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Trends in Japanese Cultural Anthropological Research on Whaling Cultures

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(Abstract)
This article reviews major research articles and books on the cultural anthropology of whaling cultures written in Japanese. These studies fall into the following categories: (1) cross-cultural, (2) small-type coastal whaling, (3) aboriginal subsistence whaling, (4) local whaling, (5) the international politics of pro-whaling and anti-whaling movements, and (6) disciplines other than anthropology in which whaling forms the focus of the research. In this review, several features of whaling culture studies in Japan are examined. Based on this review, several topics for future investigation are suggested. These include: (1) relationships between humans and whales in both regional and historical perspectives, (2) deconstruction analysis of existing anthropological studies of Japanese small-type coastal whaling and aboriginal subsistence whaling, (3) sustainable use and management of whale resources, (4) activities of whaling-supporting NGOs and anti-whaling NGOs, both domestic and foreign, (5) perspectives on whales, whale tourism, environmental ethics and humanitarian kill relating to whaling, and (6) theory-oriented ethnographic research of whaling cultures.

Introduction

The blue whale, which grows to 30 meters or more in total length, is the largest extant animal, and is believed to be the largest animal to have ever lived on earth. Whales can be classified into two groups: toothed whales and baleen whales. There are presently 82 types (to the sub-species level) of whales recognized (OSUMI 2003: 16-17). These include large baleen whales such as the blue whale, fin whale, sei whale, humpback whale, bowhead whale, right whale, Bryde's whale and gray whale, as well as the sperm whale (a large toothed whale) and the small toothed whales such as dolphins, which can be as small as 1.5 meter in length.

Humans have made use of the whales as food or raw material resources for a very long period of time, and the relationships between humans and whales have varied historically and regionally (AKIMICHI 1994). For example, whales were drawn on rocks at the Bangu-Dae archaeological site in Ul-san in the southeast of Korea, which
was dated to BC 6000.

Whales were caught and their products were used by people during the *Jomon* period in Japan. In addition, Japanese fishermen have engaged in whaling in Taiji (Wakayama Prefecture), Nagato (Yamaguchi Prefecture), and east coast of Kyushu since at least medieval times. During the Meiji period (1868-1912), they began to catch whales not only in nearshore waters but also in open offshore waters. After World War II and up until the late 1980s, whales were also commercially hunted intensively in Antarctic waters. Recently, whale-watching businesses began operation in many localities along the Japanese coasts and offshore islands. Although whales were traditionally used for food, fuel resources and raw materials, they have recently also become a tourism resource. Thus, relationships between whales and human beings have a long and variable history.

Anthropologists and historians in Japan have studied a variety of whaling activities of Japan and of foreign countries. The purpose of this article is to examine research trends and to propose appropriate research topics for further study. Specifically, major articles and books of whaling cultures written primarily by Japanese anthropologists are reviewed, with attention to objectives, methods and result.

**Whaling Cultures in the World and Their Context**

In this article, for convenience modern whaling is classified as either commercial or non-commercial. The former includes pelagic whaling, large-type coastal whaling, small-type coastal whaling and dolphin fishing (ex. drive and hand harpoon fisheries). The latter includes subsistence-oriented whaling by local peoples.

A ten year moratorium on commercial whaling was proposed by the USA government at the UN Human Environment Congress held in 1972 in Stockholm, based on the premise that the protection of whales served as a symbol of environmental protection. Ten years later, in 1982, the IWC (International Whaling Commission) decided that commercial whaling should be suspended from 1986 onwards. This decision affected whaling industries throughout the world. Japanese whaling companies ceased commercial whaling in the Antarctic Ocean in 1988. Currently, only small whale hunts (not under IWC regulations) near the coasts of Japan, and scientific research whaling in the Antarctic and the coastal and offshore waters of the northwestern Pacific oceans, are carried out (HAMAGUCHI 2002a).

Although large whales are allowed to be harvested under aboriginal subsistence whaling as defined by the IWC, they are also harvested by local whalers in Iceland,
Norway and Indonesia (Table 1). In the arctic regions, Solomon Islands and other areas, small whales such as beluga whales (Arctic only) and dolphins are also harvested.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Name or Region</th>
<th>Types of Whale Harvested</th>
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<tr>
<td>The Inupiaq and the Yupik in Alaska</td>
<td>Bowhead whale</td>
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<td>The Mahka near Seattle in USA</td>
<td>Gray whale</td>
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<td>The Chukchi in the Chuktoka Peninsula</td>
<td>Gray whale and Bowhead whale</td>
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<td>The Inuit and Inuvialuit in Arctic of Canada</td>
<td>Bowhead whale</td>
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<td>The Inuit (Kallaalit) in Greenland</td>
<td>Minke whale and Fin whale</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bequia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines</td>
<td>Humpback whale</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northwest Norway</td>
<td>Minke whale</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>Minke whale (Fin and Sei whales)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lembata, Indonesia</td>
<td>Sperm whale</td>
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<tr>
<td>Palawan, central Visayas and northern Mindanao, Philippines</td>
<td>Bryde’s whale (currently not catching)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Sperm, Sei, Brydes, and Minke whales under scientific permit</td>
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Table 1. Large whale harvests. Based on information from HAMAGUCHI (2002a) and the IWC web site (2008a, 2008b).

Several environmental NGOs such as Greenpeace carry out extensive anti-whaling campaigns throughout the world to influence public opinion. Currently, in many places in the world, and particularly in western developed countries, a whale is not a food or industrial resource, but is instead a symbol of environment protection.

