"Why Don't They Write in English?" Academic Modes of Production and Academic Discourses in Japan and the West

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At the end of 1996 I participated in a panel at the American Anthropological Association (AAA) organized by Yamashita Shinji of Tokyo University on the distinctiveness of Japanese anthropology. The other papers in the panel were historical surveys of the origins of Japanese anthropology, its colonial past, and the careers of distinguished anthropologists such as Nakane Chie and Yamaguchi Masao. My paper (Eades 1996) took a slightly different direction: Japanese anthropology was different, I argued, not so much because of any consistent difference in theoretical stance between Japan and the West, but because of much more mundane considerations, like conditions of employment and publishing opportunities.

The problem of lack of communication is a very real one. Many scholars outside Japan are unaware of just how extensive the anthropological research being carried out by Japanese scholars is, not only in Japan but also internationally. As Sekimoto Teruo made clear in his contribution to the AAA panel (Sekimoto 1996), Japanese anthropologists have always tended to work as far away from Japan as possible. As soon as economic reconstruction took place after the War, they quickly began research in Africa, Latin America and South Asia, in addition to areas closer to home such as Okinawa, Taiwan and Southern China. The number of Japanese scholars is also very substantial: the main anthropology association, the *Nihon Minzoku Gakkai* or Japanese Society of Ethnology has around 1,600 members, making it probably the second largest anthropological organization in the world (it is slightly larger than the European Association of Social Anthropologists, but recruits from a much smaller population). It holds large meetings once or twice a year in which hundreds of presentations are made, presided over by timekeepers armed with bells who keep things running to schedule with a precision and regularity unknown in meetings in the West.

And yet little of this immense research and writing effort is exported to the West: it remains untranslated, except for the occasional table of contents, abstract or summary. In terms of world anthropology, Japanese research remains largely unknown. At the same time, the number of Japanese scholars who actually contribute to mainstream Western journals is extremely small. Glancing through the copies on my shelves from the 1990s of *American Ethnologist* (America) *Man/JRAI* (UK) and *Social Anthropology* (published in the UK but aimed at the EU), I soon found that *American Ethnologist* and *Social Anthropology* had not a single paper by a Japanese scholar. *Man/JRAI* had three: two of them by Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney (1990; 1995), one of the handful of major Japanese anthropologists based in the West, and one by Shimizu Akitoshi (Shimizu 1991) on Yap kinship. This was the sole example in the three journals of work by a Japanese ethnographer based on research carried out outside Japan.

This minimal input to the mainstream Western journals means that the Japanese contribution to anthropology in general is never reflected in the standard citation indices which have become the main method for measuring academic impact in the USA and UK. This in turn merely reinforces the tendency of scholars outside Japan to ignore this body of work virtually completely, unless they are actually working on Japan itself or the countries immediately around Japan. This is clearly nothing to do with the quality of the research. In fact in the one case where I have been able to make a direct comparison, that of China, the published work by Japanese-based scholars is certainly on par with, and in some cases probably better than, that coming out of the USA (Eades 1997a).[1] This may be true of other parts of the world as well. When it comes to the careful compilation of facts, the Japanese still possess a thoroughness second to none. Their researchers spend longer in the field than their Western counterparts, often learning the language better and collecting more data on a wider range of topics. They are masters of research which involves long-term painstaking collection of detail: the compilation of word lists and dictionaries, the cataloging of plant or animal species and their diffusion, and the micro-level observation of interaction, gesture and conversation.[2] This is indeed a treasure trove of material, and non-Japanese scholars are missing a considerable amount by ignoring this body of scholarship, as they often do. Japanese scholars are generally very well informed on what is going on in Europe and America, but the information flowing in the other direction is minimal. This paper is largely concerned with identifying where this blockage lies and what might be done about it.

Western scholars of course often accuse Japanese higher education of being "closed" in a variety of ways, (though this is far from being my own experience working from the inside). Like most other major Japanese social institutions, universities have come under heavy criticism in the popular and the academic press, from commentators both in Japan and the West who urge the Japanese to open them, reform their bureaucracies, and foster greater competitiveness on the grounds that it will lead to greater scholarly creativity. Almost every aspect of the system, from students and their motivation to bureaucratic control, teaching techniques, library facilities and the examination system are compared unfavourably with the "situation in the West," and the implication is that the Japanese system should borrow the best practice from outside as quickly as possible in order to "catch up" with the rest of the world.[3]

Here, however, I argue an almost contrary position, which can be summarized as follows:

> (i) Japanese higher education is not at all "abnormal" from an international perspective. Many features of the Japanese higher education system are shared with many other countries, particularly those countries in Europe with more traditional systems like France and Germany.

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[1] For a direct comparison of the work of two Chinese scholars of very similar age and background, but educated in Japan and the USA respectively, see Nie (1992) and Yan (1996).

[2] On plants and animals, see the Japanese papers in Ellen and Katsuyoshi (1996). On conversation, see Sugawara (1998).

[3] For a recent survey of critical literature in English on Japanese higher education, see the relevant sections in Eades (1998).

(ii) A generation ago the Japanese system was also much more like the systems in the USA and UK than is the case at present.[4] It is actually the systems in the USA, and increasingly the UK, which are changing very quickly in response to a number of economic and bureaucratic stimuli, and which are therefore "abnormal" from the perspective of the rest of the world.

(iii) These changes taking place in the USA and UK are not necessarily always good for pushing back the frontiers of knowledge. In some instances they are clearly dysfunctional and actually form an obstacle to the diffusion of knowledge.

(iv) Because some features of the British and American systems make them so difficult to use or work within, scholars from countries elsewhere, including Japan, are unwilling to spend time and effort participating in these abnormal and distorted systems. For instance, Japanese scholars are quite happy to spend a period at American think tanks and make use of the excellent library facilities – but this does not generally lead to an increase in the number of articles they publish in American journals. Rather they continue to publish most of the results in Japanese when they get home.

(v) The result of this abnormality and dysfunction in the British and American systems is the imbalance in information flow which we see at the moment. Scholars from elsewhere find it fruitless to try and publish through mainstream British and American publishing channels, and prefer to maintain their own traditions of research and publication – which in the case of Japan means publication in Japanese.

