Some Critical Appraisals of Recent Achievements in the History and Methodology of Geography

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Abstract: In this review article, the author examines from a critical viewpoint the recent achievements of Japanese geographers in the methodology and history of geographical thought in the broader sense. Works discussed in the previous review article of 1988 by Takeuchi and Nozawa are excluded from the present considerations. Rich achievements in the intellectual and social history of Japanese geographical thought and geographical knowledges in Japan are underlined. The strong influence of Western geographers in Japanese modern and contemporary geography is also mentioned.

Key words: geographical thought, academic geography, Japanese geographers, history of cartography, history of geography, geographical knowledge

In this review article, the author on principle examines the achievements of Japanese geographers in the methodology and history of geography, taking up where our previous review article (Takeuchi and Nozawa 1988) left off. Strictly speaking, there exists a certain degree of divergence of focus between the previous and the present papers. In the previous review article, the authors took into consideration works dealing with the history of Japanese geographical thought, including a number written by foreign researchers; whereas in this paper, the scope of examination also includes methodological discussions, with examinations being made of works written by Japanese, and including works by the latter on the history and methodology of Western geography.

In many cases, considerations on geography as an academic discipline, that is to say, geography of great tradition in Redfield's sense and on geographical thought of little tradition, i.e., people's perception of place and milieu and the popular approach to environmental management, inevitably touch on a methodological reflection on the research and practice of geography. Methodological reflection in geography is, however, sometimes conducted without reference to the historical context or historical development of geographical studies; in this review article, the author excludes purely theoretical discussions of this kind. Geographical knowledge is not expressed solely by means of language (langue), that is, the combination of words, but also by means of other langages, especially graphically, that is, by means of maps, including pictorial maps. Numerous noteworthy achievements are to be found in the history of cartography, but here, the geography expressed by cartographical langage is taken into consideration only when it relates to the history of geographical thought. Or in other words, the history of cartography is examined only in the context of iconology of place and of social history pertaining to geographical knowledges.

History of Japanese Geographical Thought

History of cartography

Generally, the study of the history of indigenous Japanese geographical thought has been conducted on the basis of the examination of cartographic materials on the one hand, and on the examination of written documents on the other. Over the past eight years, veteran students of the history of cartography have continued to pursue their studies in this field. Thus we have Unno's exhaustive studies on Asian cartography, including cartographic works by Japanese researchers (Unno 1991), and his original work on Kokan Shiba (Unno 1994); also the late Yamori's last book (Yamori 1992) and Kawamura's comprehensive examination of...
pictorial maps of provinces (kuni) of the early modern period (Kawamura 1990, 1992); and Funakoshi's studies on the world map of Kageyasu Takahashi (Funakoshi 1992) and the impact of K'ang-hsi maps on Japanese cartography (Funakoshi 1986, 1991) and his investigation of gore-shaped sections of globe maps in a private collection in Toyama Prefecture (Funakoshi 1995) are also relevant among works of this kind. Kawamura's work of 1992 is also a pioneering contribution to the history of the land survey technique of the early modern period. Kimura published a synthesis of his long years of study on the cartographical history of the Early Modern period (Kimura 1987).

Collective works on pictorial maps were published (Katsuragawa Ezu Kenkyukai 1988, 1989). While Yamori was also numbered among the contributors to these collective works, most of the authors belonged to the younger generation of historians of cartography and the studies themselves are characterized by the authors' interest in the cosmologies of the map makers and the people who utilized these pictorial maps, and also by the broad coverage of the times and places of the pictorial maps treated. Onodera's book is the first synthesis of fluvial maps pertaining to various parts of Japan in the Early Modern period (Onodera 1991). Ogawa explored mental worlds reconstructed on the basis of mediaeval pictorial maps of manors (Ogawa and Hisatake 1991; Ogawa 1992). The influence of the humanistic geographical viewpoint on these and other works of the members of the younger generation, who undertake the analyses of environmental perception and cosmology through the maps of past ages, is clearly evident. In this phenomenological or humanistic aspect, studies of old maps have for the first time broken out of their old mould of a supplementary discipline to historical studies to become a genuine and proper study of geography in their own right.

Ohji opened up new perspectives with regard to the social history of cartography with his contribution of an analysis of marginal areas of Japan depicted in mediaeval pictorial maps, which constituted source materials for maps of East Asia compiled in 1471 in Korea (Ohji 1993). Representing the fringe areas, mediaeval Japanese are shown to have begun to discriminate against ethnic groups living in those areas. Cartographic representation is thus interpreted in a political and social context.

