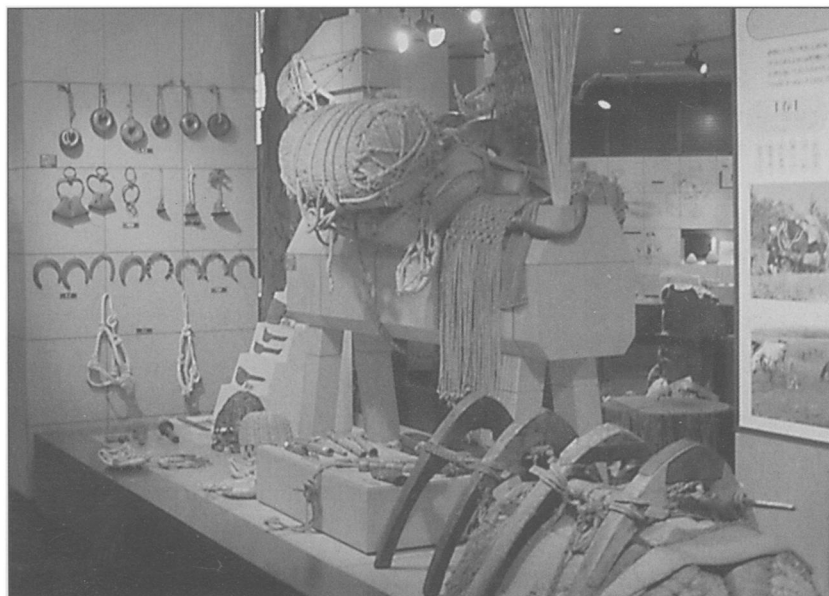
No one would seriously disagree that anthropology's public mission is to promote cultural understanding among different groups of people. Ironically, people all over the world have accused anthropologists on various occasions of spreading 'misconceptions' of their culture, as the Samoans' persistent criticisms of Margaret Mead's *Coming of age in Samoa* show (Yamamoto 1994). In my view, these misconceptions have more to do with the natives' outsider status in the study of their own culture than with factual errors anthropologists may have made. Native discontent stems from the structure of ethnography itself, in which anthropologists' 'dialogic others' are the readers within their own linguistic and cultural community, many of whom are their professional colleagues. As Johannes Fabian (1983:85) put it, though in a different context, natives are 'posited (predicated)', but are 'not spoken to'. They are, in other words, excluded from the dialogic circle of ethnography and acquire legitimacy only as objects of thought.

Like the Samoans, many people studied by anthropologists have complained about what has been said of their culture because, while they were extensively 'exploited' as sources of information during fieldwork, they are seldom consulted once it is over and the ethnography is written. As the Native American anthropologist Beatrice Medicine (2001) has pointed out, it is not unusual that the finished products (i.e. books and articles) are not even shown to them. It would, therefore, be incorrect to suppose that natives are merely contesting the accuracy of outsiders' representations, which almost inevitably include errors and misunderstandings, despite their revelatory values.

Native protest

The controversy between Jocelyn Linnekin and Haunani-Kay Trask about Hawaiian nationalism illuminates this point.³ In her pioneering work on the invention of tradition, Linnekin (1983) maintained that the resurgence of interest in their history among urban Hawaiians is part of

Fig. 5. Traditional farm tools displayed at the Tōno Municipal Museum.



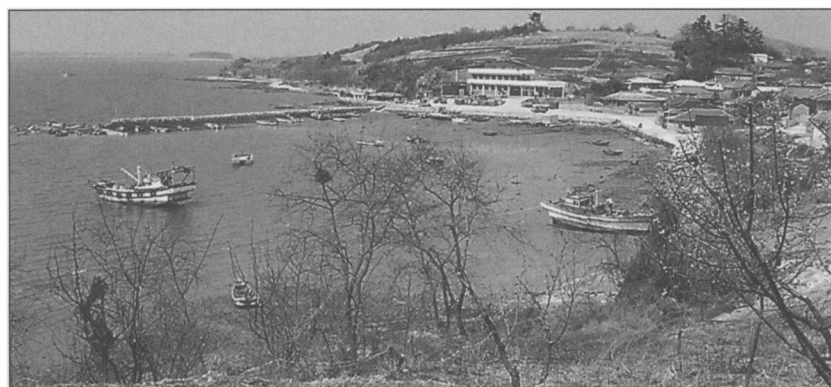
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Fig. 7. Headed by Akira Takeda (centre left, in white cap), students studying anthropology and folklore at Soka University, Tokyo, arrive on the island of Ōshima, off the Bay of Tokyo, to receive ethnographic training.