**Whaling Culture Studies in Japan**

Researchers living in Japan conduct extensive studies of both domestic and foreign whaling cultures, and publish a considerable number of ethnographies, articles and reports. These studies can be categorized as follows: (1) cross-cultural, (2) small-type coastal whaling, (3) aboriginal subsistence whaling, (4) local whaling, (5) the international politics of pro-whaling and anti-whaling movements, and (6) whaling in disciplines other than anthropology. These studies are reviewed below.

**Cross-Cultural Studies of Whaling Cultures**
Tomoya AKIMICHI has carried out a comparative study of the relationships between whales and human beings in the Circum-Pacific regions. He describes different whale classification systems, images and myths concerning whales, and the influences of Euro-American commercial whaling on indigenous cultures (AKIMICHI 1994). His latest work comprehensively concerns cultural diversity of whaling cultures in the world, whaling culture in Japan, and international politics of whales and whaling activities (AKIMICHI 2009). He has also examined problems relating to the ownership of whale resources from the perspective of commons theories (AKIMICHI 1999, 2009).

While AKIMICHI deals with whaling in non-Euro-American societies, Katsuaki MORITA has investigated various relationships between whales and human beings from the 16th century to 20th century, with a focus on Yankee and Japanese whaling (MORITA 1994). He describes and discusses the formation of modern whaling, Yankee whaling, whaling and Kujiragumi (whaling crew groups), representation of whales in various accounts of travels and academic books, historical relationships between Japan and American whaling activities adjacent to Japan, the genesis and development of the modern whaling, and whales as symbols. He argues that many Euro-Americans believe in a fictitious “media whale”, created by anti-whaling NOGs through the mass media (MORITA 1994: 391).

Similarly, Shoto YAMASHITA (2004) discusses the 400 year economic-cultural history of whaling in the context of technology, the organization of whaling, and the use of whales in both world historical and cross-cultural perspectives. He is concerned with the development of modern whaling and resource management, environmental problems, regional diversity of whaling cultures, commercial whaling, Japanese whaling, Yankee whaling, modern whaling, whaling in the Antarctic Ocean, whaling as a state strategy, and indiscriminate overharvesting and resource management.

Hisashi HAMAGUCHI (2002a), in a book entitled “An Introduction to Whaling Cultures” proposes the sustainable use of whales as a biological and cultural necessity in the current whaling era, after first describing Japanese whaling, the IWC and whaling problems, and various whaling activities worldwide. His book is essentially an encyclopedia of whaling and provides concise information of the current state of whaling and its associated problems. Seiji OSUMI (2003) reviews current whaling conflicts after discussing Japan’s whaling history, whaling culture, the management of whale resources, and current whaling and whale use worldwide.

He also describes various uses of whale products and beliefs associated with whales among Northeastern Asian indigenous peoples such as the Chukuchi, Yupik (Asia Eskimo), Koryak, etc (WATANABE 1994, 1995).

Kiyoshi YAMAURA (2008) describes whaling-related rituals among North-Pacific indigenous societies. Hitoshi WATANABE (1990) provides a very extensive comparative study of stratified hunting and gathering societies along the Circum-North Pacific Rim. In this study, he suggests a causal relationship between socio-economic stratification and subsistence noting that whaling constituted a specialized subsistence activity and that whaling was monopolized by high status individuals among Northwest Coast indigenous societies of North America (WATANABE 1983, 1990: 25).


**Small-Type Coastal Whaling in Japan**

After World War II, small-type coastal whaling was carried out by local fishermen and companies at Abashiri in Hokkaido, Ayukawa in Miyagi, Wada-machi in Chiba, and Taiji in Wakayama. Following the IWC's adoption of the moratorium on commercial whaling in 1982, Japanese whalers stopped harvesting minke whales in 1987. This resulted in significant socio-economical effects on small-type coastal whaling communities.

Milton M. R. FREEMAN, a Canadian anthropologist, and other foreign researchers with Tomoya AKIMICHI, Junichi TAKAHASHI and Masami IWASAKI-GOODMAN held an international workshop on small-type coastal whaling in Japan in April, 1988. In this workshop, they examined and reported on the history of whaling in Japan, small-type coastal whaling, whaling communities, commercial and non-commercial distribution of whale meat, the Baird's beaked whale hunt in Boso Peninsula (Chiba), food culture and religious beliefs relating to whales, and socio-economic and cultural impacts of the moratorium on local whaling communities (FREEMAN et al. 1988, 1989). FREEMAN and others argue that whale meat is analogous to blood in that it reaches every part of each whaling community. Also, they compare Japan's small-type coastal

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1 The participants in the workshop included Tomoya AKIMICHI (Japan), Pamela J. ASQUITH (Canada), Harumi BEFU (USA), Theodore C. BESTER (USA), Stephen R. BRAUND (USA), Milton M. R. FREEMAN (Canada), Helen HARDACRE (USA), Masami IWASAKI (Japan), Arne KALLAND (Norway), Lenore MANDERSON (Australia), Brian D. MOERAN (UK), Junichi TAKAHASHI (Japan).
whaling to aboriginal subsistence whaling in Alaska and Greenland and find that the former has characteristics of both commercial whaling and subsistence aboriginal whaling. Thus, they argue that Japanese small-type coastal whaling is neither commercial whaling nor aboriginal subsistence whaling category, but instead represents a third category of whaling.