(vi) Given present conditions, the situation is unlikely to improve very much, though a degree of convergence may eventually be possible. If convergence happens, it will most likely happen not because of planned reform in Japan, the UK and the United States, but rather because of technological change which will change the shape of the publishing industry itself. However, the most probable scenario is that things will continue more or less as they are for some time, so that the "balance of payments problem" in the academic world will continue, rather like its counterpart in the world of international trade.

The notion that it is the hegemonic English-speaking countries which are academically out of line with the rest of the world may seem rather counter-intuitive, if not simply perverse. However, the purpose of adopting this rather unorthodox position is to stimulate some fresh thinking among both Japanese and Western colleagues about the nature of the intellectual systems within which we operate. If it leads to some fruitful questioning and rethinking of these systems, the paper will have succeeded in its aim.

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[4] The comparison with the UK is based on research currently being carried out at Shiga University by Hada Yumiko and myself. Much of it uses material drawn from interviews with university vice-chancellors and other senior figures in British higher education in the summer of 1997, most of them on condition of anonymity. Much of the Japanese material is drawn from my own experience teaching at the University of Tokyo, 1991-1994, and at Shiga University from 1994 -2000.

The Japanese system: a normal system?

(a) Recruitment

Criticism is often aimed at recruitment in Japanese universities because it is said to be based on the "old boy network" rather than demonstrated excellence in publications (as in the USA), or on performance in competitive interviews (as in the UK). My own view is that the practical consequences of this can be overemphasised. In fact what usually happens in all three systems is that most of the jobs are monopolised by the best students from the best schools. This is hardly surprising. The best students go to the best schools because they are able to meet the entrance criteria, because the research facilities are better (even if the teaching is not), and because there is a larger critical mass of bright people around with whom to discuss research.

As we will see below, American and British recruitment policies are not without their own difficulties. In Japan, as is probably still true in Germany and other parts of mainland Europe, forming patron client links with senior professors is still a good way of getting into the profession, even though it may take time for a position to materialise. My own impression is that generally Japanese scholars are older when they get their first jobs than their counterparts abroad. Up to now, they were also less likely to have completed a PhD than in the UK or USA because the Japanese system has traditionally put less stress on doctorates (a situation which is now changing fast). The old boy network raises further problems in that it is more difficult for people from lower ranking universities to gain entry to the system. It also makes it more difficult for groups like women and members of minorities who are not already well represented in the system, though my impression is that this is also changing fast.[5]

On the other hand, for the lucky students who want to become university teachers and who have the right connections, entry to the system is probably less traumatic and stressful than it is in the British or American systems. Requirements in terms of degrees and publications are less rigorous, which leaves the student more time for making a living. The more able research students have traditionally been able to teach part-time at other universities or get additional research funding while they are waiting in the queue for a full-time job, and this remained a possibility in the 1990s, despite the end of the bubble economy. In Japan it is actually possible to survive on two or three part-time teaching jobs at universities, and I have met people who said that they actually prefer the flexibility this gives to what they see as the constraints of a regular university position in terms of meetings and other administrative responsibilities. In some universities the assistants (*joshu*), the lowest rank of academic appointees, can look forward to moving steadily up the hierarchy over the course of time. In other universities they are regarded as fixed-term appointees, who are expected to move on to more senior posts elsewhere, but they are still in an excellent position to find out about opportunities in other universities, cultivate the right people, and accumulate research experience and publications, as their formal duties are often quite limited and usually do not include teaching at all.

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[5] During my time teaching at Shiga University from 1994 to 2000, the number of women professors in post, including some married women with children, expanded rapidly. And *pace* Ivan Hall (1998), the number of foreigners teaching in Japan is also steadily rising, the most conspicuous example being APU.

A final point on getting a job in Japan appears to be this. In general, the Japanese university system over the last 20 years has not been so seriously affected by the fluctuations in the wider economy as have the systems in the UK and USA. Japanese state universities have so far been protected from these fluctuations by steady government funding, and the best private universities are sufficiently prestigious and popular to retain their appeal and financial strength, even against the background of the bursting economic bubble and the declining birthrate. Indeed, a number of prefectures and cities have recently opened their own universities, and the best of these have become popular and have attracted good quality students very quickly. It is likely that the situation will change rapidly in the near future with the proposed reforms of the state system and the increasingly serious effects of the declining birthrate on the private schools, but hitherto the profiles of these institutions in terms of age have been much more conducive to smooth career development than in many universities in the West. Senior professors have continued to retire, junior assistants and lecturers have continued to be appointed, and there has been a steady stream of vacancies to be filled in most institutions in most years. For historical and economic reasons, this is in particularly sharp contrast with the UK, as we will see below.[6]

(b) Career structures

The other striking difference to an outsider between the Japanese and the American or British systems is the proportion of teaching staff at each level of the teaching hierarchy. In Britain and America the hierarchy is rather like a pyramid with relatively few full professors, a greater number of associate professors or senior lecturers, and a majority of lecturers or assistant professors. In Japanese universities this generally seems to be reversed, with a preponderance of full professors (*kyôju*) slightly fewer associate professors (*jokyôju*), and comparatively few lecturers (*kôshi*) and assistants (*joshu*).

This is coupled with the salary structure. The salaries of teaching staff in Japan are still usually based mainly on age rather than achievement, with the result that the gap between the highest and lowest salaries is much smaller than it is in the American or British systems. The pay is also still reasonably generous by international standards. The cost of living in Japan is not as high as is usually made out, and professors regularly receive transport and housing allowances, or even free accommodation. There are also very generous retirement bonuses. To put things in perspective, a fairly young associate professor at a private university in Japan makes as much as many British full professors. Even though the most highly paid British or American professors will probably earn more than their Japanese counterparts, by international standards Japanese professors remain comfortably well off.

