

# ANOTHER POSSIBILITY FOR "NATIVE ANTHROPOLOGY"

## THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING OF KURODA TOSHIO AND *SHINBUTSU SHŪGŌ*

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**Abstract:** In this article, I consider the developmental possibility of cultural anthropological studies on Japan by Japanese researchers, and rethink the problems of describing Japanese folk culture to the Japanese people using the Japanese language, on the basis of the concept of the "world system of anthropology" formulated by Kuwayama Takami. As a concrete example, I take up the model of Japanese cultural history as proposed by Kuroda Toshio (1926-1993), a famous historian of the Japanese medieval period, especially his historical model based on the concept of *kenmitsu* Buddhism and the concept of *shinbutsu shūgō* (the mixture of Buddhism and Shinto). I attempt to describe the folk culture of Japan according to that historical model, and also articulate problems in describing Japanese folk culture through that attempt.

In creating the concept of a "world system of anthropology," Kuwayama clarified its structure of hegemony, while simultaneously describing the position of "native" and "native anthropologists" to that system. The position of natives and native anthropologists is marginal to the center of the world system of anthropology, in the same way that Japanese cultural anthropologists are marginal to the so-called "local system" in which Japanese cultural discourses are created. In that "local system," historical studies and Japanese folklore form the center of academic cultural discourses about Japan, and their discourses are formulated by such actors as the publishing world, the policies of the government toward cultural inheritance, and educational systems, and are consumed and reproduced as "Japanese traditional culture" by the general Japanese audience. Meanwhile, current Japanese anthropology and anthropologists lie outside that "local system," that is, they are marginal to it, because they have excluded Japanese studies from their field. Accordingly, Kuwayama's attempt to relate that marginal position to the central hegemony and ideology of the world system of anthropology can be considered an effective method to deconstruct the ideology and modernity of the Japanese "local system."

In my essay, I specifically look at the model of Japanese cultural history developed by Kuroda Toshio, a heretical Japanese historian, as mentioned above. That is because the central ideology created by Japanese cultural history conflicts with that kind of current cultural and historical discourse. For example, he said that the orthodox religion of Japan in the medieval era was not the so-called Kamakura new Buddhism (i.e., the Jōdo, Zen, and Nichiren sects) as is generally thought, but rather *kenmitsu* Buddhism—which started in the eighth or ninth century and lasted to the fifteenth or sixteenth—which lay on the theological foundation of *honji suijaku* (the idea that Japanese deities were provisional manifestations in Japan of Indian Buddhist deities).

Further, he also demonstrated that Japanese Shinto was merely one sect of *kenmitsu* Buddhism, and did not have historical substance. He regarded *kenmitsu* Buddhism as the original basis of Japanese folk culture, not the masses in themselves or Shinto. In that model, then, where exactly can one position Japanese folk culture? Kuroda insisted that *kenmitsu* Buddhism itself became indigenous in folk society, and he opposed the idea that folk culture reflected Japanese culture before the introduction of Buddhism to the country. That historical model contradicts that of the discipline of Japanese folklore studies, which supposes the existence of a "pure" and "essential" model of Japanese folk culture existing outside the influence of Buddhism.

Kuroda regarded folk culture to be *kenmitsu* Buddhism in medieval Japan, and current Japanese folk culture as the outcome of historical processes in which the cultural subjects changed from *kenmitsu* Buddhism to the masses. His model of folk cultural history can be reconstructed in the current Japanese field, especially through the survival of the belief in *shinbutsu shūgō*, but very few ethnographic reports remain in Japan on the basis of his historical model. That means that the conception of a description of Japanese culture does not exist in the center of Kuroda's model of *kenmitsu* Buddhism or *shinbutsu shūgō*, in the Japanese "local system" in which Japanese cultural discourses are constructed. Namely, Japanese cultural discourses are strongly influenced by the ideology and modernity of that "local system."

Meanwhile, one cannot say that the "world system of anthropology" (as described by Kuwayama) can be cleanly separated from the "local system." Cultural discourses that are created in the "local system" are translated into the common main language (English in the case of anthropology) of the world system, because of the officially recognized validity in the "local system." Accordingly, one can say that those cultural discourses have already been adopted by knowledge of the "world system." The position of Japanese cultural anthropologists is thus doubly marginal—both to the world system of anthropology (as native anthropologists) and to the Japanese "local system" (as outsiders). At the same time, however, they have an advantageous position that allows them to obtain a relative view of both systems.

## **Introduction: The Ambiguity and Clarity of "Native"**

Due to Kuwayama's definitive problematic in his concept of "Native Anthropology" (1997), this terminology seems to have gradually but steadily accepted within the world of Japanese cultural anthropology. This phenomenon of course shows the re-evaluation of the significance of the thesis of "native anthropology" within the "postmodern" academic trends of recent years. However, what the word "native" here indicates, and what this thesis of "native anthropology" takes as its purpose may differ rather significantly depending on the person using

it. Therefore, I would like to express my own understanding of the term "native anthropology" as a first step toward summing up the various meanings of the expression.

While I admit that crowning the discipline of "anthropology" with the modifying adjective "native" has no intrinsic relationship to the academic significance of cultural anthropology, I believe that the problematic represented by the concept of native anthropology is crucial. However, this does not mean I would insist that we position this native anthropology as a subfield under the broader discipline of cultural anthropology. In the same way as the arguments of Kuwayama (1997, 2004) serving as a base for the present discussion, the problematics posited by "native anthropology" are effective in making visible issues in the academic system of cultural anthropology, or issues of system and hegemony relating to academic disciplines. In a certain sense, this might be similar to the categorization of "applied anthropology" in the past. One can say that the framework of applied anthropology, which includes the medical and educational anthropology that appeared in the 1970s, is—in light of the classical understanding of anthropology itself—a term positing a field different from itself. In the present, however, the very distinction between classical and applied has become obsolete, and there is no need to go out of the way to place a new modifier in front of "anthropology." Like applied anthropology, in time the category of native anthropology itself will become obsolete, and if in time nobody comes to speak of native anthropology, that will be fine, too. Ultimately, I believe that the category "native anthropology" is necessary only in a transitional, provisional sense, as a means of clarifying the thesis or topic.

In this way, the problematics of native anthropology could be said to be ultimately a form of strategic rhetoric. However, when this argumentation is used as a strategy to deconstruct the oppositional frameworks of native/non-native—that is to say the party that represents (the

anthropologist) and the represented (the native)—then there is a tendency for it to move in the direction of "anthropology for anthropology's sake," or towards the inwardness of "the anthropological world system." There is also a phrase that is largely synonymous with native anthropology, "home anthropology" or "anthropology at home," which chiefly American and British anthropologists have often used when treating their own societies as the field for anthropological research.<sup>i</sup> (The use of "home," rather than "native," is probably because the concept of native harbors some types of negative associations [Kuwayama 1997: 520-521; Nakagawa 2005b: 46-47].) The topic discussed here tends to focus on the appropriateness and significance of researchers in Western societies studying their own "home"—namely, making Western society the object of their field research.<sup>ii</sup> And since these various forms of research have been strongly influenced by Reflexive Anthropology and Postmodern Anthropology, they as a result do not take the form of simple studies of "home," rather having the tendency to develop instead into highly self-critical meta-anthropological "research about 'home research,'" or about "anthropology as a product of Western culture" (Nakagawa 2005b: 45-46).

Of course, I do not deny that this kind of discussion is a worthwhile endeavor for cultural anthropology. However, when arguments about home research suddenly develop into problems of cultural anthropology as a whole, there is the possibility that the stance and research of non-Western native anthropologists may be ignored, with the result that fewer opportunities may exist to review their research. If one includes the discipline of Japanese folklore studies or ethnology (*minzokugaku*), then the anthropological research conducted by natives within Japan has already accumulated nearly a century of results; it is not a discipline begun only yesterday. In my own case, before the intellectual current of postmodernism entered into cultural anthropology, I was already starting field research in Japan (Umeya, Urano, and Nakanishi 2001,

for example), and I did not select Japan as my field in order to "anthropologically study anthropology." I might be said to have an extremely classical stance on cultural anthropology, but that is because—in order to expand the possibilities of Japan as a field—I venture to argue through native anthropology for research about Japan or Japanese cultural anthropology.

Therefore, the implication of the "native anthropology" argued in this essay is to focus on cultural anthropologists and their research from the perspective of the issue of system or institution. My fundamental perspective relies upon Kuwayama (1997 and 2004), and with this argument as an underpinning, I have already discussed the indistinctness of the position of Japanese cultural anthropologists who conduct research on Japan, using myself as subject matter (Nakanishi 2003). Kuwayama's characteristic feature (1997 and 2004) lies in his suggestion that even with the negative modifier "native" attached to it, when that "native" is reoriented as the actor undertaking anthropological research, the potential exists for a new form of cultural anthropology that stands in contrast to the center of the world system, and I have also been deeply influenced by that thesis.

Here, I would like to once more expound upon the characteristics of the problem raised by Kuwayama (1997). His argument finds its characteristics in (1) the addition of the axis of audience to the discussion regarding "native" (which is in turn characterized by the tendency to take place within the binary oppositions of anthropologist/informant and the West/the field), and (2) in its pointing out that the existence of the native and the native anthropologist becomes explicit through the system encompassing the anthropologist and his/her audience (Kuwayama 1997: 521). As the preceding example of postmodern anthropology shows, when the category of native is placed merely in terms of its relationship to the researcher or cultural anthropologist, the borders of the category become interminably indistinct due to the cultural anthropologist's

position. From the beginning, the very distinction between insider and outsider, or between home and foreign, is vague and relative. However, Kuwayama showed that it is characteristic of this system (in Kuwayama's terms, the "world system of anthropology") that the contours of this seemingly relativistic category are made explicit in the form of the absolute category of native. This argument, which clarified the contours of the seemingly vague "native" through the concept of the system, is clearly substantially different from the argument that is entirely concerned with the binary opposition of researcher/native.