- Asante, Molefi Kete 1999. *The painful demise of Eurocentrism*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.
- Brettell, Caroline B. (ed.) 1993. *When they read what we write*. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.
- Clifford, James & George E. Marcus (eds) 1986. *Writing culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Fabian, Johannes 1983. *Time and the other*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Fahim, Hussein (ed.) 1982. *Indigenous anthropology in non-Western countries*. Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press.
- Geertz, Clifford 1988. *Works and lives*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Fig. 6. A fishing village in Mokp'o, at the southern tip of the Korean peninsula. Akira Takeda conducted much of his fieldwork in this area.



the new movement for cultural revival. In her view, the traditions they admire have been selected arbitrarily and thus 'invented' to suit the present political purposes, rather than having been handed down from their ancestors. Linnekin then cited the example of *aloha 'āina* (love of land), arguing that it has become a convenient slogan in the Hawaiians' demand for the return of Kaho'olawe Island, where their ancestors are allegedly buried.

Linnekin's thesis is theoretically exciting, but she has met strong opposition from Hawaiians who accuse the US Navy of destroying sacred ground for military training. Among her fierce critics is Trask, the author of *From a Native daughter* (1999), who contends that *aloha 'āina* is an authentic tradition of her people. She argues that *aloha 'āina* has taken on a political meaning because land use is now contested, maintaining that 'The Hawaiian cultural motivation reveals the persistence of traditional values, the very thing Linnekin claims modern Hawaiians have "invented"' (1999:128). Particularly important in our context is her assertion that outsiders' representations have been privileged over those of natives. 'In a colonial world,' Trask writes, 'the work of anthropologists and other Western-trained "specialists" is used to disparage and exploit Natives.'

Thus, what Linnekin writes about Hawaiians has more potential power than what Hawaiians write.' Trask argues that this is demonstrated by the US Navy's use of Linnekin's argument that Hawaiian nationalists have invented the sacred meaning of Kaho'olawe. She further argues that statements made by white people are accepted as 'facts' with little verification, whereas natives' assertions are subjected to strict examination of evidence. She attributes these different standards of proof to racism. This suggests that anthropology can be used not only to delegitimize native claims, but also to legitimize possibly coercive relationships by outsiders. Similar criticisms are found in the writings of Molefi Kete Asante (1999), a proponent of Afrocentrism.

The 'world system' of anthropology

The discourse of native intellectuals should be distinguished from that of laymen. The internal diversity of a native community should also be noted. Generally, however, natives' voice has seldom reached the metropolitan West, where much of the esteemed knowledge about them is produced. Even when it is heard, it tends to be stigmatized as 'biased' or simply ignored as 'noise'. I submit that this situation derives from the imbalance of power in the 'academic world system', rather than from the alleged lack of sophistication of native discourse (Kuwayama 2000a, 2000b, forthcoming).

Every academic field constitutes a 'world system'. Like the economic world system described by Immanuel Wallerstein (1979), this system consists of two major groups of countries or regions: the 'core' (centre) and the 'periphery' (margin). (For the sake of simplicity the group that falls in between – what Wallerstein called 'semi-periphery' – is not discussed here.)⁴ Although they nurture diverse traditions of anthropology, the United States and Great Britain, and to a lesser extent France, together constitute the core of anthropology. Even though there are internal differences, their collective power is such that other countries, including those in the rest of Europe, have been relegated to the periphery. As the late Swedish scholar Tomas Gerholm aptly pointed out, the relationship between the core and the periphery may be likened to that between the mainland and remote islands (Gerholm 1995). People on the mainland can go through their life oblivious of what happens to the remote islands, but the opposite is hardly true. Similarly, central scholars can safely ignore peripheral scholars without risking their career, whereas the latter will be labelled 'ignorant' or even 'backward' if they are unfamiliar with the former's research. This asymmetrical relationship shows that the core has the power to dictate the dominant modes of academic discourse. The periphery is forced to accept them, for example by adopting the central scholars' theories, methods, and writing styles, if it wishes to be recognized internationally. Under these circumstances, it is difficult for peripheral scholars to speak with those at the centre on an equal basis.