The low wage differential coupled with the hierarchy shaped like an inverted pyramid means that promotion within the Japanese system is taken for granted as relatively automatic. When I arrived at Tokyo University and asked a colleague how an associate professor could become a professor in the university, he looked at me with a straight face and said "you become old." It was only half a joke. Theoretically, there are

[6] A vast amount of information on the British higher education system was published in the massive "Dearing Report" (London: HMSO) and is available on the internet at www.hefce.ac.uk. The Mombushô has shown considerable interest in the "British model," and even appears to be adopting some of its features.

regulations relating to volume of publications governing promotion to the ranks of *joshu*, *jokyôju* and *kyôju*, but these are fairly minimal and (for reasons to be explained below) it is actually much easier for Japanese academics to publish their material than their Western counterparts. Most associate professors move smoothly up the ladder to full professorships when they are between 45 and 50, and in exceptional cases they may well be younger – if for instance there is a danger of them moving to a full professorship elsewhere. The usual procedure is that a *curriculum vitae* is circulated, and opinions on the work of the candidate for promotion are sought from two internal and one external judge. The reports are read out in the professors' meeting, and the professors as a body vote whether or not the candidate should be promoted. Of the dozens of promotion reports I have listened to in faculty board meetings over the last ten years, only two were actually critical. This criticism created a furor in the meetings, but even in these cases the candidates were promoted after lengthy and acrimonious discussion.

Promotion therefore is pretty much a foregone conclusion, and this reduces the pressure to publish for the sake of getting tenure, as in the USA, or to get a job in the first place, as in the UK. If Japan has its examination hell, the UK has its job market hell, and the USA has its tenure hell – all three systems are competitive and nasty in the final analysis, but the selection and the nastiness take place at different stages of the university system.

(c) Publication strategies

In terms of publication strategies, Japan is also very different from the West. What academics who have never worked in Japan or been inside a Japanese library seldom realise is the importance of in-house publishing in Japanese universities, and this is worth a comment.

While there are national-level peer-review journals in Japan, there are probably not as many of them as one might expect for a university system of the size of Japan's. To cite the case of anthropology, the main Japanese anthropology journal is the *Minzokugaku Kenkyû* (Japanese Journal of Ethnology), but compared with the equivalent mainstream journals in the USA or Europe, its volumes are fairly slim, and the number of articles fairly limited. The four annual issues have a total of 400-500 pages. Each issue consists usually of between three and six articles and research notes, with shorter sections of documentation and book reviews. Most of the articles nowadays have lengthy English summaries – two or three pages – so the substance is accessible to scholars who do not read Japanese, even if the actual text is not. But most of the publication in the discipline takes place outside that, and probably the bulk of it takes place in in-house journals or other outlets which the universities publish themselves.

To give the example of the Economics Faculty of Shiga University, a smaller middle ranking state university where I taught for six years. Even though Shiga University as a whole was small, its Economics Faculty was actually one of the largest in the country, encompassing almost the entire range of social sciences, in addition to management, accounting, language instruction and computing. The faculty had 101 full-time teaching staff, including 38 professors, 35 associate professors, 21 lecturers, 5 assistants, and 2 foreign language lecturers (*gaikokujin kôshi*, foreigners on special short term contracts).[7] Shiga had the reputation of being a place where bright young staff taught for a while on their way to more prestigious institutions, so there was rapid staff turnover, with at least one appointment in each department almost every year. There were therefore probably more lecturers and assistant professors, and proportionately fewer professors than in the more prestigious schools.

Considering its size, and the fact that there was no university press, the faculty maintained a very substantial publishing operation. There was a research office with a staff of four whose sole job was to keep this operation going, and it was common to see members of the office staff driving off to the post office with a car laden with books or journals for posting. They were sent free to all staff members, as well as to a list of other universities which reciprocated with their own publications. As in other areas of Japanese academic life, dissemination is something which is taken for granted, not something which has to be competed for in the market place – more on this point later.

The university's most important publication was an interdisciplinary journal, *Hikone Ronsô* ("Hikone Collection") published six times a year, with an average of about six articles and two or three lengthy research notes each issue. The bulkiest issues, with up to a dozen articles, were either *Festschrift* collections for departing staff or memorial volumes for staff who had died in post, and these contained articles loosely linked to these professors' own research interests specially written by their immediate colleagues. About half of the editions fell into these categories, given the steady turnover of staff. All professors who reached retirement age or died in post were automatically honoured in this way, which acted as another stimulus for their colleagues to be productive. Many of the articles were in English, often the more technical mathematical ones, and those that were in Japanese had brief English (or occasionally German or French) abstracts. In addition to this, the university also put out: a working paper series (in English); a specialist monograph series (in Japanese); a second annual journal, *Kenkyû Nenpô* ("Annual Research Report," mainly in Japanese); and various other occasional publications linked to symposia or other events in which university members had been involved (in both English and Japanese). There were thus many in-house publishing opportunities of which the staff members were quick to avail themselves. The reviewing and editing was carried out by committees and staff members on site, there was much less competition for space than in mainstream Western journals, and the turnaround time, especially in the *Hikone Ronsô*, was breathtakingly rapid by Western standards, sometimes as little as three weeks. University professors not only made use of these journals to publish their work, but also regarded these articles as an important part of their output.

This was quite clear from other occasional publications of the faculty, which included yearbooks and directories in which the staff summarised their careers and their main publications. Contributions to the in-house publications featured prominently in these lists, and my colleagues obviously saw them as a major part of their academic activity. For instance, in the 1995 edition of the faculty directory (see footnote 6) in which academics were asked to list up to five of their main publications, 382 items were listed of which 125 (32.7%) were articles in regular journals, 92 (24%) were monographs (either authored or edited), 106 (27.7%) were articles in in-house publications, 22 (5.8%)

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[7] Details are taken from the *Shiga Daigaku Kenkyûsha Sôran* 1995 (Directory of Faculty and Research Staff, 1995). Hikone, Shiga: Shiga University. The position of foreign lecturers in the Japanese system is particularly complex, on which see the chapter on "Academic Apartheid" in Hall (1998).

were in-house monographs, and 37 (9.7%) were miscellaneous others, including translations and chapters in books. In other words about one third of what my colleagues regarded as their *major* publications were published in the house journal. In terms of absolute numbers of publications, the percentage was certainly much higher.