**The changing geographical imagination**

New humanistic trends in the study of the history of geographical thought now rely heavily on the analysis of written documents and of the landscape as text. Senda, who has already explored the geographical imagination or territorial possession in ancient Japan, published works on the cosmology of the people of ancient Japan, reconstructing the landscape of past times, mainly of the Kinki District, which was the focus of ancient civilization (Senda 1990, 1991a, 1991b). He has succeeded in clarifying the influence of a cosmology of continental Asian origin on the landscape of ancient Japan. His broader and very original interests, moreover, ranged as far as the changing landscape perception of the Japanese people in the Meiji period (Senda 1992a). Strongly under the influence of Senda, Abe explored the geographical imagination or the significance of the ancient Japanese landscape through an analysis of the mythology, ancient poems and stories pertaining to it (Abe 1995). He began his geographical studies in the field of geomorphology, but after collaborating in the translation of Tuan's *Topophilia*, he shifted his interest to humanistic geography (Abe 1990, 1992). Yamada also demonstrated the cosmology of the people of the past and edited collected works focussing on the sense pertaining to bearings (Yamada 1994). Kikuchi reviewed the significance of the humanistic geography viewpoint in the construction of past landscapes (Kikuchi 1988).

Stimulated by the increasing interest in landscape in many other disciplines such as architecture, folklorist studies and sociology (Katsuki 1989; Sato, K. 1994), geographers published a large number of works on the significance of landscape in geographical studies (Iwata 1985, 1986; Okada 1987), and on the perception of landscape (Arayama 1989; Aichi Daigaku Sogo Kyodo Kenkyusho 1992; Uchida, Y. 1987; Uchida, T. 1990; Shiraishi and Tsuchida 1992). Iwata pointed out that landscape
studies in geography in Western countries were introduced in Japan in the period prior to World War II by Taro Tsujimura (1890–1941), Kumataro Yamamoto and Katsue Misawa (1885–1937), each of whom presented different and partial aspects (Iwata 1994). T. Uchida's main interest was the phenomenological analysis of the province (kuni); he recently reconstructed the kuni landscape of the past by means of ancient narratives, especially the Fudoki (Uchida, T. 1995), and Sasaki proposed the application of landscape semiotics in historical geography, adopting psychological and behavioural approaches in his analysis of the formation of territoriality in ancient Japan (Sasaki 1990). The studies of Kinda had their basis in the solid orthodox methodology of historical geography involving the grid-pattern landscape of ancient Japan, but these studies also demonstrated his deep interest in the aspect of cognition of landscape in ancient times (Kinda 1993).

For the first time in Japanese geography, modern Japanese literature undergoes analysis at the hands of Sugiura, who sought to discover the geographical imagination of writers (Sugiura 1992) and edited collected works on the reconstruction of landscape in literary works (Sugiura 1995a). There are also some studies on children's environmental perception or the significance of what could be termed the proto-landscape, or images formed during childhood (Teramoto 1988, 1994a, 1994b). Teramoto is interested in the reconstruction of past landscapes by means of analyses of the proto-landscapes of the authors of literary works, and it is in this sense that we can consider him a historian of geographical thought. Recent studies have been achieved here in this field, though a certain number of foreign researchers such as Augustin Berque are currently actively exploring these topics.

Modern geography in Japan

After the middle of the nineteenth century, Japanese geographical thought came to be strongly influenced by Western geographers and Western geographical thought. With regard to the period before the institutionalization of geography in higher education around the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, T. Sato re-examined the writings of Yukichi Fukuzawa (1834–1901), one of the so-called Meiji enlightenment writers (Sato, T. 1994), and Minamoto published detailed bibliographical studies (Minamoto 1989a, 1989b). Takeuchi pointed out the internationalist aspects of Shigetaka Shiga (1863–1927) particularly in his late years; he was generally considered a nationalist who utilized geographical writings for the encouragement of nationalist sentiments (Takeuchi 1994b); and Otsuki analyzed the achievements of Shiga as a geographer (Otsuki 1992). Detailed studies on Shiga as forerunner of political geography in Japan were
conducted by Nozawa and Nicolas-O (1992). New source materials on Shiga were published by his descendents (Toda 1994).

The institutionalization of geography in higher education and the establishment of academic geography in Japan were closely related to the development of geography education in primary and secondary schools. Apropos of this, K. Nakagawa published a pioneering work on the history of geography education in Japan (Nakagawa, K. 1978) and Y. Sato explored the significance of the Teacher's License Examination for Geography in Secondary Schools in the period before World War II (Sato, Y. 1988a, 1988b). Where Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871–1944), early successful candidate for this examination, was concerned, many studies have already been published, with particular reference to his role as founder of the Soka Gakkai, the active militant Buddhist sect; but Okada concentrated on a re-evaluation of the significance of his geographical writings (Okada 1994). Furthermore, studies on certain figures in the history of geography education before World War II, carried out respectively by Iwata and Mikami, are important contributions (Iwata 1986, 1988; Mikami 1993). Nozawa traced the tradition of homeland studies (kyodo kenkyu) from Makiguchi through Misawa and Michitoshi Odauchi (1875–1954) up to Kan'ichi Uchida (1888–1969) (Nozawa 1989). Odauchi was not a professor of an imperial university, but his pioneering works in human geography, especially settlement geography, and his relationships with representative figures of the Japanese folklore school are still attracting the attention of historians of Japanese geographical thought (Okada 1995).