Junichi TAKAHASHI (1989) describes and analyses how cultural traditions relating to whaling activities is utilized as a political and symbolic resource by local people to maintain their community identity in Taiji, Wakayama Prefecture. He does this from the perspective of Abner COHEN (1969), who regards an ethnic group as an interest group. In addition, he explores historical processes of integration and revitalization of the Taiji community, which has successfully engaged in whaling since the 17th century. TAKAHASHI points out that the Taiji community people have used various objects and events relating to whales as symbols of identity on various occasions.

According to TAKAHASHI (1989), there are four types of symbols relating to Taiji community identity. The first type demonstrates the historical distinctiveness of Taiji as a whaling community. This type includes historical documents relating to whaling, items in the local whaling museum, architectural or other remains of historical whaling sites, etc. The second type enhances pride in the Taiji community people. This includes, for example, publication of Taiji’s whaling history, construction of a whaling museum, designation of historical whaling sites, and the performing arts as they relate to whaling as important cultural assets. The third type mobilizes the community, and includes whale dances and Buddhist ceremonies for dead whales, etc. The fourth type has a “reminder” function such as visual symbols incorporating whale imagery. TAKAHASHI argues that the Taiji community identity is manifested and enhanced by the utilization of these whale symbols, and lead to a strong cohesion and political activization among the Taiji people (TAKAHASHI 1987: 165).

TAKAHASHI (1992) also published an ethnography of the Taiji community. He considers culture as an organic whole, and describes the community culture as a cultural system whose parts such as knowledge, technology, value, beliefs, organizations, institutions, and customs associated with the harvesting, and the processing and consumption of whales, are organically inter-related.

IWASAKI-GOODMAN conducted field research in two small-type coastal whaling communities, Ayukawahama and Abashiri, and stressed the socio-cultural significance of whaling in these communities (IWASAKI-GOODMAN 1994, 2000, 2003b, 2004, 2005a; IWASAKI-GOODMAN and FREEMAN 1994). She notes that whaling activities have two functions: (1) internal and external social integration of the community and (2)
integration of the whaling community with the spiritual world. She calls the former “horizontal integration” and the latter “vertical integration” (IWASAKI-GOODMAN 2005a: 46-47).

While FREEMAN et al, TAKAHASHI and IWASAKI-GOODMAN primarily focus on land-based whaling communities, Mikako YAMAGUCHI (2007) carried out ecological anthropological research on Baird’s beaked whale hunting crews, especially gunners, in small coastal whaling ships based in Abashiri, Hokkaido. Based on interview research with crew members, she describes whaling crew composition, training, religion and taboos, knowledge of Baird’s beaked whales, and whaling activities. She notes that the whaling success rate varies greatly between gunners.

Hiroyuki WATANABE (2006) conducted a historical sociological study of the relationship between whales and Japanese. He describes the development of modern whaling in Japan, the spread of whale meat dishes throughout Japan and the commercial over-catching whales after World War II. He then examines the discourse relating to “whaling culture” by anthropologists such as TAKAHASHI (1992). According to WATANABE (2006), the relationships between whales and Japanese which had originally been diverse were gradually simplified to essentially one form of relationship during the Japanese expansion and colonial rule in the last century. Then, he criticizes the anthropological representation of whaling culture by TAKAHASHI (1992) and FREEMAN et al (1988, 1989), noting that their representation is political in nature and based on essentialism. WATANABE argues that whaling is not a Japanese cultural tradition because the whale meat dishes were spread throughout Japan through a national policy to solve the food shortage problems following World War II. After criticizing the politics of whale culture representation, he notes that he supports sustainable whale resource use under the following two conditions: 1) to protect the natural environment and 2) to recognize and maintain a variety of relationships between whales and human beings.

Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling

Aboriginal subsistence whaling is a type of whaling approved by the IWC due to the historical, nutritional, and cultural needs of aboriginal peoples, and is defined as follows:

“Aboriginal subsistence whaling means whaling for purposes of local aboriginal consumption carried out by or on behalf of aboriginal, indigenous, or native peoples who share strong community, familial, social, and
Aboriginal subsistence whaling includes (1) the bowhead whale hunt by the Inupiaq and Yupik of Alaska, (2) the bowhead and gray whales hunt by the Chukchi of the Chukotka Peninsula, (3) the gray whale hunt by the Makah in Washington State, USA, (4) the minke and fin whale hunt by the Inuit in Greenland, and (5) the humpback whale hunt in Bequia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Several Japanese anthropologists have conducted field research relating to (1), (2) and (5).

Nobuhiro KISHIGAMI (2007a, 2007b) has carried out field research on whaling activities and sharing/distribution of whale meat and maktak (skin with blubber) among the Inupiaq in Barrow, Alaska, USA. In this study, he examines contemporary spring and fall whaling activities and points out that there is a “subsistence complex” relating to whaling in that seal and caribou hunts are carried out as a part of the preparations for the whaling activities. In addition, he reports on the sharing of whale meat and maktak immediately after the hunt, at the feasts at successful boat captains’ houses, at the Nalukataq (Blanket Toss Festival), Thanks Giving Day and Christmas, and Messenger Feast, and on daily life in general within the whaling community. He also describes the manner in which whale meat and maktak are distributed by whaling crew members to their family, kinsmen and friends outside Barrow. He notes that whaling and the sharing/distribution of whale meat, etc are significant in contemporary Inupiaq society in nutritional, social, economic, political and cultural terms. Also, from the perspective of political economy, he describes whaling as being carried out under the co-management regime between the Inupiaq and the US government as well as under IWC regulation and the political anti-whaling pressure of the US government and several environmental NGOs. Finally, he insists that the Inupiaq’s positive participation in resource management is required for the sustainable use of whales.