Furthermore, Kuwayama advocates the strategic usage of the "native" position made explicit through the concept of this system. This strategy is to illuminate in reverse the intellectual ideology and hegemonic structures of the center from the peripheral position of "native." One could probably say that Kuwayama's analysis utilizing the "reverse reading of ethnography" (with Ruth Benedict as example) 2004: 87-114) is a successful case of the use of this strategy. This method does not allow the field of Native Anthropology to end up simply as "Cultural Anthropology," and it also avoids simple postmodern reflexivity, making it, I believe, an effective methodology for returning to constructive argumentation through the medium of the "field."

Due to the establishment of this "world system of anthropology," the traditional ambiguity of the concept of native has been eliminated and made more explicit, but, as modern research and educational systems are established in the peripheral regions where natives live, the "indigenization" of cultural anthropology is rapidly progressing (Yamashita et al., 2004). In a sense, cultural anthropology possesses tendencies of the social sciences and humanities even while differing from classical humanities such as History and Literature, has been indigenized under the strong influence of the framework of the state. Likewise, the fact that a comparison of

the fields of cultural anthropological research in Japan, China, and reveals substantial differences (Suenari 1992) illustrates the way in which this discipline is influenced differently depending on what point of the modernization process it is introduced as an educational and research system.

Outside the English-speaking world, Japan possesses the most vigorous level of research in cultural anthropology, but on the other hand, in its process of modernization Japan has proceeded in an original direction of research, one that differs from other non-Western countries, with the result that Japanese cultural anthropologists have come to occupy a unique position in Japan (Nakanishi 2003). In the next section, after explaining the nature of this structure, I will consider the application of "native anthropology" to this "local" world of Japan.

### **I. Another "Native Anthropology"**

Because they have been quite faithful to the discipline, Japanese cultural anthropologists find themselves situated within a rather unique academic situation, represented by their decision to not undertake fieldwork in Japan. Of course, until the 1970s, overseas fieldwork was a luxury few could afford, and under such economic conditions, Japanese cultural anthropologists did indeed perform fieldwork in Japan. Since the 1980s, however, with the rising value of the yen and subsidization of various fields of research, as well as the progressive academic recognition of the discipline of cultural anthropology, the model of cultural anthropology as a discipline synonymous with overseas fieldwork in non-Western countries became generally accepted, and that understanding is the discipline's defining orientation today.

The Western-inspired understanding of Japanese cultural anthropologists as researchers who conduct fieldwork exclusively overseas places Japanese cultural anthropologists at the

periphery of "Japanese Culture Studies," creating a phenomenon rarely encountered among non-Western scholars. Within modern Japanese academism, this tendency is probably not unrelated to the establishment of the enormously influential discipline of Japanese folklore studies preceding the introduction of cultural anthropology from the West. The imposing figure of Yanagita Kunio, in particular, can be considered a barrier not easily overcome by Japanese cultural anthropologists. Here, a curiously twisted system emerges. This is the division of labor between domestic fieldwork by ethnologists and overseas fieldwork by cultural anthropologists, and further acceptance of the tacit assumption that these respective fields were mutually exclusive. Many may wish to dispute this claim, but from my own perspective, as one undertaking research with Japan as one of my fields, it would not appear that significant works of cultural anthropological research dealing with Japan have had much impact on folklore and other areas of Japanese studies. The contrary examples are really too numerous to mention. For example, Ōbayashi Taryō (1990) used the concept of cultural territory to reconsider the distribution of Japan's cultural elements, but one doesn't hear of that theory being applied to a reevaluation of Yanagita Kunio's concentric theory model. Similarly the concept of pollution [*kegare*] as understood within Japanese ethnology has not been significantly altered as the result of issues raised by anthropologist Namihira Emiko (1984). Japanese ethnological research applying Komatsu Kazuhiko's structuralist and symbolist theories (1978; 1982) have dramatically enhanced the significance of earlier but marginal folklore research on spirits and possession, but the ethnologists in question seem to have little or no consciousness that they are utilizing cultural anthropological methods and theories.

This history and structure coincides to a curious degree with the relationship between Kuwayama's "world system of anthropology" and marginal "native anthropology." That is to say,

there exists in Japan an "academic system" that constructs the discourse on Japanese culture, and cultural anthropology lies outside of that system (the relationship with Japanese ethnology noted above is representative). In turn, cultural anthropologists are also outsiders to that system, or marginalized participants, with the result that their theories tend to be ignored or devalued. The class of "cultural anthropologists" referred to here is unrelated to nationality, and it might be more accurate to say that Japanese cultural anthropologists are located in the category of "foreigner." This structure is similar to—or the mirror image of—the relationship between the world system of anthropology and native (anthropologist). Here, in order to emphasize the contrast with the world system, I will tentatively use the expression "local system" to refer the closed system dominated by the Japanese language and composed of (1) the academic study that constructs Japanese cultural discourse (as I explain below, chiefly historical studies<sup>iii</sup> and native ethnology); (2) the official cultural views of the nation-state based on that study; and (3) the audience of consumers of that discourse (namely, the Japanese people). This system can be called an antithesis to Orientalism, that is to say, it is a system wherein the pronouncements of *outsiders* are expropriated. This conceptual framework may seem extreme, but it allows us to clarify the status of Japanese cultural anthropologists within Japanese Studies in the same way that Kuwayama delineated the status of native anthropologists through his proposal of the concept of the "world system of anthropology."

A particularly fascinating point in this regard is the way in which the Japanese cultural anthropologists who confront these antithetical systems of "world system" and "local system" are reduced to the literal role of "translator." With respect to the center of the world system of anthropology, they play the role of guides or informants providing information about Japanese culture and society. On the other hand, with respect to the "local system" responsible for

constructing Japanese cultural discourse, they represent the introducers of "advanced" theories from overseas. Both roles can be called that of "translator." No further explanation is probably necessary with regard to the former role, while with regard to the latter, the aforementioned research of Namihira Emiko and Komatsu Kazuhiko might be representative. Both analyzed Japanese folk culture by means of intellectual systems (the structuralism and symbolic studies of cultural anthropology) not available within the local system, but in the end what was introduced to the local system was neither the analytic content nor perspective of these scholars, but rather merely the terminology used in their analyses, specifically, words such as "symbol," "border," "binary," "everyday and non-everyday," "the Other," and so forth. When one hears the research reports presented before the annual meeting of the Japanese Ethnological Association, one is impressed by the prevalence of terminology previously used by, or currently being actively used by, cultural anthropologists. Furthermore they are often used in ways or with meanings that differ from those within cultural anthropology. The cultural anthropological methodology decodes particular, local customs by adopting cross-cultural analytical concepts oriented toward comparison. In Japanese ethnology, however, this methodology is turned on its head: the indicated concepts are substantiated, and discussed as if essential attributes of a particular and local custom (the term *kyōkai no minzoku* ["border folklore"] is probably a good example). In such cases the cultural anthropologist is reduced to the role of nothing more than provider of new terminology through translation. The context that makes those terms significant is overlooked, with the result that the cultural anthropologist is excluded from, or ignored in, the system that creates cultural discourse.

In this way, Japanese cultural anthropologists are marginalized by the local system that constructs Japanese cultural discourse, and it appears that what is expected is, at most, merely to

perform the role of translating and providing terms from the world system that will help unpack issues within the local system. Today, there is an apparent decline in the relative status of cultural anthropology within the humanities, but this may be due to the fact that the role expected of Japanese cultural anthropologists as translator of "the center" has been diminished due to overseas' postcolonial criticism and postmodern intellectual trends. As a result, the situation is one in which Japanese cultural anthropologists are being increasingly forced to adhere to the narrow framework imposed by the conventional model of "Japanese cultural anthropology" (that is to say, overseas field work). The current situation of close interconnection between cultural anthropology and area studies may be amenable to analysis in this context.

This double marginalization might also be said to be the result of the thorough way in which postwar Japanese anthropologists (ethnologists) depoliticized their discipline as the result of regret associated with prewar colonialism. However, is it proper for cultural anthropologists, who recognize themselves as specialists in culture studies, to recognize these conditions yet go ahead and acquiesce to them? I am not arguing they should aggressively contribute to the construction of Japanese cultural discourse, nor to the construction of a national framework. At the same time, while this structure is exceptionally distorted, Japanese cultural anthropologists have accumulated large amounts of field work experience in other cultures, and precisely because they have been excluded from the local system, it may remain possible that they are able to conduct new research from a perspective apart from the ideology that constructs the local system.

As a result, I think that the same method by which Kuwayama (1997, 2004) deliberately placed himself at the margins, throwing down the gauntlet to the central hegemonic structure of the world system, might be usefully applied to the local system of Japan. In this article, I will

provisionally call that method "another native anthropology." In Japan, assuming the positioning of cultural anthropologists within the world system and the local system is similar, even if the vectors directed toward them are diametrically opposed, it might be possible to use one and the same strategy in advancing research. To Japanese cultural anthropologists, however, this strategy of relativizing the center from the position of the periphery is not particularly novel. In research on East Asia, for example, Watanabe Yoshio's research on Okinawa and Suenari Michio's research on Taiwanese indigenous peoples, South Korea, and Vietnam, can be seen as representing a stance in which anthropological research on marginal areas is used to relativize the gigantic civilization of China. Watanabe's orientation in particular, which sprang from his research on Okinawa, demonstrates a paramount degree of originality among Japanese researchers.