This was apparent in the *curricula vitae* that were circulated in faculty meetings when members were promoted up the academic ladder. Promotion reports at Shiga were often lengthy, taking up to 20 minutes each to read out, thus prolonging the meetings considerably, but what was clear was that the bulk of the output being reported on consisted of in-house publications, and that there was seemingly no discrimination against these in favour of mainstream journals when it came to evaluation. (After all, the evaluators had themselves presumably published most of their own output in similar journals.) Many associate professors being considered for promotion to full professor had published 20-30 papers or more, and the bulk of these were usually in-house publications. To give a not untypical example which occurred just before I left, a colleague was promoted to full professor at a faculty meeting. His *curriculum vitae* included a list of 24 papers, 18 of which had been published in the in-house *Hikone Ronsô*, and a book which had appeared in the Shiga University monograph series.

Two other facets of the Japanese publishing system are worth noting. The first is that many larger research grants also have a dissemination budget. Much of the research in Japan is carried out using grants from one or other of the major private sector foundations, which have a vested interest in seeing the results published in books or reports with their own names (or even company logos) prominently displayed. Many grants therefore include a component for editing, printing and mailing the output of the research, which eliminates the need to find a commercial publisher. Academic commercial publishing also differs from the situation in the West in important ways. In addition to the larger and more prestigious university and commercial presses in Japan, there are also many smaller companies which are always on the lookout for possible publications, and often the main criterion of whether they are willing to publish is whether or not the authors are willing to guarantee a sufficient level of sales. Japanese students are in general good about buying text books if they are a prescribed part of the course, especially if they perceive that reading them is essential to passing the final examination.

As an example, I myself contributed to a collection of essays in Japanese on the sociology of high-speed economic growth (Suzuki and Nakamichi 1997). This book resulted from the meetings of a research group (*kenkyûkai*), which met once a month to listen to papers presented by the members in rotation on related themes. With ten contributors willing to put the book on their students' reading lists for the next two or three years, the first run of 2,000 copies was quickly sold out and the book is now in its third printing. In addition to this, these companies publish more rapidly and efficiently than their Western counterparts. Instead of the eighteen months to two years which books seem to take to get through the press in the West, Japanese companies seem able to turn them around in six months at most from the receipt of the manuscript. Indeed, one of my colleagues in Tokyo complained to me, after a publisher took three months to get his book out, that they had taken too long!

To summarise, if they have the right connections and come from the right school, and if their professors evaluate their performance sufficiently highly to look out for opportunities for them, would-be university teachers in Japan have a very good chance of gaining a permanent job, and a very good chance of earning enough through part-time work to keep themselves going while they are looking. Part-time work and an eventual teaching position of course go hand in hand, as working at an institution is a good way of getting one's foot in the door and finding out which jobs are likely to come up.

Once in post, many teachers then simply move smoothly up the ladder, turning out enough papers to qualify for the next level, many of which will be published in house journals. Publishing books is also not problematic, if potential sales can be demonstrated, and if the book can be used as a class textbook this is not difficult to do. Generally, the system results in probably less frenetic activity, more time to research and write, and a lot less stress than the British and American systems, which is one reason why I personally am still teaching in Japan.

As will be seen below, this is not only the current situation in Japan and in European countries like Germany, but it is also very similar to the situation that used to be found in American and British universities before they began to change in response to various political and economic pressures. It is these pressures to which I will turn in the next section.

The American and British systems: abnormal and dysfunctional?

(a) Recruitment in UK/Recruitment in USA

The first point to make about recruitment in the USA and UK is that it used to be very much like that in contemporary Japan, done on the old-boy network. This is not surprising, given the tendency of the best students to attend the best schools. Like Japan, the UK put little emphasis on open advertising and interviews until comparatively recently – in fact the late 1970s when the number of jobs on offer diminished sharply, just as the number of PhDs was increasing rapidly due to the massive expansion of the university system in the 1960s. There was also concern at the time that women and minority groups were not being given a fair chance, and so the whole system rapidly changed to one of recruitment through open advertising followed by highly competitive interviews.

It is debatable whether this is much of an improvement over the old system of personal recommendation as a way to choose staff: having been involved in the process myself, it is very much a lottery as to which candidates are selected for interview, and which candidates put on the best performances on the day. In any case, interview performance is not necessarily much good as an indicator of future potential. There are also other factors that play a part, for example travel expenses ("Can we afford to fly this person in from abroad for an interview?") which have nothing to do with research quality but which are still important when finances are tight. Even in these interviews, many of the best candidates still often come from Oxford, Cambridge, and London. Former supervisors and professors play an important role by providing references, which are taken very seriously in the British system. Whether or not a candidate is selected for interview is often dependent on the prestige of the professors writing the reference, and how well they are known in the department wishing to hire.

It might be mentioned that in the case of the UK, the government's five-yearly research assessment system has tended to concentrate research resources increasingly in the élite universities, especially Oxford, Cambridge, the various University of London schools, and a small group of ultra-successful new universities like Bath and Warwick, and this has in turn led to even more of the best students moving to these highly rated centres of excellence. All the ratings are readily available on the Internet for the prospective students to read.[8]

From a wider perspective however, university staff recruitment has also been heavily influenced by the boom and bust cycle in the British economy since World War II. In the 1950s, the economy was generally strong, and the few universities which then existed failed to keep up with the demand for skilled manpower from business and industry. The government response was to found a cluster of new universities in the early 1960s, and to upgrade a number of colleges of technology in the late 1960s. During this period getting a teaching job was relatively easy, and a number of those recruited had only masters rather than doctoral degrees, as was the case in Japan until very recently. Many of them had been born during the baby boom days following the war, and so a very high percentage of university teachers were heavily concentrated in this age group.

However, the British economy moved steadily into recession in the 1970s, and by about 1975 the number of advertisements for new jobs had fallen off considerably. By the time Margaret Thatcher became Prime Minister in 1979, there were virtually no new jobs on offer and this remained the situation throughout the 1980s. A partial exception were "new blood" appointments, for which universities were given government funds in expanding fields such as information technology; but generally many of those graduating with a PhD during this period could find no teaching jobs at all. They tended to drift off into government service, administration, and business, and many moved abroad.

