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Introduction: Writing on Gender, Sexuality and Religion in South Asia

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1. THIS COLLECTION

The present collection consists of nine articles by Japan-based South Asianists. All but one contributor, T. Fitzgerald, are Japanese. Thus this work aims to introduce the scholarly standard of Japanese (in its broader sense) studies on South Asia to those who are not familiar with such works.

What are the characteristics of Japanese works on South Asia? One of them is a close link between anthropologists and Indologists. This is apparent from the backgrounds of the two editors, M. Tachikawa being an Indologist, and M. Tanaka an anthropologist. The first part is devoted to Indological or textual studies of gender, sexuality and religion. The contributors to Part One are all Indologists with some experience of fieldwork in India and Nepal. In this sense, it should be noted that the present volume of *Senri Ethnological Studies* (*SES*) is a sequel to *From Vedic Altar to Village Shrine: Interface between Indology and Anthropology* (*SES* No. 36).

M. Tachikawa's article, the first in Part One, plays the role of another introduction to this volume and enables readers to understand the development of goddess cults or the concept of *śakti* in the history of Hinduism. He uses materials from Nepal and is especially interested in seeing some differences between the concept of the Jungian archetype of mother-goddess and the Hindu concept of mother-goddess. This article is followed by S. Einoo deals with multi-layered origins of a goddess festival, well known in contemporary India as *Dasain, Daśarā, Durgā-pūjā* or *Navarātri*. Based on a detailed analysis of Purāṇas he points out four possible origins of these festivals, and questions a monolithic idea of them. The third article by Y. Yokochi on the development of the concept of warrior goddess in the classical text of *Devīmāhātmya*; why should the goddess be a form of warrior? She suggests some links between the warrior goddess and the development of royal rituals.

Both Indological and anthropological works are mostly concerned with rituals. Though the second part consists of anthropological articles, their common topic, that is, goddess festivals, has been analyzed with the help of studies of classical texts, especially their subtle symbolic interpretations of Hindu rituals. This is most apparent in M. Tanaka's article on *Navarātri* at Chidambaram in southern India.

He owes his argument to such symbolic analysis. However, his interest in "gender politics" in the festival is a significant point of departure from textual studies to anthropological studies. Tanaka's article shows that the festival, though often called a festival for women, actually legitimizes male superiority. The *Navarātri* festival transforms itself from a women's to a men's festival in the process. The ritual transformation and its relationship with social order are an important theme of the following articles. T. Fitzgerald's article on several Marīāī festivals in Maharastra also notes the transformative process in the festivals, and the changing character of Marīāī, a local goddess, sometimes identified with Mahākālī. Like Tanaka, he tries to show the political functions of the festivals. A. Tanabe deals with a grand-scale village-royal goddess festival in Orissa, and shows the transformation of *śakti* from a wild and dangerous power to a protective power. Then he argues a historical change of the meaning of the festival in colonial and post-colonial contexts. He successfully discusses how the meaning of gender-sexuality in the character of the goddess has been influenced by the wider politico-economic changes in the region.

The third part, again, has three anthropological articles. The first two deal with puberty rituals in Orissa and Tamilnadu, and therefore again transformation is a continuing topic. Here those to be transformed are girls, and not goddesses. Y. Tanabe-Tokita's article, like Tanabe's, not only considers the symbolic meaning of the puberty ritual, but its historical implications, by referring to the changing gender positionality in India. Y. Sekine, dealing with a Tamil puberty ritual, questions the Dumontian emphasis on purity-impurity dualism as a Brahmanical and ideological set-up, and suggests a more positive creative capacity of pollution in establishing female gender identity. The final article by Y. Yagi is concerned with women's participation in the main rites of passage in northern India. Here, she emphasizes the distinctive roles of female participants and ritual specialists in contrast to male Brahmanical priests. They are related more to the concepts of fertility and auspiciousness than to pure-impure ideas.

It is obvious from the above summary of the contributions that this collection not only provides new data, on gender, sexuality and religion, but also new interpretations along with a historical perspective. There is an increasing amount of literature on these topics, such as Good (1991), Kapadia (1995), Kumar (1994), Raheja and Gold (1994), Sunder Rajan (1993), Thapan (1997), and Visweswaran (1994). One of the main issues of gender, sexuality and religion in South Asian contexts is the politics of representation: how to write on religion or sexuality in other cultures; how to represent them, or what kind of right we have to do so. These are a few issues of Orientalism. In the following part of this Introduction, I will show how Japanese intellectuals, not Western people, saw India, especially popular Hinduism, and suggest three Japanese versions of Orientalism. Such Orientalism is still found in contemporary Japanese works on India.