However, the examples of such attempts being conducted successfully on mainland Japan are rare. That failure is represented, as noted before, in the form of frequent dismissal by the local system. Therefore it can be said that putting this orientation into practices requires a strategy. Namely, it is the necessity of a strategy in which one first grasps the characteristics of the local system that constructs modern Japan's cultural discourse, and on that basis deliberately works to participate in the essential areas of that system. I believe that the ruling ideological core of that local system is its historical perspective on culture. When discussing Japan—a literate society for more than a millennium—and no matter what the specific topic of research, history is given an overwhelmingly high relative weight in cultural discourse. I will argue in the next section that even in the case of Japanese ethnology, which might appear at first glance to hold a completely different orientation relative to the discipline of history, its academic significance is still defined in the context of its relationship to history. "Culture theory" in

literate societies also has the tendency to give precedence to historical context when discussing culture. In short, I am arguing that we search for a method similar to these, that is to say, one that relativizes the local system and its cultural discourse while dealing with history and relying on field work (a feature of cultural anthropology). To put it even more clearly, I think that it is appropriate to use field--based anthropological participation in Japanese culture history as a means for marginalized figures in Japan's local system to gain entry to the field of Japanese studies<sup>iv</sup>

What one must consider is the fact that this orientation does not make its aim the deconstruction of a narrowly conceived "modernity" of the sort often seen in postmodern studies. That because, in the face of the intricately constructed local system represented by (1) a public and solid academic framework of education and research; (2) the political system that reflects those academic achievements (for example, the issue of how the state designates important cultural assets); and (3) the concept of tradition that is reproduced on the basis of the preceding two, any attempt to deconstruct the "modern" nature of historical culture discourse may well fail to produce a perspective that reflects on history itself, but find itself trivialized merely to the framework of so-called "modern history."<sup>v</sup>

Therefore, at this juncture I want to take up the model of cultural history promoted by Kuroda Toshio (1926-1993). Kuroda was a somewhat heterodox historian who fundamentally altered our consciousness of medieval Japanese society and religion, and who is even now at the center of research on medieval Japanese history. Using his model, I want to explore a method of participating in the discourse on Japanese culture. This is of course intimately connected to the fact that I specialize in research on religious ethnology, and is also a perspective to which I was

led through research on the folk culture of Northern Kyushu that I began in the latter half of the 1990s. I will refer to the specific points of this research in Section III.

It seems that most Japanese historians who study Japan basically have a tendency to avoid the construction of a transhistorical model that transcends their own fields (time periods) of specialization.<sup>vi</sup> In contrast, Kuroda used his own theories about medieval history as the basis for advancing a "culture history" with broader implications. The characteristic of his theories lies in the fact that he sharply criticized the "modernity" of the historiography and Japanese ethnology forming the central actors in the local system, which in turn was responsible for constructing the modern culture discourse, as I discuss below. The substance of his theory was its fierce critique of the fact that both disciplines interpreted medieval Japan based upon modern models of religion and culture, with the result that they "mistakenly" reconstructed Japanese culture history.

Kuroda's research is still today made the topic of symposia at academic conferences on Japanese historiography,<sup>vii</sup> but while forming a central pillar in Japanese historical research, its sheer originality means that it is relegated to a less than "orthodox" status. This is probably because his "Japanese cultural history" obviously interfered with the cultural discourse constructed by the aforementioned local system and its modernity. In that sense Kuroda can be called a heretic within the local system. Even though they may not be heretics, when cultural anthropologists, as marginalized agents, confront the entrenched local system, Kuroda's theories can provide powerful inspiration. In the contemporary sense, we may be able to say that his work was postmodern research that "before its time."

## **II. Kuroda Toshio's Theory of Medieval History and its Escape from Modernity**

The local system that responsible for constructing Japanese cultural discourse is basically composed of two central axes, namely, historical research (chiefly the discipline of Japanese History) that makes history its object, and Japanese ethnology, that studies folk culture as a superficial expression of the substrate (or mentality) of Japanese culture. In contrast to historical studies, which objectify the process of change as history, Japanese ethnology views the culture of the masses as a realm not easily affected by political change; both, however, are in agreement in the sense that they possess a common background in the context of history, and it is possible to view this as fulfilling a mutually complementary function within the local system. Here, research produced by these two disciplines are politically and culturally reintegrated within the framework of the nation-state, with the final result that they receive official definition in manifold ways, from history textbooks and various other publications to the system for presenting state medals and awards.<sup>viii</sup> In this essay, I want to focus specifically on the discourse of Japanese ethnology within the larger cultural discourse created by this local system. This is because while historical study dedicates itself to thoroughly empirical research based upon written historical materials, Japanese ethnology can be recognized as possessing an obdurate ideological quality to it. Namely, while basing itself upon collected field data, Japanese ethnology maintains the assumption that Japan possesses an ethnically indigenous culture (=folk culture), that that culture has been historically transmitted among the masses, and that that culture can be detected even today in fragmentary form.<sup>ix</sup> In order to validate this hypothetical premise, it is necessary to the historical existence of two things: first, an indigenous unique folk culture, and second, an image of the folk as the bearers of that culture. Even though it is difficult in the extreme to verify this premise, it has already been publicly approved by the state in the

form of the system of designating ethnic cultural properties. In that sense, it is more fitting to call this premise an ideology rather than a hypothesis.

Kuroda can be considered a rare academic who, from his field of specialization in medieval religious history, clearly asserted that this premise of Japanese ethnology could not be historically valid. If this had been a simple critique of ideology, it could just as easily be made by cultural anthropologists of today. However, since cultural anthropologists are generally unversed in history, they would occupy an extremely weak position if asked to provide evidence for such critical claims. Additionally, the problem of translation also intervenes here. Even when using the same Japanese language, the ruling vocabulary of historical study and ethnology is only mildly familiar to cultural anthropologists, and without understanding the context of that vocabulary, they confront the same problem as that experienced when translating into a foreign language. Therefore, even if, for example, a cultural anthropologist criticizes the ideology, in the end it appears that he or she has done nothing more than suggest an alternative ideology. Certainly to Kuroda as an historian, it was important to propose a new alternative culture history model together with its historical rationale, with the result that he suggested the core and crux of Japanese folk culture to be *kenmitsu* Buddhism. For Kuroda, the regime represented by esoteric-exoteric Buddhism was not only the Japanese expression of Mahayana Buddhism's development, but also formed the most powerful units of political and economic influence in the medieval period, and moreover thoroughly controlled Japanese religious culture as a whole. In other words, he considered that the very process of shifting the subject of folk culture from *kenmitsu* Buddhism to the people represented a moment in Japanese cultural history, with the result that he doubts the existence of a folk culture—particularly religious folk culture—independent from *kenmitsu* Buddhism. Folk culture was not a fundamental possession of the people, but rather, in

the process of the disintegration of the medieval world, the subjectivity of that culture passed to the people, with the result that Kuroda asserted that *kenmitsu* Buddhism formed the mold from which were drawn the religious practices of folk religious culture. This framework of Kuroda's cultural history with its thoroughly "historicizing" of folk culture clearly contradicts the cultural discourse created by the contemporary Japanese local system, particularly the premises of Japanese ethnology. Cultural anthropologists are relatively unfamiliar with this concept of "*kenmitsu* Buddhism" that Kuroda places at the core of Japanese culture. What exactly was it? The following is a general overview to the issue:

The term *kenmitsu* Buddhism is one that Kuroda created as a criticism of the narrative constructed by modern Japanese religious historians, especially the historical account focusing on the equation of medieval Buddhism with "new Kamakura Buddhism," and he also used it to suggest the true religious image of the enormously powerful and extensive temple and shrine institutions, which were the largest estate (*shōen*) holders of the age.<sup>x</sup> While extant perspectives, represented by Ienaga Saburō (1947), took the "new Buddhism" of the Kamakura-period as the core of medieval religion, Kuroda considered those perspectives as no more than reflections of modern sectarian history (Kuroda 1994b: 287-340), and he went on to describe the medieval manifestation of religion by using the contemporary term *kenmitsu* or "exoteric-esoteric." *Kenmitsu* was a term used in the medieval period to refer comprehensively to the various exoteric Nara Buddhist schools (*kengyō*) constituted early in the medieval period, together with the Tendai and Shingon schools of esoteric Buddhism (*mikkyō*) constituted thereafter, and these various schools overall based their activities on an esoteric ideology geared toward "practical benefits in this world" [*genze riyaku*]<sup>—</sup>for example the pacification and protection of the nation [*chingo kokka*], and "abundance and fertility of the five grains" [*gokoku hōjō*]. Categorizing

these various religious schools as *kenmitsu* Buddhism, he asserted that they represented the religious orthodoxy of the Japanese medieval world. Based on this, he then used the term *kenmitsu taisei* ("exoteric-esoteric regime") to refer to the system whereby religious powers based on this religious ideology of "*kenmitsu*-ism" took the form of "collusion" with state power so as to permanently fix the boundaries of orthodoxy religion (Satō 1995; Kuroda 1994b: 45-182). Kuroda defines *kenmitsu* Buddhism as Japan's religious core for the 600-700 years until the sixteenth century, namely until Oda Nobunaga burned the temple complex of Mt. Hiei in 1571. The characteristics of this *kenmitsu* Buddhist thought include the aforementioned esoteric concept of "power" and the concept of *honji suijaku*. Particularly with regard to *honji suijaku* thought, Kuroda claimed that this concept—which arose in the eighth century and proclaimed that the Japanese *kami* were provisional manifestations of buddhas who appeared for the benefit of living creatures, and thus led to the identification of buddhas and *kami*—was the defining religious discourse of *kenmitsu* Buddhism (Kuroda 1980: 20-21; 1994b: 75-80).