By the late 1980s, it was clear that another potential crisis was on the horizon: very few new teachers were being recruited at the bottom of the system, and most of the older professors had already retired. This meant that there would be very few other retirements before the 21st century – and then the baby boomers would all retire together, with few younger people to replace them. So the late 1980s and early 1990s saw another cluster of early retirements, as the less productive members of the faculty were given cash handouts to retire early and make way for younger, cheaper and more productive scholars. The universities reckoned that they would get the money back in cheaper salaries and higher research ratings, resulting in more government cash. Thus, the number of positions for junior staff in British universities has increased in the 1990s, but increasingly these positions are fixed-term three-or five-year appointments, many of which are not being renewed. Tenure was officially abolished for new recruits in 1987, and universities feel that they cannot make many quasi-permanent appointments in order to protect themselves against a future financial crisis. So the British system increasingly looks like that in America, with a large number of younger scholars circulating in search of work, and with increasing job insecurity.[9] As in the UK, short-term and part-time appointments are used in the USA as a buffer against financial uncertainty, and also to reduce teaching costs. There are larger numbers of jobs available than in the UK, given that the university sector is larger and staff mobility is greater.[10] However, the

[8] The ratings for both 1991 and 1996 are available on the Internet. See note 5.

[9] The tenure issue is very complex. Technically, people who have the same contract as they had in 1987 still have tenure. But those who have new or changed contracts (e.g., because they were promoted) have lost it. The legal position is therefore that these people could be fired at any time:, for example, if the financial situation of the university required it. So far, however, the British universities have been able to avoid mass redundancies, and have generally given financial compensation to people who have retired early, after being employed on a quasi-permanent basis.

[10] The British university system expanded considerably in 1991, with the incorporation of the former city

main problem for academics in the USA is not finding a job, but trying to get promotion and tenure, problems which for most university teachers hardly exist in Japan.

(b) Career strategies in UK/Career strategies in USA

In the UK to the 1970s, the staff profile looked rather similar to that of Japan: most people were on the same level and earned roughly similar salaries, which, as in Japan, were almost purely based on age. However, only 40% of staff could be senior lecturers or above, and there was usually only one professor in a department, usually the head of department. That began to change in the 1980s. The introduction of the government assessment system for research and extra cash for universities doing the best research meant that there was now more money to pay for the more energetic staff who could bring in large research grants. Increasingly, these people were competing in an international market, with opportunities to move to the USA, Canada, Australia, and other countries in Europe, where the salaries were often higher than in the UK. The solution adopted by many universities was therefore to promote these people to professorships and pay them higher salaries to prevent them from moving. A system came in where professorial salaries were no longer determined primarily by age: within limits they could now bargain with the university for a raise, rather as in the United States.

The results of this were rapid and extensive. Since the late 1980s, age has no longer been of major importance in promotion. (In the anthropology department where I used to teach in the UK, the age distribution in 1990 was actually the exact opposite of the academic rank distribution, the oldest people in the department being the lecturers and the youngest the professors!) The trend towards hiring younger professors has continued in the 1990s. Because of the lack of new teachers and PhD graduates in the 1980s due to the government financial cuts, there were in fact very few people in their forties in the UK system who could be appointed to chairs in the 1990s. Thus, universities looking for new professors had two other main options – to hire someone from abroad (especially Europe or America), or to appoint younger scholars in their early thirties, with good publication and research funding records. The result was that some professors in the UK were still in their mid thirties, no older than assistants in Japan, but they already had ten years teaching experience, a PhD, a couple of published books, twenty or more published papers, and hundreds of thousands of pounds of research funding. The gap between the rich and the poor in the British academic mode of production has grown increasingly wide.

Meanwhile in America, the problems of building a career are even worse. In some universities at least, using full professors for routine teaching often seems a waste of money, and much of this teaching is done by an army of assistant professors who are not tenured, and by teaching assistants, many of them graduate students. The main roles of associate and full professors are to teach as well as to administer the university, and do research which will potentially bring extra income to the university. The key element in promotion, therefore, is research performance. This is easy to measure in cash terms in some subjects, notably the natural sciences where much of the money gets spent on labour and machines to help with the research. But in the humanities and social sciences, it has to be measured in other ways, mainly in terms of publications in peer-reviewed

polytechnic colleges into the system. As a result, the number of institutions rose from around 50 to well over 100. The number of students has also been considerably increased since the 1980s.

journals. But the point is that the number of people given tenure depends not only on the micro-politics of the department at the time (complicated, as in the UK by equal opportunities legislation), but also on the financial climate.

To summarise: for the Japanese student wanting to become a university teacher, it is probably more difficult to get a first job than in the USA, and probably easier than in the UK. But once the job is obtained it is much more secure, and probably better paid than in either the USA or the UK. Building a career after the first appointment is much easier, as promotion is virtually assured. Becoming an academic superstar and a professor at an early age is more difficult in Japan, but to put things in perspective, a Japanese assistant earns as much as many British or American professors, and a Japanese professor earns as much as many foreign superstars.[11] Only in fields like law and medicine are the salaries in the West likely to be greater. Finally, so far in Japan, the academic job market has been insulated to a much greater extent from the ups and downs of the economy than has been the case in the USA or UK. In the USA, hiring has tended to vary with the fortunes of the wider economy, and falls off during a recession. In the UK, hiring has been even more lumpy, with the mass hirings of the 1960s being followed by an extreme shortage of jobs during the Thatcher period, and then another upswing as the economy revived and the polytechnics were brought into the university system in the early 1990s. The key to success in both the USA and UK has long been research output, both in terms of publications and research grants, and it is to publications that we now turn.

(c) Publication strategies in the UK and USA journals, and commercial publishing

In discussions of differences between academic traditions, little attention seems to have been paid to basic differences between the publishing industries of the countries concerned. Because British and American scholars enjoy a common language, and to a great extent contribute to a common pool of academic journals and publishers, it is assumed that the publishing industry in the rest of the world has a similar structure. Differences in the structure of publishing and the effects this has on the kinds of things that academics write are seldom taken into account. Here the comparison between Japan, the USA and the UK is instructive. As noted above, publication for Japanese academics is not a big problem, because they can usually fall back on the in-house journals. Things are very different in the USA and UK.