Simply put, the world system of anthropology describes the politics involved in the production, dissemination, and consumption of knowledge about other peoples and cultures. Influential scholars in the core countries are in a position to decide what kinds of knowledge should be given authority and merit attention. The peer-review system at prestigious journals reinforces this structure. Thus knowledge produced on the periphery, however significant and valuable, will be buried locally unless it meets the standards and expectations of the core – hence the neglect of native discourse in the wider world.

Minority scholars in the United States often complain about their marginal status within American anthropology. The fact is, however, that their voice gets through to the rest of the world to a considerably greater degree than that of natives in other regions because they too are located at the centre of the academic world system.

Skirmishes with 'peripheral' scholars

Let us take up the example of Japan to further clarify this point. In 1994, Sandra A. Niessen contributed to *Museum Anthropology* a review article on the permanent exhibition of Ainu culture at Japan's National Museum of Ethnology, known as Minpaku,⁵ where she had spent six months as a guest researcher. She presented her article as a reflection on the complexities of representation of indigenous peoples in local and international settings. However, in Japan the review was widely received as a severe criticism of local Japanese scholarship and representation of the Ainu. Her arguments may be summarized as follows. (1) Since

Fig. 8. An Ainu ritual called *kamuinomi* (god worship) is held every year at a *chise* (house) displayed in Minpaku. At the centre, in traditional dress, is Shigeru Kayano.



- Gerholm, Tomas 1995. Sweden: Central ethnology, peripheral anthropology. In H.F. Vermeulen & A.A. Roldán (eds) *Fieldwork and footnotes*, pp. 159-170. London: Routledge.
- Knight, John 1996. An interview with Sasaki Kōmei, National Museum of Ethnology. *ANTHROPOLOGY TODAY* 12(3): 16-20.
- Kuwayama, Takami 2000a. Native anthropologists. *Ritsumeikan Journal of Asia Pacific Studies* 6: 7-33.
- 2000b. Kunio Yanagita's global folkloristics reconsidered [in Japanese]. *Bulletin of the Folklore Society of Japan* 222: 1-32.
- (forthcoming). The world system of anthropology. In S. Yamashita, J. Bosco & J. S. Eades (eds) *The making of anthropology in East and Southeast Asia*. Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- Linnekin, Jocelyn S. 1983. Defining tradition. *American Ethnologist* 10: 241-252.
- Marcus, George E. & Michael M.J. Fischer 1986. *Anthropology as cultural critique*. University of Chicago Press.
- Medicine, Beatrice 2001. *Learning to be an anthropologist and remaining 'native'*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Messerschmidt, Donald A. (ed.) 1981. *Anthropologists at home in North America*. Cambridge University Press.
- Niessen, Sandra A. 1994. The Ainu in Minpaku. *Museum Anthropology* 18(3): 18-25.
- 1997. Representing the Ainu reconsidered. *Museum Anthropology* 20(3): 132-144.

Fig. 9. Akira Takeda exchanges greetings with a villager upon his arrival in Mokp'o. To his right is Suman Na, Takeda's Korean colleague, who teaches at Mokp'o University.



its opening in 1977, Minpaku has had a close relationship with Shigeru Kayano, the first Ainu to be elected to the Japanese Parliament. Although it was couched in the context of a complex comparative argument, Japanese scholars took particular exception to the implication they perceived in Niessen's article, namely that Kayano's view of Ainu culture resembled that of salvage anthropologists. (2) The ethnographic film made by Minpaku at Kayano's house in Hokkaido was shot in 'sanitized' settings, thus creating a 'fictitious illusion of authenticity'. (3) The politics of cultural representation is seldom discussed among Minpaku staff. The museum has no official policy about what to display and how; exhibitions are programmed on a case-by-case basis. (4) The history of struggle between the Ainu and the dominant Japanese is concealed in Minpaku's exhibition. In North America, similar exhibitions would be criticized as blatant attempts to oppress ethnic minorities. (5) Minpaku's gallery creates an idyllic image of the Ainu people. It calls to mind the exhibition *The spirit sings*, sponsored by Shell in Canada during the 1988 Calgary Olympic Games, at a time when the First Nation peoples represented in the exhibition were in conflict with Shell about exploitation of resources on their territory. The exhibition was boycotted by Native Canadian peoples, who gained international attention through their protests. (6) When Niessen asked Tadao Umesao, then Minpaku's director general, if such a reaction could occur in Japan, he 'laughed incredulously', saying it was 'posterous'.⁶