In relation to *honji suijaku* thought, Kuroda makes important observations regarding Japanese "Shinto." He does not view Japanese "Shinto" as a historically independent religious school or sect, but rather takes it as one part of the exoteric-esoteric regime that was the religious system based on *kenmitsu* Buddhism, and thus situates Shinto *within* exoteric-esoteric Buddhism (Kuroda 1994b: 287-308). Observing that shrines (*miya, jinja*) did not exist as autonomous organizations but always united with Buddhist temples (*jiin*) to form powerful politico-religious entities, he called this the phenomenon of "temple-shrine powers" [*jisha seiryoku*] (Kuroda 1980, 1995). From the perspective of the modern image of religion based on sect history, the "contours" of such temple-shrine powers may seem a bit hazy. To Kuroda, the large temples of Nara Buddhism (such as Tōdaiji and Kōfukuji) were part of the construct of temple-shrine

powers, but on the other hand, "shrines" [*miya*] like Usa Hachimangū of Ōita prefecture and Iwashimizu Hachimangū of Kyoto where "*kami*" were enshrined were likewise members of the "temple-shrine powers" complex based on *kenmitsu* Buddhism. It may be easier for cultural anthropologists to understand this phenomenon by describing temples and shrines as together composing a single polythetic<sup>xi</sup> complex. Kuroda continued by pointing out that even the medieval "Shinto thought" of the Grand Shrines of Ise, said to have been unmediated by Buddhism, is in fact based upon the Tendai theory of "original enlightenment" (Kuroda 1994b: 146-160).

This clearly differs from the perspective of religious studies that understands *shinbutsu shūgō* in the context of "syncretism," as well as from the position of religious studies and Japanese ethnology that identifies worship at shrines as the indigenous religion of the Japanese people. Kuroda claims that the ancient belief in *kami* was not "Shinto," but rather a simple cult of heavenly and terrestrial deities [*jingi shinkō*]—translated into the terminology of cultural anthropology, it might be close to "rituals and worldview"—while Shinto as a systematic religion was devised from within the framework of *kenmitsu* Buddhism, that was in turn based on *honji suijaku* thought. As an example of this, he indicates that neither "*shinbutsu shūgō*" [the amalgamation of *kami* and buddhas] nor any other similar terminology existed in medieval times. The concept that the two were distinct "religions" that had "amalgamated" was not seen prior to the spread of the Kokugaku [National Learning] perspective of the early modern period (Kuroda 1994b: 328-329). Kuroda argued that what we generally think of as "Shinto" was not historically an embodied "religion," but should rather be considered a form of religious thought that developed within the framework of *kenmitsu* Buddhism.

I have here very simply and roughly summarized Kuroda's theories on medieval religion, but even looking at this alone one can probably understand that his theories exhibit a radical element in comparison with previous historical discourse. In addition, Kuroda then suggested a Japanese culture history that paralleled the rise and fall of the *kenmitsu* Buddhism he had described. In that system, what position does so-called "folk culture" (*minzoku bunka*) hold? Here, Kuroda states that the *kenmitsu* ideology itself was transformed into folk culture (Kuroda 1994b: 329, 338). This does not mean that *kenmitsu* Buddhism "indigenized" by syncretizing with something previously existing in the popular religious world. Kuroda believes that *kenmitsu* Buddhism itself became a "folk culture." To Kuroda, the various religious concepts postulated by ethnologists as existing prior to the introduction of Buddhism were on the contrary compatible with cross-cultural notions such as animism and shamanism (though he does not use such anthropological terminology himself), and thus not particularly descriptive of the local culture of Japan (Kuroda 1980: 2-6). Instead, it is in the folk culture of *kenmitsu* Buddhism itself that he finds exemplary Japanese characteristics. And one could say that he conceptualized that folk culture by means of the framework of a culture history represented by the process extending through the early-modern regulation of religion under the shogunal feudal system to the eventual extinction of that folk culture through the separation of *kami* and buddhas [*shinbutsu bunri*] in the Meiji Restoration.

Here, some may have natural doubts with regard to Kuroda's concept that Buddhism itself was transformed into folk culture. This is because priests [*sōryō*] are renunciants [*shukkesha*], and from the start their connection to the popular world (the secular world) is supposed to be cut off. However, no problem exists whatsoever from the perspective of the theory of *honji suijaku* thought at the core of *kenmitsu* ideology. The *kami* representing the

"provisional manifestations" [*suijaku*] of buddhas can probably be easier understood as the objects of veneration not by Buddhist-renunciants, but rather by lay householders. Rites of worship to such *kami* are simultaneously expressions of faith in the buddhas representing the "original ground" [*honji*] of those *kami*. It is important to note that while the central object of worship here is the *kami*, the religious specialists who control that worship are the Buddhist renunciants. One can probably assume that Kuroda believed this *kenmitsu* system itself became a folk culture, thus creating the substrate for contemporary folk culture. *Kenmitsu* Buddhism's era as a "gate of power" [*kenmon*] wielding political and economic influence ended with the sixteenth century, but through the medium of esoteric Buddhist temples and Shugendō ascetics [*shugenja*], that same *kenmitsu* ideology and ritual system were preserved within folk culture period down through the Edo period. Even now, we can easily find remnants of that system "in the neighborhood." Ultimately, the early Meiji "separation of *kami* and buddhas [*shinbutsu bunri*]" struck the decisive blow to this system, while the subsequent emergence of State Shinto had the effect of destroying this kind of thought down to its roots. With the Meiji-period order to separate *kami* and buddhas, the "shrine temples [*jingūji*]" formerly located at every major *kami* shrine were without exception destroyed, while the so-called "shrine-priests" (*shasō*, Buddhist priests who simultaneously managed *kami* shrines and conducted their rituals) who controlled the various shrines to the *kami* were defrocked together with mountain ascetics [*shugenja*], or given no choice but to transition into the chief priests [*gūji*] of the new Shinto shrines.

The sort of religious culture history (folk-culture history) depicted by Kuroda contravenes at two points the cultural discourse that emerges from the contemporary Japanese local system as described earlier. One is the perspective on modern sectarian history, the other is folk-culture theory. In relationship to the former, one can note the evaluation of concepts of the

"amalgamation of *kami* and buddhas [*shinbutsu shūgō*]" and *honji suijaku*. These intellectual currents were not "doctrines" within the framework of the modern concept of "religious sects"; rather, they were "motifs" that enveloped the entire medieval world. In contrast to Kuroda, who explains medieval religious "orthodoxy" through its difference with the early modern and later periods, researchers of the modern period have projected the modern sectarian framework back into the medieval world, leading to an underestimation of *shinbutsu shūgō* and *honji suijaku* thought within the religious history (=sect history) of later eras. In relationship to the latter (folk culture theory), as I have repeatedly said, Kuroda's theory violates Japanese ethnology's identification of folk culture with Japanese "fundamental culture." Furthermore Kuroda's view of Shinto contradicts Japanese ethnology's view of Shinto as inseparable from Japan's "indigenous religion." As a result, the relationship of the two is virtually like oil and water. In this way, the culture history that Kuroda imagined is heterodox within the Japanese local system, and can therefore be expressed only as a culture history "model."

However, even today, 130 years after the Meiji government's suppression of the combinatory religion of *kami* and buddhas, it is surprisingly easy to confirm the vestiges of those beliefs throughout Japan. This is an important point in relation to the next field to develop, but the very breadth and depth of this kind of combinatory religion may lead some to opine that it is overly simplistic to lay all combinatory *shinbutsu shūgō* beliefs at the feet of *kenmitsu* influence. However, it was religious specialists who created the concepts of combinatory *shinbutsu shūgō*, and outside of what Kuroda calls the *kenmitsu* ideology, or the sects (e.g., Edo-period Tendai One-Truth Shinto) that transmitted the esotericism at the core of that ideology, there was historically no one who made that combinatory religion the core of their religious thought; it certainly was not a mere reflection of the popular religious worldview. Research related to the

separation of *kami* and buddhas [*shinbutsu bunri*] following the Meiji Restoration (e.g., Yasumaru, 1979) lets us understand the way combinatory *shinbutsu shūgō* thought penetrated deeply throughout popular thought, but on the other hand, it has also led to the tendency to understand this form of religion simplistically via the category of “folk culture” à la Japanese ethnology. But these concepts were not merely made up by the common people out of whole cloth; they were as well a historical product created and systematized entirely by those within the formal walls of “religion,” and Kuroda's claim that that combinatory faith was then translated, as is, to “folk culture,” is a crucial pointer in the sense of clarifying the previously ambiguous relationship between history and folklore. The high tide of *shinbutsu shūgō* came in the medieval period; with the early modern period, regulation of religion by the feudal regime [*bakuhatsu taisei*], together with the rise of Confucian thought and Nativism [*kokugaku*] resulted in a trend toward the negative evaluation of combinatory faith by the ruling regime. As a result, the religious phenomenon of combinatory *shinbutsu shūgō* represents a clear historical index when considering the process of formation of Japanese folk culture.

As a textual historian, Kuroda appears not to have conducted ethnological fieldwork, perhaps an inevitability in consideration of his negative attitude towards Japanese ethnology and cultural anthropology.<sup>xii</sup> It is interesting to note, however, that when one observes the actual field through Kuroda's culture-history model, his hypothesis has substantial persuasive power. The first attempt to apply the Kuroda model to cultural anthropological research was probably Shirakawa's research on *kagura* [votive dance] (2005; 2006a).<sup>xiii</sup> Shirakawa stated that what people transmitted under the veil of *kagura* was not an unchanging folk mentality, but rather the historical “‘shape’ of prayer” that was *kenmitsu* (Shirakawa 2005), and that the transmission of *kagura* was not driven by a folk mentality unbroken since “ancient times.” On the contrary, the

central axis of the historical process involving *kagura* is represented by the issue of how people were to continue to transmit the historical shape of a *kenmitsu* ideology that had been emptied due to politically suppression.