FUJISHIMA and MATSUDA (2001) explore the factors contributing to successful whale resource management by the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission (AEWC) in Alaska, USA. In 1981, the co-management of bowhead whales was initiated by the AEWC and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Since then, the AEWC has been active in the planning and management of whaling regulations, improvement efforts in hunting efficiency, and scientific research. FUJISHIMA and

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2 Barbara BODENHORN (1989, 1990, 2000) conducted social anthropological research in Barrow, Alaska in the 1980s and published several articles on food sharing and world views on the relationships between Inupiaq and bowhead whales.
MATSUDA (2001:32) note that there are several effective organizational characteristics in the co-management system. They attribute the management success to the presence of clear organizational structure, decision making processes, and fair quota allocation systems. The co-management system is also supported by the traditional boat captains’ association, strong cooperation among whaling communities, traditional whale meat/maktak distribution system based on the traditional world views and customs, and leadership of boat captains (FUJISHIMA and MATSUDA 2001: 39).

Tsuyoshi TAKEDA (1998) gives an account of whaling in Chukotka Peninsula coast by the Chukuchi in the Post-Socialist era after the collapse of the Soviet Union. However, no systematic research of whaling there had been conducted until Kazunobu IKEYA’s (2006, 2007a) recent studies. IKEYA studied gray whale hunting by the Chukchi of Lorino on the Chukotka Peninsula, Russia, from an ecological anthropological perspective. He reports on the current situation of whaling there, after first discussing the ecology of gray whales. He discusses the role of whaling in the local economy and analyzes state and private enterprise involvement in whaling in Lorino. The whaling crews are made up not of family members and kinsmen, but rather of workers of the public enterprise “Kepel”. The whale meat, maktak, blubber, etc. are used as food and oil by local people as well as food for foxes and dogs. He reports that the sale of skins and furs from fox farming and seal hunting with dog-teams contribute to cash income of the Lorino residents. In addition, he examines territoriality of the Chukchi in relation to their bowhead and gray whales hunts. Although the gray whales generally migrate close to the village, they are highly mobile. Thus, the Chukchi find it difficult to predict the movement and location of the whales. As such, there is little necessity in establishing whaling territories. On the other hand, the hunters apparently view the hunting of bowhead whales outside their territory as being extra-territorial, since bowheads must be harvested at locations very distant from their village (IKEYA 2007b: 106-109).

Hisashi HAMAGUCHI (2003b) compares Alaskan and Chukotkan aboriginal subsistence whaling. The Chukchi and Yupik people in Siberia engaged primarily in bowhead hunts and harvested gray whales only in several specific areas until the 1930s. However, because the number of bowhead whales decreased in the 1940s, hunters were forced to give up the hunt of bowhead whales and intensified the gray whale hunt. Then, in 1969, following the IWC quota system, the gray whale hunt was undertaken from whaling ships of the Russian Government on behalf of the indigenous peoples. Thus, the gray whale hunt is presently not associated with traditional rituals and customs (HAMAGUCHI 2003b: 30). This governmental harvesting of gray whales came to an
end with the collapse of the Soviet Union, after which the Chukchi resumed traditional gray whale hunting (TAKEDA 1998; HAMAGUCHI 2003b: 31). On the other hand, the Alaskan aboriginal bowhead whale hunt continued throughout the historic period without serious disruption. Thus, Alaskan bowhead whaling is still correlated with Alaskan cultural traditions. HAMAGUCHI argues that the revival of the bowhead whale hunt is important for the Siberian Yupik in the reactivation of their traditional culture (HAMAGUCHI 2003b: 32).

Hisashi HAMAGUCHI has also investigated humpback whaling in Bequia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, which resulted in the publication of a number of papers (HAMAGUCHI 1995, 1998, 2000, 2001a, 2001b, 2002b, 2003a, 2005, 2006). In these studies, he discusses the history and current situation as it relates to hunting methods and use, sharing/distribution, and management of humpback whales, as well as the development of tourism in Bequia, and notes the social, economic and cultural importance of whaling and whale resources in Bequia society. Although most of the whale meat and skin parts are sold for cash, the IWC regards Bequia whaling as aboriginal subsistence whaling.

The sharing/distribution of whale meat is important in Bequia culture. According to HAMAGUCHI, whalers are not paid in cash but obtain the meat and other parts of humpback whales as shares from the hunt in a formalized manner. He notes:

“In 1998, the meat was divided into eighteen equal shares. The two boat owners received two shares each and the twelve crewmen, the lookout and the owner of the shore station received one share each. Blubber, on the other hand, was divided into three equal shares. The two boat owners received one share between them, the two harpooners and the two captains, who were called officers, received one share among them, and the other eight crewmen, the lookout and the owner of the shore station received one share among them.”

(HAMAGUCHI 2005: 93)

Furthermore, each man’s share, except that portion reserved for family consumption and that given or gifted to his kinsmen and friends, is sold to others. In this way, the meat will be distributed to local people all over the island. Any meat left over is salted and dried, and then sent to the fish market in Kingstown in St. Vincent Island. Although the whale meat is not exported to other countries, it is distributed not only within Bequia Island, but also to neighboring islands. In addition to supplying food, the distribution of the whale meat and blubber is closely associated with the maintenance of
social relationships and cultural traditions.

Concerning whale resource management, HAMAGUCHI argues that the use and management of the whales should be left not in the hands of the state, but rather with the Bequia islanders, since they are the primary users (HAMAGUCHI 2003a, 2005). Also, he notes that whaling is still full of cultural meaning to the Bequia islanders, in spite of development of the tourism industry on Bequia Island (HAMAGUCHI 1995, 2003, 2005).