Two Japanese anthropologists at Minpaku, Kazuyoshi Ohtsuka and Akitoshi Shimizu, raised strong objections to

Niessen's review. Pointing out the trust and friendship Minpaku has assiduously worked to forge with Ainu people, Ohtsuka (1997) objected as follows: (1) Niessen's criticisms of Minpaku are scornful; (2) her 'surprising misunderstandings' derive from her failure to consult Minpaku's publications, in which the museum's exhibition policies are clearly spelled out; (3) Niessen's article is based on 'superficial impressions'. Had she consulted Minpaku staff before publishing her paper, she could have avoided much trouble and embarrassment; (4) by misrepresenting the cause of Ainu people, Niessen has injured their dignity, and especially Kayano's reputation; (5) the 'illusion of authenticity' she problematized is an example of her quixotic discourse. The depicted Ainu themselves questioned her interpretation; (6) Niessen's claim that Minpaku should highlight the conflict between the dominant Japanese and the Ainu shows how she was intent on 'brainwashing' Japanese with her own ideas.

Shimizu's objection was more theoretical than Ohtsuka's. He was particularly critical of Niessen's neglect of the Japanese-language literature. According to him, her neglect demoted Minpaku to an 'illiterate' status, 'without history.' In Shimizu's opinion, Niessen innocently assumed she could understand Minpaku's exhibitions by participant observation only, a method originally developed to study non-literate people. The 'imagined' Minpaku, said Shimizu, was then judged by the supposedly global standards of North America. Shimizu concluded that Niessen's article is 'a political text which has the effect of establishing the hegemony of the "North American" standards of museums and anthropology over



Fig. 10. Akira Takeda takes notes while conducting an interview in Korean with a villager in Mokpo.

- Ohtsuka, Kazuyoshi 1997. Exhibiting Ainu culture at Minpaku. *Museum Anthropology* 20(3): 108-119.
- Said, E. 1978. *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon.
- Shahrani, M. Nazif 1994. Honored guest and marginal man. In Don D. Fowler & Donald L. Hardesty (eds) *Others knowing others*, pp. 15-67. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Shimizu, Akitoshi 1997. Cooperation, not domination. *Museum Anthropology* 20(3): 120-131.
- Sinha, Vineeta 2000. Moving beyond critique. *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science* 28(1): 67-104.
- Trask, Haunani-Kay 1999. *From a Native daughter* [2nd ed.]. University of Honolulu Press.
- van Bremen, Jan 1997. Prompters who do not appear on the stage. *Japan Anthropology Workshop Newsletter*, 26-27: 57-65.
- Wallerstein, Immanuel 1979. *The capitalist world-economy*. Cambridge University Press.
- Yamamoto, Matori 1994. Sexuality in anti-colonialism [in Japanese]. *Annals of Social Anthropology* 20: 111-130.

their counterparts in Japan' (Shimizu 1997:120).

In her response to Ohtsuka and Shimizu, Niessen described their views as 'personal and sometimes unprofessional' (Niessen 1997:141). Niessen asserts that she in fact sent a draft of her article for comment to her Japanese museum colleagues for feedback before publication, but received no response. Although some of her points are well taken, from my point of view her strategy was that of a detached theorist. For example, she effectively disregarded Ohtsuka's meticulous comments on Ainu history and its display at Minpaku, thereby avoiding a wrangle with Ohtsuka, an Ainu specialist. Instead she wrote at length – with the benefit of hindsight – about the significance of her article, referring to some of the most recent theories in museum studies in North America. Although Niessen herself is Canadian and works at a Canadian university, Ohtsuka and Shimizu criticized her for what they felt was too strong an American orientation, involving 'brainwashing' the Japanese and strengthening American 'hegemony'. Her defence was skilful and, insofar as the debate took place in the context of Anglo-vernacular journals, the Japanese came across as mostly intellectually immature and ideologically motivated.