Although Kuroda's cultural history model is in contradiction with the contemporary discourse on Japanese culture, it seems to possess general applicability not only to *kagura*, but to other folk phenomena as well (see, for example, Nakanishi 2006). In the next section I will take up the folk religious practices of Nijōmachi in Itoshima District, Fukuoka Prefecture, and consider the effectiveness of Kuroda's model of culture history. Due to space constraints, however, I must limit the scope of my argument in this section. (For more detailed information, please see Nakanishi, 2005).

### **III. *Shinbutsu shūgō* and Cultural Description: The Case of Nijōmachi, Itoshima District, Fukuoka Prefecture**

With a population of 13,687 people (as of March 2006; see Figures 1 and 2), Nijōmachi is a town situated in the western part of Fukuoka Prefecture at the border with Saga Prefecture. With the exception of the Fukae district at the center of the town, the primary industry is agriculture, and in recent years the town has also developed as a bedroom community for commuters to the Fukuoka city region; the population of the town entered a growing trend from around 1985.

Fieldwork in this town allows one to confirm with surprising ease not only the phenomenon of *shinbutsu shūgō*, but also the history of the rise and fall of the *kenmitsu* Buddhism suggested by Kuroda.<sup>xiv</sup> While the nature of the relationship between *shinbutsu shūgō* and folk culture obviously varies depending on the area in question,<sup>xv</sup> it is nonetheless possible to

clearly observe the phenomenon even today in some fieldwork locales, and one can say that Nijōmachi is an excellent example of that type.

Nijōmachi is an entirely ordinary small suburban town, but since the medieval period the area has gone through a fascinating historical evolution. First, as a historical matter, Buddhism established itself rather early in this area. According to legend, an Indian monk named Seiga (清賀, 聖賀) came to the area in the Nara period and established seven temples (collectively called "The Seven Temples of Ito") in Nijōmachi and the city of Maebara to the east (both part of the medieval Ito estate) (Amamoto 1994: 13-15; Kyūshū Rekishi Shiryōkan, ed. 1989: 36). The only extant temple transmitting the legacy of these Seven Temples of Ito is Raizan Sennyōji (see Figure 2, same for the following), which according to temple legend was established in the year 178 of the Western calendar. It is said that the present-day area of Nijōmachi was originally home to two of the Seven Temples of Ito, one of which was Kyūanji of the Yoshii district. In turn, the shrine Fugoku Jinja is said to be the later incarnation of that temple, and today possesses three Heian-period buddha images designated nationally as Important Cultural Properties. The second of the two temples was Ikiji of the Ikisan district, which I will discuss below. There is no doubt that these temples actually existed, since they appear frequently in writings from the medieval period on (Nakanishi 2005: 710-711). Of course, one cannot take at face value the legend that the Seven Temples of Ito were founded in the Nara period, but it is possible to surmise they had been essentially established by the Kamakura period, at latest, based on the fact that in the late Heian period the Ito estate was the property of Hōkongōin, a temple sponsored by Emperor Toba's consort Taikenmon'in (1101-1145) (Hattori 1998: 5), and on other sources (Nakanishi 2005: 710-711). The majority of these temples were destroyed during the civil wars of the sixteenth century.

(Illustration 1<sup>xvi</sup>)

Second, unlike other regions, no *daimyō* appeared in the Nijōmachi area throughout the medieval period, nor did the area come under the control of such a warlord. The local Harada clan maintained administrative control over the region from the beginning of the medieval period until that the sixteenth century, with the result that the Ito estate is located in one of those few areas nationwide where the manor (*shōen*) system continued in operation for the longest period of time.<sup>xvii</sup>

Third, under the early modern feudal system (*bakuhau taisei*), the western part of present-day Nijōmachi and Maebara was under a somewhat unusual type of control wherein it was governed as an exclave away from its political center. At the beginning of the early modern period the area was located within the territory of the Karatsu domain, but later the city's western portion came within the Tsushima domain while the city's eastern portion became an exclave of the more distantly separated Buzen Nakatsu domain, and this situation continued until the Meiji Restoration (Committee for the Compilation of Nijōmachi Documents, ed. 1967: 16-17). Based on fundamental characteristic of such exclave government, as well as historical conditions such as the radical reorganization of temples by the Tsushima and Nakatsu domains and the fact that the region did not implement the Restoration policy of “separation of *kami* and buddhas” (*shinbutsu bunri*), one can assume that a relatively moderate form of the earlier syncretic system of *kami*-buddha beliefs (*shinbutsu shūgō*) continued to be observed.

With these three points as a backdrop, I would like to consider two "folk events" observed in the town of Nijōmachi. The first is the "*odaishikō*" which takes place in the district of the mountain Ikisan each year on December 25<sup>th</sup>. Normally, the term "*daishikō*" is used to refer to veneration of the Shingon sectarian founder Kūkai (Kōbō Daishi), but the *odaishikō*

conducted at Ikisan is a ceremony that venerates Tendai founder Saichō (the anniversary of Saichō's death is the 25<sup>th</sup> day of the eleventh month, but in accordance with the modern calendar it is held one month later). Traditional participants in this rite were the twelve houses who had Buddhist titles as house names (*yagō*), but some have left in recent years, so that now only five or six houses participate. In historical documents from the area, eight Buddhist house titles (Seiko-bō, Sekishō-bō, Daikyō-bō, Sekkō-bō, Monzen-bō, Kakumon-bō, Hanazō-bō, and Songen-bō) first appear from 1706, and even today the Buddhist house names and the corresponding families continue unchanged (two houses each claim the names Monzen-bō, Kakumon-bō, Hanazō-bō, and Songen-bō, making twelve houses altogether).

The *Daishikō* is held in the main living room of one of the participating families on an annually revolving basis. On the morning of December 25, a hanging scroll of Tendai founder Saichō<sup>xviii</sup> is hung in the alcove of the living room of the house designated that year, and the head priest of the parish temple of the family in question comes in and reads a sutra—a rather austere ceremony memorializing the spirit of Saichō. However, although the parish temples vary according to the family in the Ikisan district, they are all either of the Zen or Jōdo Shin sects, thus leading to the unusual scene of a priest of “Kamakura new Buddhism” reading a sutra before a hanging scroll of Saichō—founder of the earlier Heian-period sect of Tendai.

This event, together with the house names of the participants, makes clear the uniqueness of this village. Ikisan was a community thought to have been located at the entrance to one of the Seven Temples of Ito, Ikisan Ikiji, and even today an ornamental temple gate with two Buddhist guardian gods (*niōmon*) stands at the village entrance (according to local legend, the temple Ikiji was actually located a bit farther up in the mountains). Although the temple Ikiji was destroyed in the sixteenth century, it is thought that the houses with Buddhist titles represent the

descendants of clergy affiliated with the earlier temple. According to an 1841 document describing religious facilities in the region, the area was originally a "Tendai Buddhist training area [*butsujō*]," and the village was a community of its acolytes [*shuto*], but the domainal lord ordered the temple acolytes to return to lay status as farmers in the first half of the seventeenth century. The document goes on to relate that out of respect for the past, on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> month each year a ceremony is conducted involving "the display of a painting of the (Chinese) Tendai founder Zhiyi [Jp. Chigi = Tendai Chisha Daishi] that has been transmitted from ancient times" (Inoue and Murakami 2006: 151-152). When one considers that this group of acolytes composed the population of the temples of the Tendai Buddhist training area, it is no mistake to view these houses with Buddhist titles as originally forming the local terminus of the *kenmitsu* system of temple and shrine power. As though to illustrate this point, of the eight houses bearing Buddhist titles, the house called Daikyō-bō, said to have occupied "the role of the priest" [*bōzu no yakuwari datta*] even today has in its possession a set of printing blocks for the sutra *Niō-kyō* that are thought to be a product of the medieval period (Kyūshū Historical Records Museum, ed. 1995: 6).

Other similar villages also exist. Today's Fugoku Shrine of the Yoshii district, discussed above, was originally the temple Kyūanji, one of the Seven Temples of Ito, and it possessed ten residence halls for priests. During the civil wars of the sixteenth century, however, the priests of the ten halls were driven into the mountains where they committed suicide (thus the place name *jūbōzan*, or "ten halls mountain"). The temple Kyūanji thus disappeared, and the sole surviving priest, named Shōei, came to take over the management of the shrine (the Shōei-bō lineage thus became chief priests for the present Fugoku Shrine; see Nijōmachi-shi Hensan Iinkai, ed. 1967: 484-485). Turning our attention to the city of Maebara, Nijōmachi's eastern neighbor, it is said

that the temple Raizan Sennyoji, another of the Seven Temples of Ito, formerly represented a major political power with some three hundred residence halls for priests (Kyūshū Rekishi Shiryōkan, ed. 1989: 36). Another of the seven temples, Shōzōji, is said to have existed in the Shiraito area, also on the border with Nijōmachi, but also went out of existence. In the early modern period, the Shingon Buddhist shrine-priest [*shasō*] of the nearby shrine Umi Hachimangū came to manage the shrine rites for the area, and the descendants of that priestly lineage, named Hōzō, currently serve as chief priests [*gūji*] of the shrine Umi Hachimangū (Nakanishi and Inoue 2006b: 166, 169).

In this way, the community of Buddhist priests and their medieval temples, together with the fragmentary vestiges of *shinbutsu shūgō* combinatory religion can be said to demonstrate that the Seven Temples of Ito possessed the basic character of *kenmitsu* temples, and that acolyte communities took shape around their peripheries. However, the Ikisan district and Fugoku shrine are both located in the foothills, considerably separated from the lower plains area. What, then, was the situation regarding religious ritual in that latter plains area?