2. BACKGROUND: WARTIME JAPAN AND COLONIAL INDIA

The following aims to analyze Japanese views of India expressed in wartime Japanese publications (1941–45). The number of publications on India increased in this period. The main reason for the increase in the number of such publications is not difficult to guess. The Japanese Imperial Army started to invade Southeast Asian countries in 1941. India had been colonized for the last two hundred years by the British, and the nationalist movement for Independence had been very active since the early twentieth century. Some turned to Japan and tried to cooperate with the advancing Japanese forces. In 1942 a provisional government of independent India was set up in Singapore under the Japanese occupation. Gradually, India was recognized as an important country for the Great East Asia Co-Prosperity Zone by some Japanese intellectuals. Therefore there would have been a great need for information on India, explaining the increase in the number of publications on India, including several translations of books, such as those of Bouglé and Senart.[1] These books deal with a wide range of topics from Buddhism to the natural resources of India. But here I restrict my arguments mainly to the descriptions of popular Hinduism and the caste system. Both the caste system and Hinduism were discussed in terms of whether or not they were the main causes for poverty and the disintegration of India. Such issues have been continuously argued in different ways in the post-war anthropological and sociological literature on India.

If you go through the wartime publications, you can find three images of India. First, there is a negative, essentialist view. It corresponds to the idea Inden aptly describes in his *Imagining India*. According to Inden, India was considered by European intellectuals of the nineteenth century as "the Asian land governed by a disorderly imagination instead of a world-ordering rationality" (INDEN 1990: 49). I shall take a Japanese version of this image of India from Kimura's short article on Indian national characters.

The second image of India emphasized the brutal and cunning character of the British rather than the ignorant and chaotic character of the Hindus. The British had driven India to such a situation of misery. Here India is a victim. However, such an image did not really replace or deny the first one. The reason why India had became colonized was explained in terms of her inborn weakness, thus reasserting the inferiority of India, and implicitly, and often explicitly, the superiority of Japan. In comparison with India, Japan was considered to be an exceptional Asian country with a great success in her maintenance of political independence and economic development. It is only through her submission to Japan that India could become independent, or more precisely speaking, a member of Japan's Great East Asia Co-Prosperity Zone.

Thirdly, though the paternalistic idea was still present, there was a recognition that Hinduism was a significant and central element for integrating India, and that the caste system had a more positive function than had been described and

analyzed. Like Japan's *ie* (household or extended family), it could become a basis for an Oriental nation, a new and alternative nation based on the idea of kinship and familial ties, as opposed to a European and modern concept of nation, that is based on individualism.

In the following sections, I select several books from more than thirty wartime publications on India for careful study, and show the above tendencies with regard to popular Hinduism and the caste system. These books are by the authors N. Kimura, Y. Amimoto, T. Kawatoh, T. Sahoda. The tendencies of each which will be discussed are: Kimura's ahistorical and essentialist view of India; Amimoto and Kawatoh's view of India as a victim of British Imperialism; and the caste system as an essential component of the Oriental nation as maintained by Sahoda. Finally, I will touch on some issues concerning contemporary India and Indian studies in Japan.

3. NATIONAL CHARACTER TRAITS OF INDIA: AN ESSENTIALIST VIEW OF INDIA

Professor Kimura Nichinori or Kimura Ryukan studied Buddhism in India for 28 years, and in 1927 published *A Historical Study of the Terms Hinayana and Mahayana and the Origin of Mahayana Buddhism*. Later he became a Professor of Buddhism Studies at Risho University. In his short article entitled "Peoples of India" published in 1944, he tried to explain the contemporary situation of India in terms of four "universal and eternal" national character traits of India. These are Kimura's own ideas based on his long-term experiences in India. They are: a religious character, a conservative character, an introverted character, and a chaotic or messy character.

Due to the religious character, Indians see a religious element everywhere. The conservative character means that they always maintain and observe any custom which has once been recognized as truth. The introverted character is an introverted and subjective orientation towards things. With these character traits India has become one of the most civilized countries in the world.