Local Whaling

There are several whaling activities which are not approved as aboriginal subsistence whaling by the IWC. Also, several groups hunt small whales which are not under the IWC regulations. For convenience, they are collectively referred to as “local whaling”.

In Canada, Inuit have a constitutionally protected right to hunt whales. So even though the government of Canada withdrew its membership in the IWC in 1981, it approves a bowhead whale catch in each of the western Canadian Arctic, Nunavut and Nunavik when it is requested. Also, the Inuit and Inuvialuit in the Arctic regions of North America may harvest beluga whales and narwhals under certain conditions. Masami IWASAKI-GOODMAN and Nobuhiro KISHIGAMI have investigated local whaling activities which are not under IWC regulation, but rather under the regulation of the Government of Canada.

Masami IWASAKI-GOODMAN (2005b) describes the revival of the bowhead whale hunt by the Inuvialuit in Aklavik of the Northwest Territories, Canada. The Inuvialuit and the Government of Canada reached the Western Arctic land claims agreement in 1984. Under this agreement, which recognized a number of Inuvialuit indigenous rights, the bowhead whale hunt was resumed after a hiatus of 70 years 3. IWASAKI-GOODMAN argues that the resumption of the bowhead whale hunt has not only a symbolic meaning, but that it also an important example of the successful implementation of the agreement based on congenial working relationships between the Inuvialuit and the Government of Canada (IWASAKI-GOODMAN 2005b: 241). She also discusses successful examples of the co-management of other wildlife resources by the Inuvialuit. The scientific ecological knowledge (SEK) and traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) are well integrated into the co-management system. She ascribes the success of the system to the existence of a recently-fostered positive relationship between the Government of Canada on the one hand, and the Inuvialuit as a resource

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3 The Inuvialuit did not catch a bowhead whale every year after 1991. They caught the second one only in 1996.
user on the other, based on mutual understanding through political dialogue (IWASAKI-GOODMAN 2003a, 2005).

Nobuhiro KISHIGAMI (2001, 2002, 2003) has investigated the hunting, sharing, and management of beluga whales in Nunavik, Canada. He examines the beluga hunt and community-wide sharing of beluga products within the context of the Nunavik hunter support program from the mid-1980s to 2004 in Akulivik, Nunavik, Canada. He shows that the Inuit people make use of the program to fulfill their cultural and economic needs in their own way in a rapidly changing Inuit society. Also, he points out there is a serious conflict between the Inuit and the Government of Canada over beluga whale resource management in Nunavik. In principle, beluga management in Nunavik is one of co-management between the Inuit as a user and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) of the Government of Canada. However, the DFO resource management proposal concerning the restriction of hunting locations and hunting periods, as well as quotas, based on SEK, is imposed on the Inuit (KISHIGAMI 2001, 2002). This causes conflicts over the beluga whales not only between the Government of Canada and the Nunavik Inuit, but also among the Nunavik Inuit communities. KISHIGAMI argues that the Inuit’s active involvement in the co-management system is needed for effective co-management, and that the Inuit should use the hunter support program for the fair distribution of scarce resources such as beluga whales (KISHIGAMI 2003, 2005).

Daishuke TAKEKAWA (1995, 1996a, 1996b) describes the hunting, associated traditional knowledge, sharing, distribution and use of dolphins in Malaita of the Solomon Islands. The local people engage in dolphin hunting to obtain the meat and teeth in Fanalei on Malaita of Solomon Islands. Based on his research on the dolphin hunts, and the use and distribution of dolphin meat and teeth, he notes that the meat is widely distributed to people in neighboring agricultural villages and cities through exchange, sale and gifting after equal sharing of the meat within the village. The local people use the dolphin teeth as ornaments, as special exchange goods, and as money in Malaita Island. TAKEKAWA notes that the teeth, as money, are shared unequally within the village, being different from the meat, and then distributed throughout Malaita Island (TAKEKAWA 1995).

Local people hunt whales in the seas around Indonesia and Philippines (HAMAGUCHI 2002a: 84-97). Toothed whales, such as the sperm whale, are hunted by local people in Lamalera of Lembata Island, Indonesia, where Robert BARNES began detailed field research in the 1970s (BARNES 1996, 2005). In Lamalera, Tomoko EGAMI and Kotaro KOJIMA carried out team research in the late 1990s. While EGAMI investigated several aspects of life of women such as women’s work, local markets,
peddling trips, cooking, dishes, etc., KOJIMA investigated several aspects of mens’ lives, such as whale hunting, fishing, boat building, rituals, fishing gear, etc (KOJIMA and EGAMI 1999). Also, they give a detailed account of whaling, exchange of whale meat with farmers, distribution of the whale meat, food and dishes. It is very interesting to note that the people of Lamalera use whale meat as exchange goods for agricultural products rather than for their own consumption (EGAMI and KOJIMA 2000). Their research on women’s activities leads to an original contribution to the Indonesian whaling community studies because Barnes and others have not researched these activities in detail.

Takemitsu NATORI (1945: 1-31) studied Ainu whaling in Funka Bay, Hokkaido. He recorded whale hunting methods involving the use of a detachable aconite-poisoned harpoon head, beliefs, Ainu names for whales, etc. Masami IWASAKI-GOODMAN and Masahiro NOMOTO discuss Ainu use of whales, relationships between the Ainu and whales, and Ainu place names, spiritual world, tales and dances relating to whales and whaling, on the basis of existing literature (IWASAKI-GOODMAN 2005a: 120-149: IWASAKI-GOODMAN and NOMOTO 1999). NOMOTO and others argue that revival of the Ainu whale dances are closely related to Ainu identity construction (IWASAKI-GOODMAN and NOMOTO 2000: IWASAKI-GOODMAN, NOMOTO and FUJISHIMA 2000).