The representative shrine for the town of Nijōmachi is the shrine Fukae Jinja, located in the town's central Fukae district. As post station on the highway Karatsu Kaidō, Fukae played an important role in the area during the early modern period. Early modern historical records point out that here, too, shrine-priests [*shasō*] of the Shingon temple Shūgakuin acted as managers for the Fukae Shrine. The oldest *munafuda* [ridgepole amulet] at Fukae shrine (1678) carries the Buddhist name "Present Chief Priest [*gūji*] and Dharma Master [*daihōshi*] Shunryō-bō," and a similar amulet dated 1774 has the notation, "Thirty-second Generation Shūgakuin Abbot and Shrine Intendant [*bettō*] Shunken." Historical records from 1719 (Nakatsu-han Seishika Kankōkai, ed. 1989: 134) note that the enshrined deities [*saijin*] of the Fukae Shrine are Hōman

Daibosatsu and Tenman Daijizai Tenjin, while the "original ground" [*honji*] of these two deities is listed as the buddhas Yakushi and Kannon, enshrined in a hall called the *honjidō* ["original ground hall"]; finally, the name of the shrine's chief priest [*gūji*] is recorded with the Buddhist name Shōmanbō. Furthermore, the temple Shūgakuin was ordered by the Nakatsu domain to perform ritual incantations [*kitō*] for "rain and sun" and to prevent "epidemic diseases" (Nakatsuhan Seishika Kankōkai, ed. 1988: 46-47). From these pieces of evidence, it is evident that this shrine was under the management of a temple that was both "orthodox" and of considerable status, operating under the doctrines of Ryōbu Shinto (Shinto as interpreted by the Shingon sect of Buddhism) for the purpose of making thaumaturgic prayers.

In this way, the religious actors in charge of observances not only in the foothills but also in the lower plains can be seen to have demonstrated a combinatory *shinbutsu shūgō*-style character. Another ritual of the plains region I would like to mention is the *bon* [summer festival of ancestor veneration] rope-pulling rite held in the Dainyū area along the coast in the western part of Nijōmachi. One can witness the custom of rope-pulling on August 15 in many locales around Fukuoka Prefecture, but in Nijōmachi it has been transmitted only in this Dainyū area. First, on the morning of the festival day, vines cut by local officials are collected along the approach to the shrine Hakusangū that enshrines the town's tutelary deity [*ujigami*]; these vines are then woven into a large rope. After that, the rope is dedicated within the grounds of the Hakusan shrine, where participants perform worship, and sacred rice wine [*miki*] is distributed; the rope is then returned to the shrine's entrance road where a "tug of war" is performed three times using the rope. On the third time the ritualist cuts the rope in the center, ending the tug-of-war, and the rope is carried in that state to the seaside where it is fashioned into a ring for *sumō* wrestling, and the rite ends with the observance of children's *sumō*.

Like the phenomena mentioned before, this ritual also demonstrates strong elements of combinatory *shinbutsu shūgō* religion. First, the aim of the ritual clearly derives from the *uranbon-e*, that is to say the Buddhist memorial service for providing for hungry ghosts [*gaki*]. The buddhas extend a long rope in the effort to save the spirits of the deceased who are poised to fall into hell, but demons [*oni*] contrarily try to pull the dead into hell, and the ritual is said to be an enactment of that scene (Fukukichi Kyōdoshi Kenkyūkai, ed. 1998: 228-229). However, the ritual takes place on the entrance path to a shrine, and after weaving the giant rope, it is deliberately carried into the shrine of the local tutelary deity (Hakusangū), where participants worship and partake of dedicated saké (*miki*). Also strange is the fact that, although this is a Buddhist ritual, no Buddhist priests appear.

Regarding the interpretation of the Buddhist context of the rope-pulling, I was frequently told similar explanations of the ritual while performing fieldwork in other areas of Fukuoka prefecture. In sum, it is extremely likely that a certain kind of religious specialist holding a certain religious interpretation was involved in the origins of this kind of rope-pulling ritual, but I have never heard of examples of participation by Buddhist priests operating under the early modern parish temple system—which specialized in memorial services for the dead. One must therefore presume that the participation involved *kenmitsu* Buddhist religious specialists, or for the early modern period, esoteric Buddhist specialists (or possibly mountain-cult *shugenja*) with their strongly thaumaturgic intercessions.

In sum, one frequently encounters combinatory *shinbutsu shūgō* religion when conducting fieldwork on folk culture in Nijōmachi. It is impossible to give other detailed examples within the scope of this article, but allow me to point out very simply the religious characteristics of fourteen folk customs which I discussed as "the folk observances of

Nijōmachi" in a magazine for that town (Nakanishi 2005: 692-713). Of the fourteen customs, two were the *odaishikō* and *bon tsunahiki* [rope-pulling] discussed above, but five others also displayed the influence of combinatory *shinbutsu shūgō* or *kenmitsu* Buddhism (these included the *tsuinasai*, *miyaza*, *kagura*, summer *kitō*, and the *shinkōsai*, or sacred procession),<sup>xix</sup> two more (*hanamatsuri*, *hyakumanben*) could be called Buddhist folk rituals in the more general sense of the term, and four are thought to have emerged during the development and change of the area as a post town in the early modern period (*kawa matsuri*, *chaya kake*, *bon odori*, *hassaku sekku*).<sup>xx</sup> Finally, one observance—blindfolded women's *sumō*—began in the modern period.

From this it should be possible to create a simple model relating to the process of formation of the folk culture currently found in the town. According to that model, when one arranges elements along the historical axis, one can determine that *shinbutsu shūgō*-style combinatory cults form the foundation for the area's folk culture; various new customs and events evolved with the development of the early modern post town, and these then flowed out to the agricultural villages, thus producing the major framework for today's folk culture.

The data discussed above displays the reality that the deeper one delves into local fieldwork and uses historical materials, no matter how far one goes one cannot come across the "base culture" (*kiso bunka*) or the indigenous religious beliefs envisioned by Japanese Ethnology and forming one of the pillars of contemporary Japanese government policy for cultural properties. Recent studies in Japanese ethnology have attempted to explain this frequent appearance of combinatory *shinbutsu shūgō* religion by claiming it was the result of intervention by the mountain cult of *shugendō* and its *shugenja* ascetics. In the case of Nijōmachi, however, while the names of *yamabushi* mountain ascetics appear in documents of the early period, such ascetics were not the primary religious practitioners of this area. More than anything else, it is

likely that there simply was not sufficient room for the newcomers to make a foothold in a region like Nijōmachi, occupied as it was by Shingon Ryōbu Shinto specialists with their thaumaturgic incantations.<sup>xxi</sup>

I have presented here only an extremely abbreviated local history and limited religious observances, but one can probably already foresee our conclusion to a certain degree. And that is the significance of Kuroda's cultural history model. Based at least on the results of my own local fieldwork, I believe that this town's "folk culture" is represented by the complex vestiges of a "substrate" of concepts related to combinatory *shinbutsu shūgō*, into which has flowed folk culture as the result of the development of transportation and information webs in the early modern and modern periods. It is impossible within the scope of this paper to discuss in detail issues relating to the early modern and later periods, but as the study of *yamagasa* [festival floats] conducted by Fukuma illustrates [Fukuma 1992], when one considers that folk customs migrated broadly from the early modern period on, it is possible to suggest that it was in that period that the "folk culture" imagined by contemporary Japanese ethnologists took root and became established.

Regional variations likely exist with regard to the multitiered structure of that folk culture, but in the case of Nijōmachi, various conditions have caused even the medieval "substrate" to survive to a certain degree, with the result that it represents a region where Kuroda's cultural historical model can be applied. The determination regarding whether this is merely a characteristic of one limited region of Kyūshū and thus an exceptional case must wait for further research. It remains a fact, however, that the cultural discourse constructed by the Japanese local system diverges from Nijōmachi's actual cultural history. Put another way, speaking solely with regard to the discipline of Japanese Ethnology, one might say it is possible to describe the folk

culture of this region without availing oneself of the various specialist terminology of that specific academic discipline.

Based on the standpoint of this fieldwork data, one can proceed with cultural anthropological fieldwork while invoking the methodology of history, and that alone is sufficient to make the local system manifest.

### **Conclusion**

Here, I would like once more to organize the argument thusfar, and on that basis emphasize three points as a means of bringing this article to a close.

In a certain sense, the cases presented in the previous section appear mundane, no more than a roughly hewn local history. It might in fact merely wind up being evaluated as an unusual (or perhaps "strange" or "poorly done amateuristic local history ") research. However, the cultural descriptions of Nijōmachi I have depicted are probably almost unavailable within the disciplines of historical or Japanese ethnological research. And the reason for that absence is extremely simple: it is because I discussed this region along the topical axes of *shinbutsu shūgō* and *kenmitsu* Buddhism. The very method of discussing local culture along these two topical axes does not exist within the local system that constructs Japanese cultural discourse.

Kuroda criticized conventional historical research on religion due to the way it starts with a framework of contemporary religions and sects, and projects those contemporary forms onto the past. Needless to say, the combinatory *shinbutsu shūgō* types of cults will not appear evident within a modern framework of classifications based on doctrines and scriptures. However, the *kenmitsu* ideology of medieval times did not take the form of independent religious denominations, with Buddhism as Buddhism and Shinto as Shinto; on the contrary, the reality

was power centers represented by shrine-temple multiplexes, and their comprehensive religious motif was the combintory *shinbutsu shūgō* type of religious practice. These religious multiplexes inexorably progressed towards dissolution from the early modern into the modern periods, with the result that religious sects of the modern period excluded *shinbutsu shūgō* itself from their own religious thought. That exclusion was probably unavoidable in terms of their relationship with what is today known as "Shinto." Additionally, viewed from the perspective of Japanese Ethnology, Kuroda's observations regarding the *kenmitsu* regime and combinatory *shinbutsu shūgō* belong to the realm of "history," that is, they are clear products of the historical process, and thus incompatible with the "unchanging" or "substrate" ideology on which the discipline of Japanese Ethnology is founded. As a result, neither *kenmitsu* Buddhism nor *shinbutsu shūgō* can possibly serve as a central theme for Japanese Ethnology.<sup>xxii</sup> In other words, the fact that *shinbutsu shūgō* and *kenmitsu* Buddhism have never become central themes of conventional Japanese ethnographic description is not due to lack of fieldwork data, but due to issues regarding the ideology of the local system, or its very modernity. Within this sort of context, the stance of the cultural anthropologist is clear: it's enough to base one's position on fieldwork alone.