In talking about publication with American scholars, it is not long before they start to talk about the importance of peer review. Publications which are not peer reviewed are downgraded or disregarded. Publications which are peer reviewed, and especially those which appear in the most important mainstream journals, rank as the most prestigious forms of academic output. A massive secondary industry measuring the output of scholars in the leading peer-reviewed journals and the number of citations they generate in other leading journals has grown up, and these statistics are now widely used in making decisions about appointments, promotions and tenure in American uni-

[11] In the late 1990s, the starting scale for university professors in the UK stood at around £ 34,000, less than 7 million yen. In Oxford, where academic salaries are more or less the same irrespective of rank, they are unusually low, despite the extremely high cost of living in Oxford due to very high house prices. As an ordinary professor in Japan, my income is similar to that of the lower paid university chief executives in the UK.

versities, partly because they are numerical, and therefore apparently objective indicators.[12]

This means that the motivation of scholars to publish in journals which are part of the citation measurement process is enormously strong, and these journals are generally extremely oversubscribed. Even if an article is accepted for one of these journals, it is not published immediately, but goes into a queue, the length of which depends on the number of pages the publishers of these journals will allow for each issue: the more pages, the more articles that can be published. These long queues are not seen as a major problem by journal publishers, but rather as an indicator of strength, in that the demand to publish in them is high. In fact, journals tend to be evaluated in terms of the ratio of the number of articles received to the number of articles actually published. The higher the ratio (i.e., the more articles that are rejected), the higher the journal is evaluated, and if the ratio falls, editorial committees try hard to think of ways to stimulate a larger flow of articles – most of which of course they have no intention of publishing. Queues of course mean that the data being published is increasingly out of date, but that does not seem to matter in many disciplines, including anthropology.

The peer review and revision process is itself extremely time-consuming, in addition to the time that it takes the queue of articles to get through the press. Specialist peer reviewers may be away when the manuscript arrives, and they can take months to send in their review. Some idea of the extent of the problem can be grasped from the *American Ethnologist* which is kind enough to publish the dates of initial submission, revision and eventual acceptance for all the papers it publishes. By 1997, the average length of time between first submission and publication was 2 years 4 months. Even if an article was accepted on first submission without further revisions, it usually took about 6-9 months to review and another year to publish, or around 18 months in all. This meant of course that nearly everything that appeared in this journal during this period was based on material that was at least five years old, given the length of the research and the writing cycle, and the length of time it took to publish. Things may have improved somewhat (recent editions of the *American Ethnologist* suggest that publication time for many articles has been cut to around a year) but things still take much longer than they do in Japan.

Books from major university presses are also seen as peer reviewed and therefore prestigious, some clearly being more prestigious than others.[13] Books from commercial publishers are more suspect, as are the chapters in them, because the quality of peer review is deemed to be inferior. Materials published elsewhere are often ignored completely, even though they may represent substantial contributions to knowledge in the form of occasional papers, working papers, or reports prepared for institutions, sometimes as long as full-length monographs.

In the UK the situation is rather different. Until the 1980s, books rather than articles were most important in appointments and promotions. In the 1980s, after the 40% quota of staff reserved for senior lecturers and above bad been filled, there also were very few retirements or new appointments. As a result, the number of books one needed to produce to obtain promotion gradually increased to the point where the senior faculty

[12] The citation index concept was the brainchild of Eugene Garfield who founded the Institute for Scientific Information in 1958. For an overview of the organisation and its products, see www.isinet.com.
[13] I recently had a conversation with a colleague suggesting that she publish her latest monograph in my series published by the SUNY Press. Her response was "Sorry, I need tenure. I'm going with California!"

on the promotions committees had generally published less than the people they were evaluating.[14] Articles (whether in journals or books) were taken less seriously on the grounds that (a) they were often chunks or summaries of material which was later incorporated into books, (b) they were shorter and took less time to write, and (c) they involved less complex theory and less data than a full-length monograph. In the case of the generation of scholars in anthropology educated before the war who remained the senior professors until about 1970, the usual pattern was similar to Japan until the present: many scholars published a large number of articles based on chunks of their field data early in their careers, only turning them into monographs later on. The classic case is that of Evans-Pritchard who carried out his fieldwork on the Nuer in the late 1920s, publishing his trilogy of monographs between 1940 and 1956 (Evans-Pritchard 1940, 1951, 1956). These were actually based on portions of a large number of earlier papers published in rather obscure colonial house journals such as *Sudan Notes and Records*. Had Evans-Prichard been a member of the postwar generation, undoubtedly his publishing strategy would have been completely different!

The situation changed somewhat with the introduction of government research assessment at five yearly intervals from 1985 onwards. Departments are graded according to a formula which takes into account their output of various categories of publications, including journal articles, monographs, and edited volumes, as well as on their output of research students, and their income in research funding.[15] The five year cycle and the emphasis still put on monographs mean that British academics still try to write books, but it also means that the books are generally shorter and take less time to write than they used to. A sustained 500 page monograph based on long-term research is unlikely to be written these days, because there will be pressure on the author to produce a number of smaller books to meet the research deadline, and because many publishers are themselves no longer interested in books of this length. A monograph in the UK is now defined by the assessment committees as a book over 80 pages. The result has been a lot of very short books. There is not so much emphasis put on peer review as in the USA, possibly because the UK research assessment exercises are themselves regarded as peer review – all the material submitted for assessment is evaluated by a panel of senior academics.

The impact of the publishing system on research output

It is clear that such drastically different systems of publishing and evaluating publications are likely to have a considerable impact on what people write and the way that they write it in the three countries. The first point which can be made is that often the material being published in Japanese is actually far more recent than that presented in Western journals. We have noted above that articles in mainstream British and American journals take an extremely long time to appear. Book publishers in the West are not

[14] In the early days of the universities established in the 1960s in the UK, many of the founding professors had only published a single book. In the early 1980s, a single book and a cluster of papers were considered sufficient for promotion to Senior Lecturer. By the end of the 1980s, the going rate had risen to three books or their equivalent.