Sun-Ae II of the Miyazaki Municipal University has investigated whale food culture in Ul-san, Korea (II 2006, 2007, 2008). II points out that the whale food culture developed as a regional culture within the Ul-san region during the early 20th century under the influence of Japanese-Russian whaling activities (II 2007). In addition, she examines the formation of this regional culture with a specific focus on whale festivals in relation to the international politics of whaling and social change in Korea (II 2006).

Hajime ISHIKAWA (1990a, 1990b, 1990c, 1990d, 1990e) briefly discusses contemporary whaling in Norway, while IWASAKI-GOODMAN (1997: 150-163) traces the development of small-type coastal whaling in northern Norway and argues that the whaling there is subsistence-related and utilizes existing social organization and traditional culture.

**International Politics of Whaling and Anti-Whaling Movement**

At the UN human-environment conference held in Stockholm in 1972, a proposal was made “to protect whales” with the aim of protecting the environment under the influence of the anti-whaling movement by several environmental NGOs and the US government. Ten years later, in 1982, the IWC officially decided on a moratorium on
commercial whaling, beginning in 1986. Japanese large-scale commercial whalers ceased whaling in April, 1988. Since then, the Japanese government has proposed several times to resume harvesting several kinds of whales whose populations have increased to the point where sustainable use is possible. However, the Japanese proposals have never been approved at IWC annual meetings. Several Japanese anthropologists and sociologists have addressed various issues relating to the whaling controversy.

Masami IWASAKI-GOODMAN (2001, 2005a) examines IWC discussions on the Japanese minke whale hunt from 1986 to 1993. She notes that more than half of the member countries oppose Japan’s proposal to resume the commercial small-type coastal minke whale hunt, although many of these same representatives understand sympathetically the proposal. In addition, she presents an analysis of the various discussions over Japanese small-type coastal whaling at the 43rd IWC annual meeting. She finds a polarization within the IWC member countries of those supporting versus those against whaling. She argues that the polarization results from (1) different views of whale resource management, (2) differing ethics, (3) different utilization of whales and (4) the influence of anti-whaling NGOs. Furthermore, there is a conflict as to whether whales should be viewed as food resources (IWASAKI-GOODMAN 2001, 2005a: 96-113).

Kayo OHMAGARI (2002) suggests that the ban on commercial whaling is decided at the IWC annual meetings not for scientific reasons but because of international politics. She argues that the USA, in particular, views whales not as marine resources but as political resources; specifically, whales in this context are seen as symbols of the environment. In addition, she explores why the whaling issues have never been resolved at the IWC in more than 30 years. While Japan, Norway and a number of other countries regard whales as marine resources, anti-whaling countries such as the USA and Australia, view whales as a tourist resource. These two opposing views have made resolving the whaling issue difficult.

**Whaling Culture Studies in Other Disciplines**

Research on whales and whaling in Japan has also been conducted in several other disciplines, such as archeology, history, sociology, folklore, and fisheries science. Whale bones have been found at several Jomon archaeological sites in Japan (HIRAGUCHI 1991, 1992, 2003a, 2003b). Vertebral plates of large cetaceans such as fin, sperm and right whales were used as mats in the production of pottery in the western parts of Kyushu from the middle to the late Jomon period. In addition, a large quantity of
dolphin bones were discovered at the Mawaki site (BP 5000) in ISHIKAWA prefecture. Tetsuo HIRAGUCHI (2003a) has suggested that the Mawaki site occupants shared game and carried out associated religious rites.

In the medieval era, whaling activities were carried out in several places in Japan, as evidenced in the historical literature. Susumu TATEHIRA (1995), Kyoichi TORISU (1999), Nario NAKAZONO (1999), Shuzo HIDEMURA (2007) reviewed whaling activities and organizations along the western shoreline of Kyushu, especially the Nagasaki region. Yukichi HABARA (1933) presents a history of whaling activities in Tosa (Kochi Prefecture), and Tsutomu WADA (1968, 1971, 2005) presents a similar history of whaling in Ise (Mie Prefecture), Kishu and Kumanonada (Wakayama Prefecture).


Motohiro KAWASHIMA and Dai TANNO demonstrate that the examination of Euro-American views on whales can contribute much to an understanding of the background of the anti-whaling movement in Europe and North America (KAWASHIMA 2004, 2005, 2007; TANNO and HAMAZAKI 2000; HAMAZAKI and TANNO 2001, 2002). Likewise, Takako KAKINUMA (2007) contrasts the cultural differences relating to views on whales between the USA and Japan through comparison of literary works, historical remains, and museum exhibitions.

In Japanese folklore studies, Kenichi TANIGAWA (1997) published an edited volume on whale and dolphin studies by Japanese folklore specialists. Takao KOJIMA (1989) describes whale-hunting gear and methods of Baird’s beaked whale hunting, use of the whale meat and food culture in Wadaura (Minamiboso City), Chiba Prefecture. Also, he deals with the problem of transmission of the whaling culture within the community after World War II (KOJIMA 2004).