Within the rise of postmodern anthropology and the critique of essentialism since the 1980s, it would seem that the phenomemon of *shinbutsu shūgō* would prove a prime attraction as research topic for cultural anthropologists who have turned their research orientation to the critique of modernism in culture discourse. As a hypothesis proposed by an empirical historian of written records, Kuroda's cultural history model should have a great deal of utility in that application. This is because he was an insider to the local system, even though a heretical insider. It is precisely in the nodal intersection of Kuroda's deductive hypothesis and the inductive

method of fieldwork that an “abduction” pregnant with new potential occurs [Kasuga 2004: 374-377], and therein lies the potential to imagine a new anthropology of history as Japan’s own “native anthropology.”<sup>xxiii</sup>

As a second point, it is possible to arrive at the issue of the subject of folk culture from the argument in the previous section. The fact that the contemporary ritual actors (the bearers of folk culture) are the subjects of ritual action but not of ritual meaning is demonstrated not only from Shirakawa's *kagura* studies (2005, 2006a), but from the case of Nijōmachi as well. This is because the ritual activity has been maintained through time, but the meaning of the ritual has dropped away. Cultural anthropologists and Japanese ethnologists may evaluate this situation as a historical process or an emptying of meaning that has accompanied modernization, with the result that today, the meaning of those ritual actions is either imparted by outside intellectuals, or else is limited to the references that participants make to the cultural discourse created out of the local system. However, if one applies Kuroda's cultural history model, it is clear that the source responsible for systematically imparting magico-religious meaning to those ritual activities was none other than *kenmitsu* ideology, and the knowledge necessary to impart that meaning lay in the hands of *kenmitsu* religious specialists.

The concept of secrecy or secret practices that often appears in the rituals and transmissions of esotericism [*mikkyō*] and mountain religion (*shugendō*) are perhaps typical of this. From there, it may be possible to draw the following sort of hypothesis: namely, the outer reaches of the *kenmitsu* regime represented the periphery formed by those woven into that regime; even if those people were the responsible for performing out ritual activity, they were not responsible for the creation of meaning. Namely, under the *kenmitsu* regime, ritual action and the creation of meaning were separated by a division of labor from the start, and responsibility for imparting

meaning was always relinquished to the religious specialists on the outside. Following the thorough destruction of *kenmitsu* ideology (or of its embodiment as *shinbutsu shūgō*) in the modern period, the route to that meaning was completely cut, and in its place, State Shinto and the modern local system have come to function as the source of meaning attribution. One can even suggest that this condition, what might be called a “replacement,” indeed continues to function despite its contradictions precisely because *kenmitsu* Buddhism possessed the characteristic whereby meaning creation was relegated to the hands of specialists. Folklorists performing fieldwork surveys in Japan often come across cases where a ritual action continues but bereft of meaning; it might be suggested that this emptying of meaning is not merely an accident that has occurred as part of the historical process, but rather represents an inherent characteristic of the *kenmitsu* system itself.

Finally, I would like to speak regarding the relationality between the world system and local system of anthropology. I have written this article as a concrete example of the application of Kuwayama's argument limited to Japan as the “local,” but to what degree are the world and local systems of anthropology insulated from one another? With regard to Kuroda Toshio as discussed in this paper, it is true that not many English translations of his works are available, nor have many research essays been written about him and his theories,<sup>xxiv</sup> something not unrelated to the fact that he was considered in a sense as a heterodox historian. Namely, most of the local culture discourse translated into English and thus linked to the world system is precisely the discourse considered orthodox within that local system. In turn, by being translated into the dominant language of English, that locally orthodox discourse comes to form one part of Western systems of knowledge (one of which can be called the world system of anthropology). Recent attempts to deconstruct Japanese anthropologists' culture discourse based on the critical

apprehension of it as a kind of essentialism, (e.g., Sered 1999, Kawahashi 2002), can in one sense be considered an ironic result following upon the “promotion” of Japanese anthropologists from the rank of informant to [real] anthropologist, but cannot one also suggest that the deconstructive method itself is a result of foreign anthropologists’ apprehension of the continuity between the local knowledge shared within the world system of anthropology, and the culture discourse produced by the local system itself? While a great deal of room remains for considering this relationship of difference and conjunction between the world system and local system, I would think that the position occupied by today’s Japanese anthropologists makes them well suited to undertake that reevaluation.

While starting this paper on the theme of native anthropology, I have the feeling I have ultimately attempted to deal with too many topics. My central objective, however, has been to merely consider the issue of the “heretical” historian Kuroda Toshio, conjecturing about the potential applicability of his culture-history model to religious folklore as a kind of “native anthropology,” and to suggest some potential uses for it. In any event, whether in the sense of fieldwork, or in the dual world system/local system, I sense that Japanese anthropologists not only have a significant role to play, but on the contrary, possess a great deal of the potential permitted only to the outsider or marginal figure.

### **Special Thanks**

This research could be said to be the result of four years of research on Northern Kyūshū conducted until March, 2006 with Shirakawa Takakiyo of Fukuoka University. The importance of Kuroda's theories also arose as a theme in my discussions with Dr. Shirakawa. This article

could not have been accomplished with my meager knowledge of folk religion alone. I would like to offer my gratitude once more to Dr. Shirakawa.

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<sup>i</sup> The author received a Scientific Research Grant (Basic Research [B] (1), topic number 14310151) subsidy from the Japanese Academic Promotion Society for research related to "Anthropology at Home" from 2004 to 2006 (Nakanishi, ed. 2005). At that time I translated "Anthropology at Home" as "*jishakai no jinruigaku*" [lit., "anthropology in one's own society"], but I will allow room for discussion as to whether that translation is appropriate or not.

<sup>ii</sup> I have not taken accurate statistics, but as introduced in the arguments conducted by Nakagawa (2005a, 2005b) examining the concept of "home" within Home Anthropology, it seems that those who use the concept of home and raise the significance of home studies are cultural anthropologists in Western Europe. Nakagawa's two discussions are neatly organized in relation to the genealogy and practice of Home Anthropology. If one is to consider the fact that this journal has the characteristics of an academic journal, then one should probably introduce from the start the various arguments surrounding Home Anthropology, but Nakagawa's arguments fulfill that role sufficiently. Therefore, in this article I do not discuss those details.

<sup>iii</sup> In this article, in order to include the history of religions as a "specialist subdepartment" of historical studies, I will use the terms "historical research" or "historical studies" to refer to all those disciplines studies involved with the study of history.

<sup>iv</sup> Needless to say, the "cultural history" I mention here does not refer to the classical culture history school or cultural sphere theory. It is the term used in historical studies of religion and art.

<sup>v</sup> For example the noteworthy ethnological researches by Shigenobu (1999, 2003) and Kikuchi (2001) are fundamentally not based upon the formula "unchanging things=folk" as noted below. According to Iwamoto (2006), this ideological formula of Japanese ethnologists was created within the ambience of the prewar Imperial Rule Assistance regime based on a "misreading" of Yanagita Kunio, and then came to be shared among postwar Japanese ethnologists. Without touching upon that fact, the above research will be evaluated as nothing more than simple modern history. In that sense, I used the word "trivialize." Moreover, the "Japanese ethnology" and "Japanese ethnologists" that appear below of course indicate the discipline and practitioners of "Japanese ethnology" that appeared in the postwar period and that were critiqued by Iwamoto.

<sup>vi</sup> One can, of course, point to the clear influence of Marxism in the background. See Amino (1999).

<sup>vii</sup> Within the major academic associations dealing with Japanese History are the Historical Science Society of Japan and the Japanese Society for Historical Studies; Kuroda's theories were taken up as a major theme in the sectional meeting on medieval history at the 2006 annual meeting of the former, while at the latter, they were raised at the general symposium at the 2005 annual meeting, the individual reports of the 2004 general meeting, and the 2003 cooperative research reports (medieval).

<sup>viii</sup> In the "policy" section of the "Protection of Cultural Artifacts" portion of the Ministry of Culture website (<http://www.bunka.go.jp>), it states: "Cultural artifacts are precious national artifacts born and nurtured within Japan's long history, and preserved and transmitted to the generations of today. At the same time that these are indispensable to a correct understanding of our history and culture, they also form the basis for the future elevation and development of culture." Most of this cultural legacy is composed of prehistoric and historic relics, and the culture of the masses passed down through history thus comes to be considered an ethnic cultural legacy. The Ministry of Culture's policy on cultural artifacts is an easily understood discourse in the sense of understanding the historical context of the local system. Kuroda's cultural history model thus fails to fall under category of "correct understanding" according to the logic of the Ministry.

<sup>ix</sup> See Note 5. Also Iwamoto (2006) states that in the 1930s, when Yanagita is supposed to have constructed the basis for contemporary ethnology under the name of "village studies" [*kyōdo kenkyū*], there was as yet no concept of a fixed and temporally unchanging folk culture, and he states that the Japanese ethnology that developed in the postwar period and that continues up through today appears to be virtually different discipline from its beginning, even though it shares the same name.