Regarding the early years of academic geography, Tatsuoka analyzed the contents of Geographical Review of Japan, organ of the Association of Japanese Geographers established in 1925 (Tatsuoka 1987a), and courses of geography in higher education (Tatsuoka 1988). Sato's and Tatsuoka's studies belong, so to speak, to the sociology of Japanese geography as do Takeuchi's analyses on the publications of papers and books in geography and the function of "gatekeeping" for these publications (Takeuchi 1994d). Okada conducted studies on certain prominent figures in academic geography before World War II such as Takuji Ogawa (1870–1941), Taro Tsujimura and so on (Okada 1990, 1993, 1996).

Okuno's elaborate bibliographical studies (Okuno 1994, 1996), Machida's review on geomorphology (Machida 1987) and Shiki's review on the development of regional geographical studies (Shiki 1992) are worthy of mention with regard to the study of Japanese geography before World War II. Katsue Misawa, who was not an academic geographer, but published many meaningful geographical works and also taught many students who were later to become prominent figures in the earth sciences at Suwa Middle School, continued to attract the attention of historians of geography and other disciplines (Miyasaka, Katsuhiko 1986; Miyasaka, Kosaku 1990; Nakagawa, K. 1987). Concerning regional geography Nakayama examined the changing significance of the Japanese term involved, that is, chishi, throughout the years since the early part of Meiji (Nakayama 1989). In Japanese geography there existed and still exists a dualism or juxtaposition of general geography and regional geography, and Tanabe saw in this juxtaposition a correspondence with the orthodox and heterodox traditions of geography in Japan (Tanabe 1980).

Yagi analyzed the relationship between geography and the Japanese folklore school in this period (Yagi 1989) and Hisatake exhaustively examined the development of cultural geography in Japan (Hisatake 1989b, 1991). Chiba, prominent scholar both in the fields of folklore and geographical studies, traced the changes in trends in research on folk geography in Japan (Chiba 1980, 1990, 1993). Takeuchi published biographical studies on Yaichiro Yamaguchi, a representative figure in terms of the above areas of study (Takeuchi 1996a). Hata discussed the impact of cultural-anthropological studies on cultural geography (Hata 1989).

With regard to Japanese geopolitics before and during World War II, which blindly followed the line set by K. Haushofer or demagogically and opportunistically supported Japanese military expansionism, most Japanese geographers after World War II remained silent. Takeuchi and Fukushima, however, each published
papers which can be regarded as standard reference works on the topic of Japanese geopolitics (Fukushima 1991; Takeuchi 1992b, 1994c).

The fifty years since World War II constitute a sufficient length of time for the purpose of consideration as a historical study. Geography in Japan after World War II underwent great changes in comparison with the periods before and during wartime, and moreover, during these fifty years, social and institutional backgrounds, and conditions for geographical research and education have changed enormously and the number of geographers has increased, especially as a consequence of the diffusion of higher education. Some reflections on the state of geography after World War II, the lack of interest in the social relevancy of geography, failure in active participation in applied fields, the rarity of achievements in constructing creative and original theoretical models, deflections to economic determinism or historicism and so on have been published (Takeuchi 1992a, 1993), but the examination of Japanese geography after World War II from the viewpoint of social and intellectual history still constitutes a task for the future. Education in geography in primary and secondary schools underwent a radical renovation in the period immediately after World War II and has undergone further considerable transformation since then, under the influence of institutional and political changes that continue to occur in Japan up to the present day. On this topic, numerous critical examinations have been published especially by geography teachers (Bekki 1987; Ide 1989; Hoshino and Matsumura 1988; Kimoto 1986, 1988; Chiri Kyoiku Kenkyukai 1989: 77–146). Regarding the period immediately after World War II, Okada conducted a study on Koji Iizuka (1907–1970), influential figure at the University of Tokyo at that period (Okada 1990). Yamaguchi examined a textbook by Iwao Kamozawa, one of the representative geographers influenced by Iizuka (Yamaguchi 1994a). Takeuchi published a critical biography of Ryuziro Isida, another influential figure of the 1950s and 1960s (Takeuchi 1994a). Publications have appeared dealing with certain specific themes, for instance, the acceptance and diffusion of central place theories in Japan (Morikawa 1987; Tatsuoka 1987b) and it is to be expected that the protagonists of geography in Japan in the 1950s and 1960s, who have already reached retirement age, will sooner or later come round to publishing reassessments of their activities as geographers.

In 1986, Takeuchi and Masai published a book documenting interviews with sixteen senior geographers of whom more than half have since passed away. Their attestations to geography and its history and role since the establishment of academic geography in Japan are of immeasurable value (Takeuchi and Masai 1986). From these interviews, it became very clear that for Japanese geography, World War II proved a tremendous setback to geographical studies; at the same time it also became apparent that a considerably large number of geographers collaborated with the Japanese military and colonial authorities, apparently without feeling the need for due self-criticism in this regard. These interviews were video-recorded and on the basis of these records and other video records, Takeuchi published an account of the video interview programme in Japan (Takeuchi 1986a). Noma reported his experiences on the utilization of interviews with a senior geographer in a university lecture to students specializing in geography (Noma 1987).