Except for the last one, Kimura carefully presented their good points and bad points. As for the chaotic character, he only relates its bad points. This character and some harmful effects of the other characters were, he maintained, a main obstacle to India's integration and progress.

As for the religious character, Kimura considered that religion in India played a significant role in both public and private life in general. Because of this, religious and philosophical thought and spiritual cultures of ethics and morality have developed into the incomparable quality in the world. Indians are pacifists, and love philosophy and the arts.

Kimura argued that this character brought several harmful effects, and a number of irrational habits and superstitions. For example, divination, which is found everywhere in the world, was indulged in in India at every opportunity to the

extent that it disturbed new projects. The religious character, therefore, had become an obstacle for progress and development. Underdevelopment of medical knowledge and deep-rooted conflicts between the Hindus and the Muslims were also considered to result from the religious character.

The conservative character has both good and bad points. The former is an effort to maintain and futher one's own culture, without being influenced by Western ideas or trends. On the other hand, the eradication of social evils, such as the caste system, is not paid due attention.

The introverted character has contributed to the development of the spiritual culture, but at the same time has produced a nation which is less active and is lacking in fighting ability. Pessimism is an extreme case of spiritualism caused by the introverted character.

As for the fourth character, the chaotic one, Kimura tells of his experience of India:

> Having stayed in India for the last twenty-seven years, what surprised me were chaotic habits found in everyday life, whether personal, domestic, or public. There is no order, harmony or unity in placing things or in arranging a room. It is always messy (KIMURA 1944: 450).

This, he mentioned, was the fundamental element which caused the disintegration of India:

> The diversity in the spheres of religion, language, manners, and the lack of national integrity in India,...the large number of illiterates, many superstitions, an indefinite division of her people into classes and religious groups, poverty...are all explained by the harmful effects of the four national characters (*ibid.*).

In Kimura's argument we can find no reference to British rule, to the political situation in Asia at that time, or to Japan's military expansion. This is because he thought, without any historical reference, that India was constructed as an absolute and eternal other formed by the four national character traits.

4. POPULAR HINDUISM AS A JUNGLE

The same essentialist idea is found in Amimoto and Kawatoh's view of popular Hinduism. Amimoto seems to have had an extensive experience of India and his book shows a good ethnographic knowledge of everyday life. Kawatoh, a former vice-minister of Foreign Affairs and the author of *Appeal to the Mongolian People,* had a successful career in east Asia, and visited several places in India in 1940, first landing at Tuticorin in South India, then travelling northwards to Madras, Calcutta, and Varanasi, before finally going on to Afganistan. His book is based on this tour, which was originally aimed at evaluating Russia's possible southern advancement.

According to Amimoto, India is a religious country. The reality is, however,

that India is full of superstitious and fanatic ideas. The religion of India, or Hinduism, serves only to legitimize the caste system.

> Hinduism is not just a matter of faith. It is deeply rooted in the everyday life of the Hindu populace, and controls their behavior... Thus it is apparent that the significance of Hinduism lies not in its philosophy, but its social function. From such a viewpoint, Hinduism can be considered, at least in the present condition, as the microcosm of a stagnant, retrogressive and decadent part of Indian society, though it looks religious. It is unbelievable how various phenomena produced by Hinduism, as well as the caste system, can inhibit the enlightenment and progress of the Indian people (AMIMOTO 1942: 49–50).

Amimoto visited Madurai, a sacred city in southern India, and wrote of his impressions of its famous Mīnākṣī Temple. He states:

> Europeans have admired Madurai as an Athens of south India. It is famous for its great temple. Those who visit there will be surprised to find that the temple towers (*gopura*) standing at each corner of the temple are gigantic, 100 feet high, and are covered with numerous idols from the bottom to the top without any space unfilled. The temple inside is impressive, but grotesque. There is no beauty of purity which we experience when looking at the Venus of the Pantheon. This is the mystical beauty of the grotesque, caused by the strange atmosphere of tropical jungles, the beauty you might find in the prayers of prisoners enslaved by the caste system (*ibid.*: 43).