There are five types of whaling activities in contemporary Japan: (1) scientific research whaling in the Antarctic and the northwest Pacific Oceans, (2) scientific research whaling in inshore waters of the northwest Pacific Ocean adjacent to Japan, (3) small-type coastal whaling, (4) drive and hand harpoon fisheries, and (5) incidental by-catches. Whale meat from these activities is sold domestically through several distribution channels. In the field of fishery economics, Aiko ENDO and Masahiro YAMAO (ENDO 2008; ENDO and YAMAO 2006, 2007) discuss the distribution channels and price determination of whale products as well as policies governing the
distribution of whale meat from Japanese scientific and small-scale coastal whaling.

Hajime ISHIKAWA (2000) and Yoshihiro HAYASHI (2006), both Japanese veterinarians, discuss environmental ethics and humane killing as it relates to whaling. HAYASHI argues that while we tend to stress cultural differences or opposing points of view between whaling countries and anti-whaling countries, we should not ignore the commonalities between them. People from a whale food culture and those from a stock raising food culture are familiar with different types of animals. However, both peoples have a common characteristic in that they strive to make maximum use of the animals (HAYASHI 2006: 51-52).

Yasunori ARANO, a historian at Rikkyo University, conducted a research project entitled “Conflicts between Globalization and Anti-Globalization – with a special focus of whaling” from 2004 to 2007. The project focused on (1) a systematic and synthesized study of traditional Japanese whaling, (2) the collection of information on traditional whaling societies throughout the Circum-Pacific regions, and (3) positioning whaling histories within overall history and cultural history. The initial results of the project have been reported in several recent symposia (ARANO 2008, ARANO ed. 2008). Saki TANAKA (2002, 2008) as a member of this project, investigated the development of whale tourism development in Wadaura (Minamibouso City), Chiba Prefecture.

Discussion

Before examining characteristics and trends in whaling studies in Japan, it is useful to briefly examine research trends outside of Japan. Although the majority of studies of whaling cultures in the social sciences and humanities in Europe and North America are primarily in the fields of general history and maritime history, there are nevertheless a number of studies of whaling cultures in archaeology and anthropology. Archaeologists tend to concentrate on whale harvesting and whale product use from culture-historical, environmental, or socio-cultural perspectives (ex. MACARTNEY ed. 1995, 2003; SAVELLE 1987, 2005; SAVELLE and WENZEL 2003). Although cultural anthropologists tend to explore various economic, social and symbolic aspects of whaling, they have also focused on the issue of aboriginal whaling as an indigenous right.

4 A public symposium entitled “Worldwide Perspectives on Whaling (III), Heading for the Construction of the Whaling History as a General History of Man” was held in the 14th of July, 2008. The results were published from No. 7 of Rikkyo Institute of Japanese Studies Annual Report (2008).
Because most of the contemporaneous large whale hunts are conducted in the Arctic regions, most studies of aboriginal subsistence whaling take place there. In addition, there have been several studies of commercial whaling in Norway and Iceland. Milton FREEMAN, Richard CAULFIELD, and others have investigated aboriginal subsistence whaling in Arctic North America and Greenland and applied their research results to solving practical problems (e.g., A special issue of whaling in the Journal Arctic 46(2), 1993; BROCH 2003; BRYDON 2006; CAULFIELD 1993, 1997; FREEMAN et al. 1998; STEVENSON, MADESON and MALONEY eds. 1997). This is a characteristic of anthropological studies of indigenous whaling. Also, KALLAND’s (1993a, 1993b) study of the totemization of whales (i.e. the creation of a fictitious “super whale” through the mass media) by the anti-whaling movement should also be mentioned. Similarly, BRYDON (2006) conducted a cultural analysis of the politics of Icelandic whaling. These two studies attempt to explore the reason that whaling is not accepted in many European countries and how the anti-whaling movement affects whaling communities in Norway and Iceland socially and economically.

Currently there are several important issues relating to whaling. One of the most important problems is the question of whether or not humans should hunt and use whales. And if yes, under what conditions should the whales be hunted and used? We call these questions the “whaling problems.” In what way does our research relate to these problems? At this point, it is appropriate to examine how whaling culture studies in Japan relate to the “whaling problems.”

First, comparative studies of whaling cultures in Japan illustrate that the relationships between humans and whales vary historically and regionally (AKIMICHI 1994; MORITA 1994; YAMASHITA 2004). Although the various relationships should be explored from both historical and regional perspectives, very few foreign anthropologists have undertaken cross-cultural studies along these lines (MULLIN 1999). Thus, Japanese comparative studies of whaling cultures are important in cultural anthropology in general. The elucidation of various human-whale relationships can contribute to the resolution of many contemporary international whaling problems.

Second, cultural anthropologists have conducted field research among small-type coastal whaling communities in Japan, and stress the multifaceted significance of whaling in the local communities (FREEMAN et al 1988; KALLAND and MOERAN 1992; TAKAHASHI 1992; IWASAKI-GOODMAN 2005, etc.). Conclusions concerning the importance of whaling in the Japanese studies are very similar to those in Euro-American studies of aboriginal subsistence whaling in the Arctic regions (CAULFIELD 1993; FREEMAN et al 1998; STEVENSON, MADSEN and MALONEY, eds. 1997).
The common features of these studies are that both emphasize historical continuity of whaling and that both employ a holistic approach (i.e. they regard whaling communities or whaling cultures as a complex whole). As WATANABE (1998, 2006) points out, these studies unintentionally tend toward “essentialism”. However, it should be noted that as long as a researcher deals with the whaling issues in terms of an indigenous or local view, his/her study cannot but tend toward essentialism⁵. Thus, it can be suggested that researchers of contemporary whaling problems state his/her position in each study. Also, it is argued that deconstruction analysis of whaling culture studies is a necessity.