**Formation of geographical knowledges**

Geographers and others provide their audiences with different images of territories of varying scales. The social history of this process, that is, the formation of geographical knowledges, constitutes an important subject for future studies by historians of geographical thought. Here arise many important problems such as the ways in which geographers and others construct geographical knowledges, the relationships among various images expressed by different languages, the influence of certain ideologies and philosophies on the formation of geographical knowledges and the identification of the so-called managers and gatekeepers involved in the formation process of geographical knowledges. Unfortunately, there are few study achievements and little debate by Japanese geographers pertinent to these topics.
From the time of the Meiji Restoration of 1868, the formation of geographical knowledges was expected to play an important role in nation-building, not only through school geography education, but also through the compilation of works on regional geography (chishi), censuses and map-making. Mizuuchi pointed out the roles that were expected of geography and also the limitations to which geography was subject in the process of accomplishing these tasks in modern Japan (Mizuuchi 1994a). He also carried out historical-geographical studies on the allocation processes of infrastructure in the national territory, in the process of nation-building, focusing on the ideological aspects of the reproduction of space by the state (Mizuuchi 1986, 1994b). Wakabayashi, a sociologist, also remarked the significance of map-making by the state in aid of the visualization of national territory on the part of the people (Wakabayashi, M. 1995).

Where geographical knowledge of countries outside Japan was concerned, all kinds of documentation originating from castaways at sea, a limited number of travellers, entertainers, prostitutes, official missions and so on, were already in existence during the Early Modern period. In the Meiji period, the volume of documents naturally greatly increased, among them being records pertaining to the governmental mission, headed by Tomomi Iwakura, to the United States and Europe (1871–1873); this particular mission was remarkable for its scale (more than a hundred members, including many state ministers) and for the detailed and precise account of it written by Kunitake Kume, later professor of history at the Imperial University (of Tokyo). Yamamoto constructed an analysis of the geographical descriptions contained in this account and concluded that Kume laid particular emphasis on the importance of economic factors for the prosperity of the country and on the fact that the mission came to realize the necessity of geography in the school curriculum (Yamamoto 1984). Recently numerous detailed studies on Kume’s account have been published, for the most part by specialists in disciplines other than geography (Haga 1991; Tanaka 1991; Tanaka and Takada 1993; Nishikawa and Matsumiya 1995). Hatano published a place-name index pertaining to the account of the Iwakura Mission (Hatano 1993).

It was from the Meiji period, that Japan was to adopt and thereafter adhere to the policies of military expansion and economic penetration into the Asian continent, Southeast Asia and the Pacific area, in order to acquire resources and commodity markets and also to deflect the people’s attention from internal social contradictions. Takeuchi examined the relationship of colonialism and the formation of geographical knowledges concerning imperial Japan (Takeuchi 1996c) and Teramoto published a detailed bibliography of geographical publications on South and Southeast Asia and the Pacific area under imperial Japan (Teramoto 1987, 1988).

The Japanese military naturally played an important role in the process of the formation of geographical knowledges under imperial Japanese rule, but a study of the knowledge accumulated by the military presents some difficulties; a great deal of material was destroyed immediately following Japan’s defeat in World War II, and only recently have historians begun to instigate inquiries on the basis of source materials remaining in Japan and materials conserved in archives in the United States. Another important institution in terms of the formation of geographical knowledges was the Research Section of the Southern Manchurian Railway Company, which conducted extensive research activities all over Asia. Recently, numerous documents originating from the Research Section have been reprinted in Japan, and many historical studies on this company have been carried out; however, no analyses of them or accounts of the activities of the Research Section have ever been published by Japanese geographers, even though a number of geographers worked in this Section. Towa Dobun Shoin College in Shanghai was an institution which formed a large number of specialists in the colonial administration and intelligence services of imperialist Japan. Fujita, geographer at Aichi University, which inherited a large quantity of documents from Towa Dobun Shoin College, has commenced the publishing of travel accounts of the students of the College with his (Fujita’s) annotations.
Before and during World War II, not all researchers carried out their work deliberately and with a clear awareness of serving the interests of imperialist Japan, though the fact that they worked under the aegis, so to speak, of the latter must certainly have facilitated the pursuit of their researches. As it was, a certain number of studies were published on the "scientific" aspects of research by archaeologists, such as members of the Otani expedition in Central Asia, anthropologists such as Ryuzo Torii in Northern Asia, and geographers such as Tadao Kano in Southeast Asia (Honda 1994; Nakazono 1995; Yamasaki 1992).