A similar description of the Madurai Mīnākṣī Temple is made by Kawatoh, who also visited Madurai:

> Madurai is the most sacred place of Hinduism, second only to Varanasi. Its temple is not the most gigantic, but certainly one of the greatest in India. This is a complex and grotesque temple, all made of stone. There are thousands of stone pillars covered with countless carved images of all kinds, stone towers inscribed with an infinite number of images... They are all products of pains-taking work, and their quality is beyond my imagination. Such works are possible only with the power of superstition. This temple is just a collection of idols associated with superstition. The divine couple of Śiva and Mīnākṣī, that is, the core of the temple, is filled with an air of obscenity and should be ranked low. Even the goddess of Arts and Learning has big breasts and twists her hips in a funny way, a pose loved by the Hindus, who have no entertainment beyond physical joy. It is a great pity that Buddhism was replaced by such a religion. Hinduism should hold a great responsibility for the breakup and subsequent downfall of India (KAWATOH 1944: 9–10).

Amimoto considered the world of popular Hinduism grotesque and mysterious, thus describing its enigmatic nature in reference to a jungle or a prisoner.[2] Here Hinduism is contrasted with the beauty found in the Venus of Greece, the place from where European civilization is said to have originated. Kawatoh, on the other hand, demonstrated the backwardness of India by implicitly comparing her with Japan where Buddhism is still flourishing. We should note also that references to sexuality are used to devaluate Indian arts and religion.

5. INDIA AS A VICTIM

As is seen from the above quotations, it is evident that both Amimoto and Kawatoh saw a negative function in Hinduism. However, they insisted that it was just one of the elements which had contributed to the present state of India. They were not so naive as Kimura in attributing India's problems to Hinduism only. What was more crucial in their view was British rule. Although the caste system and religion were certainly principal elements in the disintegration of India, the British utilized them to the maximum for their own profit to keep India from integration and independence. From this point of view, India was a victim of British hegemony. To quote Kawatoh:

> India is a country of religion, and full of superstitions. The British should have reformed and modernized religion for the benefit of India, but they have never tried to educate the Indians, saying that such an act would disturb Hindu feelings. They boast about their legal prohibition of *suttee,* or the notorious custom of burning a widow with her dead husband's body in the cremation fire. Such a fact itself tells that they have done little to Indian society, and are indifferent to social reform. They would have undertaken social reform, even if it meant the destruction of the Hindus, not to speak of disturbing their feelings, if they had thought that such reform would have benefited themselves. They believe that it is religion and superstition that keep India divided and make British rule eternal. This is the main reason for their indifference to reform (KAWATOH 1944: 32–33).

Amimoto criticized the British in the same fashion.

> It may be correct to say that the so-called excess in spirituality or what the Buddhist literature calls the introverted character has been one of the obstacles for the progress of the Hindus. However, it is worth rethinking whether we can conclude that such a character trait is indigenous to the Indians. For we cannot explain the backwardness of Indian society in terms of the national character trait, if you consider the fact that India was one of the wealthiest and economically most progressive countries in the world, not only in ancient times but even in early modern times when it was "discovered" by Europeans. Then the following interpretation is more relevant; it is the result of the British rule which destroyed Indians' hope for happiness that they started looking for the last retreat in the other world. Indians' excess in spirituality is not the cause of the misery of present India, but its result (AMIMOTO 1942: 155–156).

Here we see a clear-cut criticism of the essentialist view of India. It should be noted that, in Amimoto's interpretation, the relationship between Hinduism and social conditions is reversed.

Kawatoh recalled meeting with Japanese expatriates in Calcutta, where he had discussed the present situation and the future of India. After his speech, one of them expressed his doubts about the possibility of India's integrity. Kawatoh replies as follows:

> Indeed, India is too seriously disintegrated to easily overcome various social

> problems. But this is mainly the result of the well planned policy of the British colonial government, which has been promoting and not reforming the division of India, the situation the British first found two hundred years and more ago. Therefore, the present situation is not necessarily the result of Indians' essential disability to become a modern nation. Most countries one hundred years and more ago were more or less in such a state of disunity as today's India. However, as the world was changing, peoples of these countries became conscious of being a nation, either to overcome such a situation and integrate into a nation-state, or like in Europe, to divide into small nation-states. But in the case of India, she became a victim of the British policy and failed to raise the national consciousness, and thus to overcome dividing factors. Therefore, if the destiny of India should fall in the hands of the Indians themselves, after the departure of the British, then though she might get in trouble for a while, in the end she could save her face. Actually the nationalist movement led by Mahatma Gandhi is driving the British to the wall. Some British dare to say that they are waiting impatiently for the day to come, when the Indians can do something for themselves. Only then can the British leave India without worry. But this is a great barefacedly hypocritical remark. Nobody in the world would believe that the British are so filled with humanity that in spite of difficulties, they may remain in India for her happiness. I admit that India faces a more complicated and difficult situation than anywhere else in the world. But this situation is not really difficult to overcome. Once the notorious obstacle, that is, the British rule, is removed, then the overall situation will enable India to find her own place in the world without any trouble. Drive out the British, the bloodsuckers, from India, and India will be saved. This is the best way. Temporary confusions brought out after the removal of the British are of little significance (KAWATOH 1944: 42–44).

According to Amimoto and Kawatoh, an excess in spirituality was certainly related to the Indians' pessimistic view of the world and to their non-action, but it was the oppressive British rule of the last 150 years that had driven the Hindus to religion. The same was true of the caste system. Certainly the caste system was one of the important elements for the disunity of India, but it was again the British that had utilized it and successfully prevented India from national integration. Finally, the above accusation of British Imperialism as being a cause for the situation of India at that time led to a justification for the Japanese paternalistic view and the coming Japanese military advancement towards India. Characterization of India as a victim leads to her feminization. She was a helpless woman in the face of a brute Briton. It is only another man, a Japanese, who will be able to save and liberate her.

6. JAPAN AS LEADER OF THE GREAT EAST ASIA CO-PROSPERITY ZONE

The view of India as a victim implicitly presupposed a contrast with Japan, which had escaped colonization and was to become the winner in Asia. Some writings examined expressed strongly the idea of Japan as the leader of the Great East Asia Co-Prosperity Zone.

To quote Amimoto again:

> We Japanese, the leader and liberator of Asia, stand in complete silence, overcome with grief, when facing the sign of the backwardness of India, which looks like a ghost wandering from the Dark Ages (AMIMOTO 1942: 18).

Here India was considered to be the world of the Middle Ages and contrasted to modern Japan. A similar idea is found in Hayashi in his pictorial *Soils and People of India*:

> The reader may find harsh my honest description of the character of Indians, but I would like to insist that this is due to compassion for my Indian friends as a whole, in order to save our friend, India. Together with India, we shall proceed to the ideal world of the Great East Asia. Now, thanks to Japan's rise, India is to face the dawn, for the first time after hundreds of dark nights. In response to the warm hands of Japan, India must make a decisive move to stand up with her own feet on the ground (HAYASHI 1943 n.p.).

Sahoda, who later became a professor of Indology at Osaka University, described Japan as the eldest brother and other Asian countries as younger brothers:

> If we Japanese hope to be the eldest brother of our Asian fellows, we must have deep and extensive knowledge about the conditions of the Asian countries. If we fail to do that, we are not qualified to be their leader. We need sufficient readiness and effort. In addition, for waging the Great East Asia War [the Japanese word for the Second World War], it is an urgent matter to lead and integrate Asian countries (SAHODA 1944: 1).

Why was such leadership expected of Japan? According to Sahoda, Japan successfully became a modern nation-state in Asia. What kind of conditions distinguished Japan from other Asian countries? He insisted that Japan was the oldest nation-state in the world, and the feudal system in the Edo period (1603–1868) was just provisional and "abnormal" in Japanese history. Japan was already qualified as a nation-state, therefore in spite of the relatively late encounter with Western societies, Japan quickly adopted their systems and values, and became a modern nation. There was no other such society in Asia. Here lay a main reason why Japan could claim leadership of Asia. Sahoda also argued as follows:

> That one [the leader of India] should be nobody but the Japanese who live in the same environment as the Indians, and have cultural elements in common with them. Only the nation which lives on rice can lead India. Those large-scale farmers of Europe never understand the hardship of growing rice.... It is only after India becomes independent, turns to Japan for help, and joins her Great East Asia Co-Prosperity Zone that the caste system will change, and a nation-state suitable for India will be established (SAHODA 1944: 57).