Third, cultural anthropologists from Japan conduct field research on the Chukotka Peninsula, Alaska, Arctic Canada, Caribbean Sea region, Indonesia, Solomon Islands, Korea, Norway, etc and publish their results on a regular basis. Regarding anthropological studies on aboriginal subsistence, IWASAKI-GOODMAN (2005a), KISHIGAMI (2005, 2007) and HAMAGUCHI (2005) argue that whaling is the peoples’ way of life, and thus indigenous or local people should be the principal resource managers. On the other hand, Japanese anthropologists have yet to study about whaling activities of the Inuit of Greenland or the Makah of USA.

Furthermore, Japanese research on aboriginal subsistence whaling is more academically-oriented than practically-oriented. It is argued that anthropologists studying contemporary whaling cultures should be involved in solving aboriginal whaling and small-type coastal whaling issues. One of the contributions which we can make is to determine how whale resources can be used in a sustainable way, while accepting the existence of various relationships between humans and whales. Because whales often migrate long distances, we cannot predict or control their movement. Thus, managing whale resources means that we manage our own behavior and activities relating to the whales. Because anthropologists have studied and compared various institutions of marine resource management throughout the world (RUDDLE and AKIMICHI ed. 1984), they can contribute to the development of whale resource management systems from both local and global perspectives (KISHIGAMI ed. 2003; KISIGAMI AND SAVELLE eds. 2005).

Fourth, several studies have investigated conflicts between pro-whaling and

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⁵ Practicing anthropologists and indigenous activists tend to employ a strategy based on essentialism to accomplish their aims. For example, several anthropologists argue that because whaling is a part of traditional Japanese culture, it should be resumed and maintained (see Hiroyuki WATANABE 2006). Adam KUPER (2003) criticizes the essentialism aspect of indigenous movements. Terence TURNER (2006) comments on KUPER’s argument as follows: “KUPER is right scientifically, but he is wrong ethically.”
anti-whaling countries. These studies concentrate primarily upon differences in cultural views of whales, and on the activities of the anti-whaling NGOs (IWASAKI-GOODMAN 2005a; OHMAGARI 2002, 2005). However, unlike whaling or environmental studies conducted elsewhere (e.g. BROSIUS 1999, FISHER 1997, FRIEDHEIM ed. 2001, PETERSON 1992), cultural anthropologists in Japan have not actively conducted research on the activities of environmental NGOs and animal rights NGOs. Without understanding the activities of both pro-whaling NGOs and anti-whaling NGOs in and outside Japan, contemporary whaling problems will be difficult, if not impossible, to solve. Thus, especially the study of these NGOs in Japan is one of importance.

Fifth, contemporary views on whales, whale tourism, and environment and humane killing relating to whaling are examined in Japan in academic fields other than cultural anthropology. Thus, anthropologists should become active in examining these topics at both local and global levels. In particular, cultural anthropologists should study historical change and the current state of relationships between Japanese and whales as well as Japanese perceptions of whales.

Sixth, Japanese anthropologists employ various approaches and perspectives to study whaling and whaling cultures, including the comparative method, ecological anthropology, political ecology, political economy, discourse analysis, interaction analysis, social functional analysis and commons theories. In spite of the employment of these approaches and perspectives, the majority of Japanese studies on whaling cultures tend to be more descriptive than theoretical in nature. We should consider using more theoretical approaches in our studies of whaling cultures. The “whaling problems” represent unique and complex phenomena in which various local and global stakeholders participate (see ARANO 2008). Thus, it can be suggested that an ethnographic study of whaling cultures with a synthesized approach employing political economy and actor network analysis, and focusing on both local and global views (or actors) is necessary to understand contemporary whaling cultures.

Conclusion

6 Concerning actor network analysis, see ADACHI (2001). There are some problems with this view in that network construction and control of a subject was over-emphasized in the early development stage of the actor network analysis. However, it can be suggested that phenomena or things, and movement, can be regarded as actors in the networks.
This paper reviews characteristics and problems in whaling culture studies in Japan. It is noted that Japanese anthropologists have conducted historical studies of the relationships between whales and humans, studies of Japanese small-type coastal whaling, aboriginal subsistence whaling, international politics in the IWC, and perceptions of whales. In addition, a variety of approaches and perspectives employed by the anthropologists are summarized.

As a final remark, this author argues that anthropological studies of whaling cultures are significant as both basic research and applied research contexts, in that they shed light on the complex mechanisms of the contemporary world, and because they may contribute to maintaining various life-ways. Such studies provide a forum in which researchers can declare how they are involved in the real world as members of that world.

In this concluding part, it is proposed that several important topics should be emphasized in future investigations.

1. The various relationships between humans and whales in both regional and historical perspectives should be elucidated.
2. Deconstruction analysis of existing anthropological studies of Japanese small type coastal whaling and aboriginal subsistence whaling should be undertaken.
3. Applied anthropological research in sustainable use and management of whale resources should be conducted.
4. Activities of pro-whaling NGOs and anti-whaling NGOs, both domestic and foreign, should be investigated.
5. Anthropological investigations should focus on the following topics: perspectives on whales, whale tourism, and environmental ethics and humane killing relating to whaling. In particular, it is suggested that Japanese anthropologists study historical change and the current state of relationships between the Japanese and whales, as well as Japanese perceptions of whales.
6. Japanese anthropologists should strive to make theoretical contributions to ethnographic research on whaling cultures. It is proposed that a synthesized approach employing political economy and actor network analysis, focusing on both local and global views (or actors), be employed.

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