Geographical Thought in Foreign Countries

Modern Japanese geography has always been under the strong influence of the achievements in geographical studies of Western countries, and a large number of Japanese geographers are interested in the methodology and history of Western academic geography. Recent trends in the study of the history of geography are characterized by a comprehensive understanding of the academic tradition and the folk tradition in Western geography (Nozawa 1992), observations on the multi-paradigmatic character of geography (Matsuda 1991), and the discovery of a humanistic tradition (Yamano 1989, 1990a, 1990b, 1992; Nozawa 1988a). Ueda (1986) reviewed the concept of territoriality in the development of modern and contemporary geography and Onjo (1993) developed Ueda's achievement, understanding territoriality as geographical imagination or the production of geographical cognition, which should be found in the vernacular, everyday life of the people. Along the same lines, Nakashima made an ontological consideration of space, which was neither merely a physical entity nor a mere expression of social activity, and he found the proper ontological significance of space, relying on the structuration theory (Nakashima 1993b).

Regarding the classical tradition of Western modern geography, Nishikawa traced in geography the tradition of natural history and the ecological approach founded by Alexander von Humboldt and developed by his successors, Carl Ritter, Ferdinand von Richthofen and Carl Troll (Nishikawa 1988b). The significance for the contemporary geography of von Humboldt was explored by Tamura (1993, 1995), of Ritter by Takeuchi (1981) and of Humboldt and Ritter by Tezuka (1990, 1991a). The reason for the recent spate of reappraisals of von Humboldt, as pointed out by Tamura, consisted in the fact that in his work, he evinced the integration of a dual personality composed of artist and scientist; accepting the romantic or holistic view of nature on the one hand, he endeavoured to provide a scientific or Newtonian explanation of nature on the other.

Nozawa has published extensive works on the tradition of French geography from Elisée Reclus (Nozawa 1986a, 1987b) to the prominent figures of the French modern school of geography (Nozawa 1987a, 1990, 1994) and the importance of excursions for this school (Nozawa 1996), but his most important achievement is his book on Paul Vidal de la Blache (Nozawa 1988b). He observes the phenomenological thought in Vidal's geography and contrasts the concept of genre de vie from the viewpoint of humanistic geography with the criticism on Vidal, such as that construed by Pierre George, on the basis of an economic viewpoint. The late Nishimura, whose early death is a matter of regret, made important contributions in this field (Nishimura 1988, 1989). Shimazu examined spatial concepts of the social morphology of Emile Durkheim, who represented one side of the famous debate between the sociological school and the Vidalians (Shimazu 1993b).

Since the establishment of academic geography in Japan, many important works by Western geographers have been translated into Japanese, as listed by Okuno with bibliographical precision (Okuno 1994, 1996), though some of the translations are either partial or abridged. Curiously enough, however, none of the works of von Humboldt or Ritter had been translated into Japanese. Hence Tezuka's great contributions were his recently published complete translations of a number of representative texts of von Humboldt and Ritter, together with translations of texts by Alfred Hettner, Otto Schlüter and Emmanuel de Martonne with
detailed annotations and commentary (Tezuka 1991b). Moreover, he published numerous papers on the history of Western geography (Tezuka 1987, 1988, 1989). His survey on the distinctions between the various meanings of *Landschaft* is specially helpful. Yamano (1990b) reappraised the *Landschaft* concept and Takeuchi (1996d) examined the concepts of landscape and *genre de vie* in a treatise of general geography. Hisatake, who for many years studied the Berkeley school of geography, published his examination on the morphology of the cultural landscapes of the United States and Germany (Hisatake 1987, 1989a). Also, Nakagawa summarized the development of cultural geography (Nakagawa, T. 1995).

Concerning the geography of German-speaking countries, Kasuga made some penetrating observations regarding the concept of Leo Weibel's *Formation* (Kasuga 1987) and Yamamoto presented unique considerations on Alfred Rühl who was something of an outsider where the German academic geography of the time was concerned, but who is now attracting attention as a forerunner of contemporary economic and social geography (Yamamoto 1986, 1988). Sakai re-examined the formation of the Munich school of social geography and the influence of Bobek and Hartke. He moreover analyzed the characteristics of this school (represented by R. Ruppert and F. Schaffer) as it was during the 1970s, in the broader context of Western geography and sociology, remarking their particular merit of facilitating the dialogue between geographers and sociologists and also their shortcomings, such as their inclination towards too functional an approach, especially in practical application in planning (Tsutsumi 1992, 1993). Morikawa published an affectionate biography of Hans Bobek (Morikawa 1992b).

With regard to the geography of North America, Nojiri analyzed the influence of the Chicago school of human ecology on human geography (Nojiri 1986, 1989a, 1989b). Okamoto reappraised the contribution of Kevin Lynch to urban studies (Okamoto 1990), and Hayashi re-examined Berry and Garrison in the context of his studies on the central place theory (Hayashi 1986). Sugitura published a series of papers on what could be referred to as the social history of the "quantitative revolution" in American geography (Sugitura 1987, 1989a, 1991). His textbook on locational theories, and quantitative and behavioural geography contains numerous interesting observations on the development of the theoretical models concerned (Sugitura 1989b).

Ishikawa published a quantitative analysis of the research trends in American geography after World War II with some remarks on the fluctuations in the number of papers classified according to topic and on the contents of AAG presidential addresses (Ishikawa 1989). Noguchi reported on the process of the closure of the department of geography at the University of Michigan in the broader context of American academic geography after World War II (Noguchi 1985). Nakayama reviewed the history of geography education at high school level in the United States and analyzed the re-evaluation of geography in the school curriculum after 1984 (Nakayama 1991).