Here Japan was not only considered as the country which had escaped European Imperialism and colonization, but she proudly claimed that, being one of

the Asian countries, she shared some elements —environment, dietary culture etc. —in common with India. In addition, as we shall see, the caste system, which was interpreted as a negative element for the state, was given a positive meaning in Sahoda's writing and compared to *ie*, or the household system of Japan.

7. A WAY TO AN ORIENTAL STATE

This section deals with Sahoda's book *On Indian Society* (1944). This is a small book, about a hundred pages long. However, its content shows a high standard, as far as information on the caste system is concerned. He seems to have conducted extensive research on the literature concerning the caste system, which was available at that time. Sahoda's book consists of two chapters, both based on public lectures made in Kyoto and Osaka in 1943.

In the first chapter, Sahoda admits that the caste system was a social problem. For example, he refers to a prevalent discrimination against the Untouchables. But such a social defect did not necessarily justify the British rule over India. Sahoda accepted the view that the caste system was responsible for the present state of India, where so many small communities existed, and no national consciousness was found among them.

Sahoda defended Hinduism. He argued that Hinduism was not a cause of castes, although they were closely related. Therefore, it was wrong to say that because religion justified the social stratification and kept India divided, the caste system would change and disappear only after the reform or destruction of Hinduism. Hinduism was not a social evil. On the contrary, Hinduism would contribute to the political unification of India into one nation. This is an idea very similar to that found among today's ultra-religious nationalists in India.[3)]

> Hinduism could exist without the caste system. Hinduism is the spirit of the Hindus. Therefore, it is impossible to destroy or change Hinduism. Such an action would lead to change or destruction of the Hindus themselves. Castes originated under several conditions. Thus, if we remove or change these conditions, they will change or disappear (SAHODA 1944: 51–52).

> Certainly, India has an unimaginable diversity of races, environments, and languages. So many different groups are found there. However, what is most significant for a state is the existence of a national spirit or state spirit, rather than the problem of race or environment. A state or nation is not a natural product, but is formed historically and culturally. If India lost the spirit of Hinduism, she would certainly lose the ability to become a nation-state (*ibid.*: 53).

Here Sahoda defended Hinduism as a potent ideology for the national integration, but his idea of the caste system was not so different from others. Sahoda accepted the problem caused by the caste system for the independence of India. However, in his second chapter, he extended his positive opinion of Hinduism to the caste system, and presented a new interpretation of it.

According to Sahoda, caste was a group based on kinship or quasi-familial emotion, the traditional emotional ties which derived from the idea that its members were all descendants from the same ancestor. It was compared to *ie* in Japan and clan (*zhongzu*) of China. A social group of this kind was a basic component of Oriental nations. Because of the collective kinship ties, the oriental state was superior to the Western state, which was based on individualism. It was wrong, Sahoda insists, to attribute the backwardness of Oriental countries to their collectivism. Here Sahoda reminded us of the case of Japan: the very fact that Japan became a first-class modern state without destroying *ie* would demonstrate an alternative basis for a modern nation in the Orient. Adopting Western individualism was not the only way to the building of a modern nation. We must remember, Sahoda warned, the harmful effect of individualism. He expressed the ideal Oriental state as maternal, service-centered, spiritual-life giving, subjective, eternal and moral (SAHODA 1944: 99–101). Sahoda reinterpreted the caste system as a fundamental basis for the Oriental state, which was superior to the Western state. Collectivism was given a new life, and the conventional paradigm of Orient and Occident was reverted.

8. LINKING TO PRESENT WORKS

What kind of contribution does the above discussion make to our study of India or Asia in general? It is obvious that the wartime Japanese publications shared some common elements with contemporary discourse on India. For example, the essentialist, ahistorical view of India, and the negative opinion of the caste system and Hinduism as irrational and anti-modern, are still prevalent in the contemporary literature on India.[4] Criticism of the British colonial power is fashionable in today's Hindu nationalism.[5]

As far as anthropology is concerned, its attempt to understand Oriental society in terms of quasi-kinship groups such as caste, *ie* and clan is not uncommon (for example, HSU 1963). Such an approach, a version of sociological essentialism, is comparable to Sahoda's nationalist thinking. In the case of Japan, many publications on Japanese society appeared in the 1970's and 1980's. Due to rapid economic development during this period, some of them positively argue for *ie* and Confucianism.[6]