I have not taken up this debate with the intention of disparaging Niessen. She reviewed a public exhibition on the strength of her abilities as a museums specialist, without claiming to be an expert on the Ainu or on Japan (she is a specialist on Indonesia), and without knowledge of the Japanese language (which thus precluded her from reading Minpaku's publications). However, this case does show how certain ingredients can and often do unintentionally contribute to confrontations between native and outside scholars.⁷ First, native texts (i.e. literature written in the local language) are often taken too lightly. Generally, outsiders are not in a position to take on board the nuances and complexities of native scholarship; indeed, they often disregard it when they do not consider it directly relevant to their immediate research. Second, native intellectuals tend to be regarded as 'knowledgeable informants' rather than as equal research partners. Outside researchers are indebted to them for many things during fieldwork, but in the process of writing up research results these researchers effectively monopolize the right to interpret the information provided by their 'informants'. Third, native discourse tends to be seen as 'propaganda' promoting a particular political position, effectively keeping native communities outside the respectable academic community. Fourth, the researchers' moral responsibility towards

their research subjects is frequently evaded in the name of scholarship. Native claims that outsider representations harm their interests and reputation are often not considered carefully enough. If outside researchers fail to respond to native objections, this can be experienced as hidden, yet deep-seated, contempt for native intelligence.

The danger of cultural nationalism

Having said this, we must remember that native discourse has often supported cultural nationalism, especially when it is connected with native rights movements. Moreover, native discourse tends to generate reverse Orientalism or so-called 'Occidentalism' because it is constructed in opposition to the prevailing discourse in the West. On more than a few occasions native intellectuals, threatened by overwhelming power, have attempted to gain spiritual independence by eliminating Western influence. Unfortunately, their attempts have largely failed because modernity has been brought about under Western leadership. Its traces are visible in almost every area of everyday life throughout the world. It is safe to say that there is hardly any genuinely indigenous system of thought that is completely free from Western influence, whether positive or negative.

For people in the non-Western world, then, categorically refusing Western ideas is tantamount to depriving themselves of any intellectual power. Indeed, over-emphatic claims to difference have resulted in alienation in the wider world: a case in point is the marginalization of 'African social science' as described by Vineeta Sinha. Sinha (2000) points out that although this discipline has merits of its own it has become increasingly 'exotic' and marginalized because of its adamant rejection of Western intellectual traditions. The study of folklore in Japan may be cited as another example of this kind of marginalization. Founded by a group of ambitious scholars led by Kunio Yanagita (1875-1962), one of the intellectual giants of modern Japan, Japanese folklore studies had the potential to develop into an attractive, stimulating field. Yanagita was well versed with the works of leading European scholars of his time, including James Frazer, and he occasionally expressed his debt to them. His strong cultural nationalism, however, together with his desire to be regarded as the undisputed founder of the discipline, led him to intentionally omit bibliographies from his voluminous books. As a result, later generations of Japanese folklorists were unable to trace the origin of Yanagita's thought, and they have been isolated not only from their international colleagues but also from Japanese specialists in other fields, including anthropology, which has developed under the strong influence of Western scholarship.

Conclusion

In this article, I have interpreted the word 'native' in its broad sense and discussed the various problems involved in cultural representation from the viewpoint of people who are described. To avoid misunderstandings, I must point out in conclusion that I am not advocating the exclusive right of natives to study their own people. It is true that the deepest layers of a culture are not easily accessible to outsiders, but there are many things that escape insiders' attention. If anything, some things may better be analysed when seen from the outside than from the inside. Problems arise, however, when temporary residents like anthropologists assume the superiority of their research skills and excellence of their interpretations while neglecting native reactions. Natives will object when foreign researchers elevate themselves to the status of ultimate judge on their culture. Anthropology has become a global discipline and is practised today in many parts of the world. The advance of our discipline depends on whether or not we are prepared to accept natives as 'dialogic partners'. ●