There are not very many studies on the geography of the former Soviet Union; however, Ono analyzed the famous debate on "integrated" or "monist" geography (Ono 1989, 1991) and critically appraised the discussions in the field of economic geography and geography education in the 1930s under the Stalinist regime (Ono 1994).

Where political geography was concerned, Takagi, translator of P. Taylor's *Political Geography*, Takeuchi and Nakashima reviewed changes in research trends mainly in English-speaking countries (Takagi 1994; Takeuchi 1986b; Nakashima 1996). The tradition of geopolitical thought is still alive in Japan, which is no longer a military power but wields still more power in the world in economic terms; this is thought to be the case specially among politicians and leaders of economic circles. However, no analyses of their discourses regarding the matter have been made from the viewpoint of critical geopolitics.

From June 1994, the monthly journal *Chiri (Geography)*, aimed at general readers, especially geography teachers and students, began to publish a series called "Geographers of the 20th Century", each number being devoted to a par-
ticular person. The series is by no means purely academic, but contributions have been made to it by specialized scholars armed with a great deal of academic information. The geographers treated to date include the following, who are now dead or are senior geographers: Jean Gottman (Miyakawa 1994), Otto Schlüter (Yamano 1994), Hans Bobek (Morikawa 1995a), Peter Schöller (Morikawa 1995b), Walter Christaller (Hayashi 1995), Nikolai Nikolaevich Baransky (Takeuchi 1995), Richard Hartshorne (Takeuchi 1996b), Carl Troll (Suzuki 1996), Chauncey Harris (Mitsuhashi 1995), Torsten Hägerstrand (Sugiura 1995b), Philippe Pinchemel (Tezuka 1996) and Wolfgang Hartke (Yamamoto 1995).

Regarding non-academic geographers or geography in the popular tradition, a certain number of studies pertaining to Third World countries and written from the ethno-geographical viewpoint have been published. The cosmology of native Americans delineated in pictorial maps and sand paintings forms the subject of numerous papers by Hisatake (1986, 1992). The book co-edited by Hisatake and Hasegawa (1989) is not simply a treatise on the history of cartography; the authors aimed to trace the development of environmental perceptions and cosmologies in different civilizations. In his paper on paradigm shifts in the study of the history of cartography, Hasegawa (1993) insists on the importance of iconological, contextual and socio-historical approaches. In adopting these approaches, popular participation in map-making and popular images of the place should be taken into account. In comparison with rich achievements where the reading of Japanese landscapes of past and present times and of texts in written form are concerned, there have been only a few original contributions of this kind by Japanese geographers pertaining to foreign countries, and most of those few studies involve Asian countries. A great deal of research of this sort conducted by Western geographers on Western countries has been introduced in Japan, in studies by Matsu- moto (1989), for example, stimulating Japanese scholars to pursue similar researches with regard to the Japanese scene, as exemplified by many contributions in the book compiled by Ohshima et al. (1989).

Methodological Discussion

During the past two decades, a large number of papers on geographical methodology have been published, but here the reviewer excludes papers that are sporadic in nature and caused no repercussions, also those without any connotations, even implicit ones, to the historical background of geographical thought. Within the Association of Japanese Geographers, and in the Human Geographical Society of Japan, there have always been a certain number of study groups and working groups, the varying situations of which reflect to some degree which methodological aspects Japanese geographers are interested in, as analyzed by Y. Wakabayashi (1991). The humanistic viewpoint has been widely discussed in study groups (sometimes under the name of working groups) on the history of geographical thought both in the Association of Japanese Geographers and in the Human Geographical Society of Japan but always in connection with historical geographical studies or epistemological reflection, that is, the interpretation of written texts and landscapes as have been already explained in the first section of the present paper.

Topics which gave rise to methodological debate or theoretical discussion in recent years can be reduced to two interrelated issues: the methodology and significance of regional geography and/or area study; and debate on the nature of and innovation in social and economic geography.