[15] For the results, see note 7 above. The next assessment is due in 2001, and by the late 1990s university departments were already making preparations for it, by hiring in new staff with good publication and funding records. The system has been likened to the player transfer market in professional football.

much better, as most of us who have published in the UK or USA can probably testify. It actually does not take very long to print and distribute books – two or three weeks at the most.[16] But, again, reviewing can take anything up to a year, and the cycle of copy-editing and proof reading anything up to two years after that. Modern technology, with the author producing the final camera-ready copy speeds things up a little in the final stages, but not all that much. As only 8-12% of the price of a book are actual printing and binding costs, it doesn't actually save the publishers that much money either, and so many of them are still unwilling to disrupt their usual routine and their relations with their usual printers, in order to save a few days.[17]

If the material one is going to publish is, by definition, out of date when it finally becomes available, then clearly one way in which the author can compete with other scholars is by appearing more theoretically sophisticated. Besides the importance of peer review, the other obsession in the literature published in the USA and UK is therefore with theory, even though the shelf-life of theory is actually very short. Most theories in anthropology are actually untestable and unfalsifiable in a logical sense, and yet they largely remain the basis on which articles and books are evaluated and selected for publication by their leading practitioners. This also leads to highly inflated bibliographies, which are sometimes nearly as long as the articles to which they are appended. One often suspects that the bulk of these references are not really part of the theoretical apparatus, but are added, rather like the lights on a Christmas tree, to ward off possible complaints from peer reviewers that they have not been noted or mentioned.

As an indication of this, and in the absence of more detailed research, I counted the references in one of the 1997 volumes (vol. 24 no. 4) of *American Ethnologist* chosen at random: the ten articles covered a total of 140 pages which included 52 pages of notes and bibliography (in a smaller font, so that actually they represented an even greater proportion of the text), and an average of 78 references per article. The average number of references in the full-length articles in a recent volume of the *Minzoku Kenkyû* (vol. 62, 1997-8) by comparison was 38. Whether the contribution to knowledge of the American articles was nearly twice that of the Japanese articles, I have my doubts; I suspect that the opposite is true because the texts of the American articles are actually very short without their notes and bibliographies. But clearly a much greater, and probably very time-consuming effort had gone into relating them to masses of other publications which presumably had to be found and read by the authors at some point.

Given that the system encourages theoretical and bibliographical inflation, and that the publication of up-to-date information is virtually impossible, a good argument can be made that the American/British academic publishing system as a system of providing information has gotten somewhat out of hand. It is a blockage rather than an aid to the dissemination of knowledge, and encourages facile theorising and wholesale quotation of secondary literature, whether relevant or not, to the detriment of the provision of relevant data about the present. Two-and-a-half years is a very long time in the present economic history, say, of Southeast Asia: presumably by the end of the century many publications were still in the pipeline in the UK and USA describing the economic

[16] A book I published on Tokyo (Eades 1998) was published only 25 days after I sent the final camera-ready copy to England from Japan, and only 15 days after I sent the final corrected proofs of the maps – but this kind of speed is extremely rare, to say the least.

[17] The explanation I was given by SUNY Press was that they publish 250 volumes a year on a shoestring, non-profit budget and therefore find it difficult to deal with non-routine requests on a case-by-case basis.

system of the region much as it had been before the crisis of 1997, still using the present tense.

From the point of view of disseminating recent information, therefore, the situation actually seems to be much better in Japan. Firstly, Japanese researchers tend to take publication for granted, which saves them a lot of time and worry during the course of the research and writing up. And their work gets published in Japanese books and journals much more quickly – a fraction of the publication time.[18]

Second, they often see publication as providing others with the results of empirical research, rather than an opportunity for theoretical pyrotechnics. Indeed, some of the more specialist publications consist of little else but raw data. In the well-known Kyoto University series of African study monographs, to take one example, there are bulky volumes which consist entirely of specialised word lists, such as names of plant and animal species used by particular ethnic groups. There are many similar examples in the published work of the National Museum of Ethnology which provide enormous quantities of primary data.[19]

The point I wish to make here is not that this Japanese work is in any way "old fashioned" but that it used to be the kind of activity which all scholars, including those from the USA, UK or the rest of Europe used to take for granted. In West Africa, for instance, this is evident in the work of the IFAN scholars or the International African Institute and the enormous archive of material they assembled during the colonial period until decolonization around 1960,[20] but competition for space in prestigious journals and publications series has meant that it has largely disappeared in the UK and USA. In Japan it is alive and well.

Thirdly, the intense preoccupation with theory and discourse which is found in a lot of work in the West is less of an issue in Japan. The length of time that many Japanese researchers spend in the field, and their mastery of the language due to the extra time available, means that the collection of data can become an end in itself. They are not under as much pressure as some of their Western colleagues to publish what is often quite thin empirical data dressed up in new theoretical clothing and inscribed in its associated specialised dialect. And indeed, acquiring the necessary linguistic skills to write in these specialised dialects of English, for a person for whom it is a second or third language, is clearly a very difficult task.

This is not of course an aversion to theory *per se*. The work of well known theo-

[18] This is not necessarily because the publishers are taking short-cuts in publication. In 1997 I published an article in Japanese (Eades 1997b) in a book published by Iwanami Shoten. The manuscript was submitted in July; the book was published, with the article edited, translated and proofread by the Iwanami staff in early November.

[19] *African Study Monographs*, Center for African Studies, Kyoto University; *Kokuritsu Minzokugaku Hakubutskan Kenkyû Hôkoku* (Bulletin of the National Museum of Ethnology), National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka.