My final remark is concerned with the subjectivity of the Other. In my view the discourse of India as being a victim is prevalent in various kinds of literature, which tend to emphasize the post-colonial situation of the third world and pay more attention to various oppressed groups, like ethnic minorities, lower castes, and women. As seen in the following quotation concerning the predicament of Indian women, such a discourse is not so different from the Japanese view of India as a victim:

> Indian women are taught self-sacrifice from their childhood. This is the virtue of

> women. As a result they have grown up without learning resistance or rebellion. Any animal will escape instinctively when exposed to danger. But, Indian women are taught to tolerate this. They tend to sacrifice themselves for the female virtue at the expense of their own lives. Thinking that death is better than suffering arising from *dowry* problems [*dowry* here means money and property given to the husband by the bride's side] and that everybody will be happy only if they can bear any trouble, Indian women keep living such unbearable lives. They are too generous. Is it too cruel to say that one of the reasons for *dowry* murder is their spirit of extreme self-sacrifice? (SHA 1990: 45).

Compare the above discrimination of Indian women with the following argument of Amimoto.

> Because of ignorance, there is no distinction between nature and man. They [Indians] tend to accept any event in society as something natural, as if it is a destiny or is fully mechanical. Such an attitude shows both their unbelievable resignation and indifference to changing their destiny. Here lies the reason why even today, Hinduism, full of contradiction and anachronism, still oppresses more than two hundred million souls (AMIMOTO 1942: 47).

Here we can find both women and Indians described as those whose subjectivity is categorically denied, and whose voice is never heard.

So is there any way to recover the subjectivity or agency of the victim? How can we "represent" the Other, who is located at the margin of society? This is becoming a crucial issue, as we anthropologists are increasingly taking a "proctological" point of view, to use Cohn's expression for history from the bottom up (COHN 1987:39). I would like to introduce here Kawatoh's observation at Varanasi.

> I have heard that India is notorious for dealing with widows. They become polluted and work hard as house slaves. Even till recently there was the custom of widow immolation. These miserable widows gather at the bank of this sacred river, the Gaṅgā, and every day purify themselves with its sacred water, thinking of the time of their death. Indians have been living and dying with superstition for thousands of years. The British have never interfered, but rather tried to preserve such horrible ancient customs.... If you turn your eyes from the burning *ghāts* (cremation spots) to the swimming place just down the river, you will see young men swimming as if ridiculing the ancient custom. They enjoy swimming races or waterpolo. They never mind drinking the water mixed with the ash of cremated bodies. It is a mistake to judge the whole of India only from the observation of the aged and the deformed who, superstitious to the core, are busy preparing for death. Even if the British dislike and try to disturb them, young and awakened Indians will grow one after another, using the contemporary rotten India as manure (KAWATOH 1944: 57–58).

In the above quotation, Kawatoh said that India was a country of superstition, and accused the British of indifference to the reform of India. However, he did not jump to the nationalistic claim of the superiority of Japan or her critical role in India's independence. Instead, he paid attention to the youths absorbed in

swimming. He recognized a gleam of hope among them. What makes this kind of description differ from the previous quotations, including Kawatoh's own? The reason is that it did not present a homogeneous India, but a discrepancy between the aged and the young, and the latter's potential power to change the society. Such a "deconstructive," though naive, perspective is increasingly important to those interested in writing about other cultures.

This Introduction tells us that like their Western counterparts, Japanese past and even contemporary works on India have seen especially popular Hinduism as obscene and Hindu women as victims, and have not escaped a grand paradigm of Orientalism. The following articles more or less attempt to overcome such problems and shed light on new directions in writing about South Asia.

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NOTES

1) In this article I have examined only a small portion of the literature on India published in Japan during the Second World War. I have not gone through material from the pre-war period. Articles published in journals during the Second World War have been excluded from this review. In spite of these restrictions, I hope I have shown that India was represented in several distinctive ways during this period, and that an understading of these orientations is relevant to the contemporary study of post-colonial situations the world over.
2) To describe Hinduism as a jungle also seems popular in the Western literature (INDEN 1990:86).
3) On Hindu Nationalism, see GOPAL 1991.
4) Cf. INDEN 1990.
5) Cf. GOPAL 1991.
6) Cf. MURAKAMI *et al.* 1979.

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