Regional geography

In the whole history of academic geography in Japan, strong trends towards an insistence on the importance of regional geography (chishi or chiiki chirigaku) have always existed; in extreme cases, those geographers involved consider “region” a proper and unique object of geographical studies, an attitude open to criticism for its fostering of a fetishism of region or regionalization myths. From an observation of the titles of ponderous commemorative tomes published on the occasions of the retirement of master geographers (Ishida Hiroshi Kyoju Taikan Kinen Jigyokai 1987; Nakamura and
Iwata 1986; Yamada Yasuhiro Kyoju Taikan Kinen Rombunshu Kankokai 1993), we may guess that in Japan, these myths are still alive. However, it was necessary to conduct an examination of the concept of region from the viewpoints of the disciplinary and the social history of geography. This was done by the late Aoki at the beginning of his book (Aoki 1985) and Nozawa examined the concept of pays in the tradition of the French school of geography (Nozawa 1986b). At present some serious examinations can be found on new trends in the study of regional geography or reconstructed regional geography in the context of the years following the predominance of logical positivism in other countries (Morikawa 1992a). Also Oshiro et al. (1993) reappraised the importance of "specificity" in reflections on the propensity for a nomothetic spatial science. Ishii made a penetrating analysis of the concept of region in Germany, in connection with regionalism and regional consciousness (Ishii 1988). In the book edited by Asano et al. (1988), examinations were made on the diversity of meanings in the concept of "region" in diverse disciplines, and even within the same discipline of geography, in different countries. Apropos of this, it should be pointed out here that the Japanese term chiiki, generally considered to be equivalent to the Western term "region", sometimes does not perfectly correspond to the concept of region in the Western sense. In Japanese geography, from the 1920s, the Western term "region" was invariably translated into chiiki; after World War II, however, the idea of "area study" as an interdisciplinary or collective style of research was introduced from the United States; this new concept or new terminology is translated into chiiki kenkyu. That means that in the Japanese academic situation after World War II, both "area" and "region" are translated as chiiki. All these factors cause the following three types of confusion and/or debate.

The first confusion regards the varied scales of chiiki. "Area" in the case of area study generally connotes a country or group of countries; it never refers to a certain district of a country or a group of municipalities. Even if micro-scale intensive studies are conducted, the tacit understanding is always there that the facts found in small and specific research areas can generally be applied to broader macro-scale areas. In geography, "region" is sometimes understood in terms of operational concepts from a micro-scale spatial unit, or a part of a municipality, to a macro-scale one, for instance a super-national territorial unit, but generally, it refers to a concrete meso-scale spatial unit, that is, part of the national territory as in "regional problem" or "regional development". In Japanese, however, chiiki refers to any or all of these varied scales and in fact, in the 1970s, in reaction to the exaggerated economic and administrative centralization then prevailing in Japan, regionalism came to the fore under the name of chiiki shugi; some advocates insisted on the strengthening of the local autonomy at municipal level, and others insisted on the local autonomy of broader districts, that is, groups of prefectures. In Takeuchi's presidential address to the Association of Japanese Geographers in 1995 on the comparative consideration of regional problems (chiiki mondai) (Takeuchi 1996e), he had to specify, in the context of the confused understanding with regard to the concept of chiiki, that the latter term referred to a region of meso-scale, that is, a territory which constitutes a spatial unit in the historical, cultural, economic and very often physical and administrative senses in the national territory.

The second embarrassing situation for Japanese geographers does not derive from problems of terminology but from the concrete situation wherein specialists of other disciplines—cultural anthropologists, economists, sociologists and so on—are now become more and more engaged in "regional studies" or field work, hence it is no longer feasible to lay claim to "region" as a proper object of study unique to geography. In his review on the studies of Japanese geographers on Southeast Asia after World War II, Yamashita did not clearly define the terms "geographers" or "geographical" but confined himself to a conventional survey of the studies of researchers having an academic formation as geographers (Yamashita 1992). It should be noted, however, that many researchers who major in geography at the university level are later considered specialists of disciplines other than geography even among their
peers in any one of those other disciplines, be
the latter ethnology, economics, history and so
on. In a collective survey of specialists of vari-
ous disciplines, in fact, it was found that geog-
raphers were very often embarrassed in finding
proper work, which in many cases ultimately
depended on the individual talent of each geog-
rapher (Nishikawa 1985: 47–48, 212–213). In
the collective survey, specialists of other disci-
plines were occasionally critical of geographers
for this lack of specialization and pointed out
the superficiality of geographical studies and
the jack-of-all-trades character of the geogra-
pher. It should be noted, moreover, that the
understanding of chiiki kenkyu by specialists of
other disciplines differs greatly from that of
geographers as shown by authors of the books
edited by Mizoguchi et al. (1993) and by Yano
(1993), and that both forms of understanding
were very often complementary to one another.
Ohji composed an epistemological considera-
tion of regional geography and area study,
pointing out that both Hartshornian regional
geography and criticism of it by “New Geogra-
phy” adherents were based on realist philos-
ophies, while both radical and humanistic geog-
raphy relied on spatial relativism. He judged
the area study conducted hitherto to be, funda-
mentally, spatial realism and looked forward to
its development in the direction of spatial rela-
tivism (Ohji 1996).

Regional geography still exists in the curricu-
ulum of geography majors, but at the same time,
many and various courses on area study and
local or monographic studies are considered
compulsory for majors in other disciplines. The
third issue of debate properly concerns this
regional geography. In parallel to the endeav-
ours in the reconstruction of regional geogra-
phy of some geographers, as mentioned before,
a number of other geographers or area study
specialists originally formed in geography,
negate the validity of regional geography as a
field of research or component of the curricu-

tion of economic activities, and also on inter-
cultural understanding, and these aspects of
educational geography are appreciated even by
the critics of regional geography (Naito 1995).
In the examination of the social history of geo-
graphical knowledges in Japan, Mizuuchi point-
ed out the limits of geographers in the nation-
building process, as indicated earlier (Mizuuchi
1994a). If the actual criticism of regional geog-
raphy is based on the viewpoint of the need to
serve the establishment in contemporary Japan,
then we have still to develop a geography crit-
cical of this kind of involvement, examining the
construction process of geographical knowl-
edges by many researchers of different disci-
plines who engage in research on various parts
of the contemporary world or the construction
process in the achievements of area study in
general.