[20] The main results of this research activity are contained in the enormous volumes of the *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Afrique Noire* for the pre-independence period, in the many papers contributed by such scholars as L.-V. Thomas, J. Lombard, C. Tardits, and P. Mercier who staffed the various IFAN research offices in Dakar and elsewhere. Details of much of their work is contained in the bibliographies in Dilley and Eades (1994) and Eades and Allen (1996). The IAI was responsible for many publications in both English and French, including the journal, *Africa*, the *Ethnographic Survey of Africa*, several monograph series, and both quarterly and annual bibliographies of Africana. Some of this work continues, but enterprises like the Ethnographic Survey more or less came to an end with the colonial period and the retirement of its originator, Daryll Forde.

rists is translated into Japanese very quickly. Most of the works of the major figures in contemporary European cultural studies, such as Bourdieu and Foucault, are quickly translated into Japanese, as have been anthropologists of the earlier generation such as Evans-Pritchard and Lévi-Strauss. Japanese scholars are also extensive collectors of classic texts in the European languages, including such monumental items as the complete works of Max Weber in German, most of the copies of which are currently exported to Japan. Even so, while an increasing amount of Japanese anthropology is being published in English, often as the result of international seminars organised by Japanese institutions, most of it is primarily empirical rather than theoretical in orientation, often in sharp contrast to the papers by Western scholars in the same volumes.[21]

In fifty years time, scholars may look upon the results of the enormous Japanese research effort of the last few years as a treasure trove of valuable primary data, rather as the efforts of the Southern Manchurian Railway Company in northern China are viewed by Chinese scholars of the postwar generation.[22] In contrast, the over-theorised articles in many of the Western journals, like works on diffusion or stages of civilization from the turn of the century, will be of little interest to anyone except to a second or third generation Professor Stocking documenting the continuing history of anthropology in the late 20th and 21st centuries. The facts that they actually convey, in amongst the latest buzzwords, references and theoretical polish, are often extremely thin by Japanese standards.

Divergence and convergence: what is to be done?

Finally I come round to the title of this paper, "Why don't they write in English?," and I think the reasons will be fairly clear. The main reason many Japanese scholars do not write in English is not because they cannot – which many of them can – but because it does them little good if they do. On the Japanese side of the equation the local publishing industry is enormous, as are the sales of books by Western standards. The publishing companies and the journals, whether peer reviewed or not, are much more efficient than those in the West, with turnaround times that are a fraction of those of their Western counterparts. With its population of about half that of the United States, and with a university sector which is almost as large, Japan is perhaps the one non-English speaking country which can maintain an academic publishing market economically and intellectually independent from that of the rest of the world. The Germans, and even the French now publish in English to a much greater extent than do the Japanese and even if they publish in their own languages they can still be read by a large proportion of English-speaking scholars. This is not true of Japanese, so the communications problem is that much worse.

The result is what Yamashita Shinji referred to as the "balance of payments" problem in anthropological knowledge: in anthropology Japan imports much more than it exports, and only a fragment of what goes on in research in Japan is known about in the wider academic community (Yamashita 1996). If Japanese scholars attempt to contribute to the mainstream English language journals, they find it hard to write the articles in the right kind of convoluted style currently fashionable, while at the same time

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[21] For two recent examples, see Ellen and Fukui (1996) and Cohen and Fukui (1993).

[22] For an example of later research based on this data, see Huang (1985).

having time to absorb the secondary literature necessary to avoid the charge of being "insufficiently theoretical." Even if they succeed, their work takes months to review, perhaps a year or more to revise, and then another year in press, by which time the material is probably fairly stale.

As a personal anecdote about the two systems: when I arrived in Tokyo, one of things I did in the autumn of 1991 was to collaborate with Han Min, a Chinese graduate student, in an article about marriage. A first version was submitted in December and published in a departmental journal in March 1992. By then I had worked on a shorter version of the paper which was sent to a major British Asian studies journal. In 1994 I was finally sent the proofs by the journal publishers, and I corrected them and sent them back, but the article did not actually appear in the issue of the journal stated on the proofs – it only appeared a year later, at the end of 1995! No explanation was provided by the publishers of the reason for the delay, and I only found out by writing directly to the Editor. (It appeared that the delay was the result of negotiations with the publisher over the number of pages.) That was the end of my efforts to persuade graduate students at Tokyo University to publish in leading English language journals![23]

The fact is that the differences between the two scholarly traditions, and the lack of communication between them, are strongly entrenched. From the point of view of their careers, there is little reason for either of these groups of scholars to talk to each other – with Japanese studies being the obvious exception. Some scholars do try: the *Minzoku Gakkai* launched a major initiative in 1998 by starting a new English language journal, with papers summarising the main results of Japanese research in China, Taiwan, Bali and Southern Africa.[24] Yamashita Shinji and I are starting a new series of monographs published by Berghahn Books which will be devoted to the work of Asian scholars writing in English. Yoshio Sugimoto and the Trans Pacific Press in Melbourne have a similar publishing initiative, offering very rapid production times similar to those of Japanese companies. A few major scholars, especially Japanese writing about Japan, will be taken up by publishing companies in the West on a selective basis, as have scholars like Nakane Chie in the past, though her main work on regions outside Japan remains untranslated.[25] And a few Japanese scholars may be persuaded to summarise their work as chapters in edited books, usually based on conferences and published in the West.

The hope for the future may well lie in the new information technology, the power of the Internet to disseminate material in translation and to make the process of translation cheaper (even though the highly specialized jargon current in the major journals is likely to test even the best translation software severely for some time to come). However, the pressure within the current academic mode of production in the USA and UK is still in the direction of ever more elaborate theorising, jargon production and the justification of every statement with an ever larger snowstorm of the latest references, making communication with scholars whose first language is not English increasingly difficult. The Japanese scholars will probably adopt the same style in their own journals in the name of "theoretical relevance," but they will do so in Japanese, thus also making their own work more difficult for non-native speakers to understand. And so for the

[23] The two versions of the paper were published as Han and Eades (1992; 1995).
[24] *Japanese Review of Cultural Anthropology*, vol. 1 (1998). The review papers are by Segawa (1998), Suenari (1998), Yoshida et al. (1998), and Sugawara (1998).
[25] On Nakane's work, see Yamamoto 1996.

most part the two traditions will continue to talk past each other as happily in the future as they have done in the past.

The point I have been trying to make in this paper is that the over-developed American and British academic modes of production are probably more to blame for this than the more "traditional" Japanese system which in fact turns out to be simply carrying on with forms of academic practice which used to be the norm in the USA and UK as well, and still are in many other countries, and which in many ways still work very well. Those wishing to answer the question "Why don't they write in English?" should probably look at the structures of their own academic modes and relations of production for an explanation rather than to see the lack of communication as just another manifestation of the "closed" Japanese system as described by its outside critics who fail to see the shortcomings of their own systems.

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