<sup>x</sup> Kuroda's argument is often summarized as a theory of "*kenmon taisei*" or "*kenmitsu taisei*." While the concepts are inseparable, for the purposes of space in this paper I will use the latter. Kuroda criticized preceding medieval histories as "historical perspectives centered upon warrior families," and instead used the more generic term "*kenmon*" [lit., "gates of power"] to organize the powers responsible for controlling *shōen* estates. In that way he was able to subsume imperial, aristocratic, and warrior families all under the single heading of *kenmon*. It was on that basis that he looked negatively at the theoretical position that considered Japanese society after the establishment of the Kamakura *bakufu* as a two-layered system of governance split between the court and aristocracy on the one hand, and the warrior families on the other. Another unique feature of his argument is seen in his inclusion of temples and shrines among the "gates of power." Existing in a collusive relationship with secular authorities, medieval shrines and temples were major holders of *shōen* estates occupying positions of enormous power and religious status. (Kuroda 1994a: 3-53; Endō 1995).

<sup>xi</sup> The term adopted by social anthropologist Rodney Needham. See Nagashima 1982.

<sup>xii</sup> Kuroda's criticism of Japanese ethnology is summarized in his 1963 review of Sakurai Tokutarō, *Kō shūdan seiritsu katei no kenkyū* (1962; my thanks to Kawamori Hiroshi for this information). Kuroda also develops his critique of Japanese ethnology and cultural anthropology in his two papers "Bunka shi no hōhō ni tsuite" and "Shisō shi no hōhō ni tsuite no oboegaki" (Kuroda 1994b: 343-372). Intriguingly, he does not make a clear distinction between the two disciplines in his writings.

<sup>xiii</sup> Together with Shirakawa, I have also conducted *kagura* studies in Fukuoka Prefecture; one result of that research can be seen in Shirakawa and Nakanishi (2005). A synopsis of Shirakawa (2006a) could be stated as follows: Buzen *kagura* is a general term for the rural *kagura* (*sato kagura*, votive dances or *kagura* as transmitted among the common people) found in Fukuoka Prefecture's Buzen City and its surroundings. Shirakawa organizes the historical development of this Buzen *kagura* in the following way: (1) He hypothesizes that the former transmitters of *kagura* dancing belonged to shrine families belonging to the tradition of *ryōbushintō*, positioned at the terminus of the shrine and temple powers under the *kenmitsu* ideology, and that *kagura* represented a thaumaturgic rite conducted in toward the achievement of a goal (a fruitful harvest, for example). (2) Following the dissolution of the *kenmitsu* regime in the early modern period, *kagura* continued to be transmitted by networks of shrines and temples devoted to intercessory prayers (see Matsuoka 1973) and by the shrine families existing at the terminus of those temples and shrines. Under the early modern Tokugawa regime, however, various new restrictions, together with the rise of the *kokugaku* [National Learning] movement brought about changes in the way that *kagura* was understood, in other words leading to a transition from the earlier medieval to a new modern interpretation. (3) At the dawn of the Meiji period, ordinances were issued forcibly separating *kami* and buddhas, and prohibiting the performance of votive dances by shrine priests, and with this, the transmission of *kagura* devolved to the modern masses or common people. For the first time in history a style of *kagura* was born in which votive dances were "offered" at shrines as a part of "folk culture." However, since little change occurred in the *form* of *kagura* throughout this period of historical transition, a great gap widened between the contents of the performance itself (ritual) and the

interpretations of *kagura* based upon the mythology of *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* as it developed from the early modern to the modern period (oral transmission).

<sup>xiv</sup> It's normal in this type of article to summarize the time period and type of fieldwork performed, but in this case it is virtually impossible to provide an accurate description. I began the onsite fieldwork as one part of a course, "Museum Practicum" that I taught for the Museology Department at Fukuoka University (Nakanishi 2002). I also continued the fieldwork on Nijōmachi with students from time to time. My first local fieldwork occurred as result of a complete coincidence when I took on the role of ethnologist Tanakamaru Katsuhiko due to his sudden passing. Afterwards, I served as a specialist member of the Nijōmachi Cultural Assets Council from 2002 until 2005, and during that time I wrote for the local town magazine (Nakanishi 2005), co-authored a report on the *kagura* of the Fukui area of Nijōmachi (Shirakawa and Nakanishi, 2005), and collated historical materials (Nakanishi and Inoue 2006a, 2006b, 2006c). In terms of research assistance, I received research grants in 2003 and 2004 from Fukuoka University, and the reports of that research are included in Nakanishi and Inoue (2006a, 2006b, and 2006c). I do not recall exactly how many days I spent doing local fieldwork. During the time I was based at Fukuoka, it took about 30-40 minutes by car to get from my home to Nijōmachi, and it generally fell into the commuting range of my place of work at that time (Fukuoka University), so I didn't actually objectify it as a cultural anthropological "field" at the time. I am not a "native" of the town (my birthplace is Yokohama), but until the end of March 2006 there was no place closer to my home. I should also mention that Tokyo Foreign Language University doctoral candidate Chu Swan Zao conducted detailed research in the area for about a year between 2003 and 2004, and we look forward to the results of that research.

<sup>xv</sup> Already under the early modern Tokugawa regime, the oppression of Buddhism (*haibutsu kishaku*) was being carried out in the form of "temple reorganization" (*jiin seiri*) (Yasumaru 1979: 37-44), with the result that it may be difficult to see the "survivals" of *shinbutsu shūgō* in such areas. The same is true in areas dominated by [Jōdo] Shinshū sect, and such historical and social factors result in regional differences in the degree of "survivals" of *shinbutsu shūgō*.

<sup>xvi</sup> Illustration 1. See the Nijōmachi Town website: <http://town.nijo.fukuoka.jp/>

<sup>xvii</sup> See Shinjō and Masaki, eds. (1963), Masaki (1991), Hattori (1998). That there be no misunderstanding, let me add that the Ito estate was not politically stable from the Heian to the Warring States periods, and since no governing authority (such as a warring state *daimyo*) emerged to aggressively negate the medieval regime, the medieval characteristics continued in existence for a long time.

<sup>xviii</sup> The date of compilation is unclear, but it is thought to predate the Muromachi period (Kyūshū Historical Records Museum, ed. 1995: 6).

<sup>xix</sup> I formulated this classification as follows: the *tsuinasai* based on the influence of Dazaifu Tenmangū and Anrakuji which belong to the *kenmitsu* tradition of shrine-temple powers in northern Kyushu; for the summer incantations (*natsu kitō*), based on the religious status of the Fukae Shrine, which transmitted that rite; and for the ritual of divine procession (*shinkōsai*), based on the characteristics of shrines observing that rite. For the *miyaza*, see Shirakawa (2006b) and for *kagura* see Shirakawa and Nakanishi (2005).

<sup>xx</sup> I am omitting the details of these rituals, but I categorized them in this way based upon the fact that all of them demonstrate evidence that they are customs transmitted from towns (urban areas) in other regions, or were transmitted from a town to its peripheral agricultural settlements; furthermore that a characteristic of this kind of transmission of customs is that it seems to have been conducted mainly "from the early modern period onward." Also, documents of town headmen (*shōya*) in the Ikisan region (Nakanishi, Inoue, 2006c) hint that from the latter half of the eighteenth century, headmen received education in general polite manners from written documents. Overall, one can say that continuing detailed study is required regarding the formation of "folk" customs in this era.

<sup>xxi</sup> See Inoue and Murakami (2006), as well as Shirakawa (2006b), which made reference to Inoue and Murakami. It should be noted that Kuroda does not speak much of Shugendō. Or rather, because *shugen yamabushi* themselves obviously belong on the inside of the *kenmitsu* system, Kuroda probably did not consider them an independent sectarian organization called "Shugendō." The current academic reevaluation of Shugendō, on the other hand, can be said to be the epitome of the modern sect history perspective that considers Shugendō as an independent sect. It may be best to think of "Shugendō" as it is currently known as representing one region of mountain worship that was reformulated after the weakening and dissolution of the *kenmitsu* system.

<sup>xxii</sup> The reader may wonder if this kind of paradox is possible, but it can currently be observed within the pages of ethnographic reportage. The classic example is the Japanese ethnological description of folk culture on the Kunisaki??? Peninsula (in Oita prefecture) which came into the modern period with *kenmitsu* Buddhism still in an overwhelmingly dominant position. (Wakamori, ed. 1960). It is symbolic to note that this work was written without discussing *shinbutsu shūgō* as a central theme, and the editor of the volume was Wakamori Tarō, a "key person"

who was "influenced by the foundational-culture theory of the Imperial Rule Assistance movement, and who significantly changed postwar folklore studies" (Iwamoto, 2006: 71). One should also note that Irie (2006) has done fieldwork regarding the *kenmitsu* regime and the religious organizations of Kunisaki???

<sup>xxiii</sup> Of course the expertise of historical studies—the reading of old handwritten texts, for example—is indispensable for this sort of endeavor. This can be compared to the need for cultural anthropologists to learn the language of their people where they perform fieldwork. In my case, I still cannot read handwritten texts, so I have relied greatly on Inoue Takeaki of the Fukuoka City General Library for aid regarding historical materials.

<sup>xxiv</sup> It seems that the only English translation of Kuroda's works is that included in the special issue edited by Dobbins (1996). Dobbins and Gay (1999) strongly recognize the significance of the problems Kuroda raised, but it is unclear to what extent that has influenced Western research on Japan. The reason Kuroda's theories have not been translated into English may be that Kuroda was affiliated with Osaka University, or there may be some subtle connection with the fact that it may be relatively easier to use his model to explain areas in western Japan. That is, foreign research students concentrate in Tokyo (or more specifically at the University of Tokyo), and the orientation of research there in no small degree tends to be related to issues of translation.