Innovations in social geography and economic
geography

The term social geography began to be used
in the 1930s but for many decades it connoted
geography only as a social science against a
background where prevailed methodologies
borrowed from natural sciences in Japanese ge-
ography. In the 1960s, the term attained a new
meaning in Japanese geography, under the
impact of observations with regard to social
areas or human territoriality and the impact
also of debate on social geography in German-
speaking countries. In substance, however,
studies in social geography were renamed
versions of what was formally called settlement
geography, population geography, cultural
geography or historical geography. The publi-
cation of the translations of the textbook
Sozialgeographie of J. Maier, R. Paesler, R.
Ruppert and F. Schaffer by M. Ishii, F. Mizuoka
and Y. Asano in 1982 had a considerable impact
on Japanese geographical circles. Many discus-
sions in English-speaking countries began to be
introduced, including the translation by M.
Hamatani of P. Jackson and S. J. Smith’s Explor-
ing Social Geography in 1991. Consequently, the
translations of these works stimulated discus-
sion in Japan, as reviewed by Hamatani (1993)
and Mizuuchi (1993). Shimazu (1993a) re-
viewed the concept of social space and Kai-
K. Takeuchi

numa (1994) remarked the importance of the concept of social space from the sociological viewpoint. From the viewpoint of social geography, some Japanese geographers analyzed the achievements of classical schools of modern Western sociology such as the Chicago school (Nojiri 1989a, 1989b) and the Durkheimian school (Shimazu 1993b); now, however, the structuration theory is under discussion by geographers interested in the "missing link" between social theory and geography (Nozawa 1995; Takeuchi 1993). Kawada (1994) remarked the relationship between social geography and educational sociology in the perspective of behavioural science and the study of social problems while on the other hand, Kamozawa (1986) presented an original consideration of the spatial economic character of the social group, proposing a new concept pertaining to the consumption of space.

In the study group for social geography of the Association of Japanese Geographers, a strong impact was felt from the discussions on space by sociologists, especially M. Castells and H. Lefevre, and in due course, from the works of D. Harvey, who reconstructed their theories. In this way, there came into being a predominant trend towards the unification of the methodologies of social geography and economic geography, as represented by Mizuoka, translator of Harvey's *The Limits to Capital* and *The Urbanization of Capital* and A. Scott's *Metropolis* (Mizuoka 1989, 1992, 1993; Nakashima 1993a). What will probably turn out to be a short and somewhat different commentary on the methodological discussions pertaining to social and economic geography now follows.

The intense interest of Japanese geographers with regard to social theories of space was evinced in two symposia at the national conventions of the Japan Association of Economic Geographers in 1993 and the Association of Japanese Geographers in 1994 (Japan Association of Economic Geographers 1994; Takatsu et al. 1995). It should be noted that the works of Harvey exercise considerable influence on many Japanese sociologists, who have conducted studies along the lines of the Castells' and Lefevre's theories on the one hand, and the structuration theory on the other (Onozuka 1994; Yoshihara 1993, 1994; Yoshimi 1992). Some of these sociologists participated as panellists at the symposia.

Certain review articles on economic geography contain remarks on the impact of Harvey (Mizuoka 1994; Yamaguchi 1994b), but those geographers who were indicated as being strongly influenced by him have not yet produced many studies applying the above social theories to the socio-economic realities of Japan or other countries. Nonetheless, with the appearance of a growing number of excellent new studies on the subject, the prospects for this particular new school, which might also be referred to as a "society and social theory" group, are considerably bright. It is a pity, however, that they tend to deliberately ignore the achievements of the proponents of the "school of the regional structure of the national economy", so to speak, in the empirical analysis of the regional economies of Japan. The intention of the latter school was to integrate the existing descriptive achievements of economic geography and abstract locational theories, and as it was, they succeeded in grasping the region as a spatial unit of the circulation of capital, commodities, labour forces and other economic factors. The methodological characteristics of this school are well summarized by Yamakawa (1988) and by authors of a book compiled by Yada, protagonist of the school (Yada 1990).

Integrated with the achievements of the authors in the analyses of Japanese realities, is their success in the conceptualization of a broad range of issues pertaining to economic geography, such as locational problems, urban problems, regional policies, the international division of labour and so on. A great deal has yet to be discussed at theoretical and analytical levels between the geographers of this school and their critics, i.e., those of the above-mentioned first school or group, so to speak; and moreover, a concerted effort and the exertion of a creative geographical imagination directed at the attaining of positive and robust results in the socio-economic geographical analyses of the postmodern landscape of Japanese capitalism are eminently desirable.

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