1. What must first be said about this book regards the author's absolutely astonishing scholarly ability. Despite the fact that Benedict has not once set foot in Japan, she has assembled a great many — some though seemingly trivial and everyday, in actuality — extremely important facts, and based on these has very vividly portrayed the whole of the spiritual culture of the Japanese. She has, moreover, analyzed these facts and derived a set of characteristics of fundamental and decisive meaning for this whole. This is not to say that there are not misunderstandings of numerous individual facts or that there are not, as will be noted later, inadequacies in her analysis. Yet despite such problems, there is no denying the fact that Benedict has been able to make a very deep and keen analysis. Indeed, who among Japanese scholars, or how many, would be able to depict or analyze American spiritual life or culture with such success without having gone to America? As someone with a scholarly interest in the observation and analysis of Japanese legal consciousness in comparison with the legal consciousness of European, American or other East Asian peoples, I cannot help but have feelings of deep respect for Benedict's scholarly abilities. At the same time, our own Japanese lifestyle as portrayed and analyzed in this book, especially our unsightly figure as laid bare and naked, must lead us to deep self-reflection.

1 This special issue was originally published in Minzokugaku Kenkyū (Japanese Journal of Ethnology), Volume 14, Number 4, 1950.
2 Translator's note: my thanks to Masaya Shijō and Takami Kuwayama for checking this translation.

I cannot forget the deep impression I received from first reading this book, just after our defeat in that war, when our hearts had been thoroughly battered and bruised. During the war, I was engrossed in reading theses on and views of Japan written by foreign authors. Emil Lederer, André Viallis, Lafcadio Hearn, Karl Löwitt and others impressed me. During the war, the Japanese state enlarged the figures of Japanese people’s spiritual life, culture and tradition as though examining them under a microscope and displayed them vividly before us. I was daily forced into self-reflection on those “painful” spots touched by the Japan Studies of these foreigners, who exposed the path of the unparalleled history of the Japanese people. However, Benedict’s book contains both a new sense and deep analysis not present in any of the many prior works written by foreign authors.

I would like all Japanese people to read this book. We Japanese, who perhaps more than any other people have been educated to judge things with at center the blind acceptance of our own traditions or ways of thinking, will most certainly receive from this book an unbounded stimulus toward self-reflection. This book was originally written with the wartime objectives of the defeat and occupation of Japan in mind, but is for us a text of limitless teaching. And, readers must not lose sight of the differences between countries that revile enemies as childlike and that compel writing that distorts facts and is only in the interest of one’s own nation, and those countries that even during wartime steadily pursue sober scientific analyses of enemy nations.

As noted above, Benedict’s book makes free use of a rich, and it may almost be said a limitless, set of facts about which explanations are then made, and both facts and explanations are of great interest. Thus, there are not a few points about which one should argue. However, it is of course impossible here to mention all of these and one must limit oneself to touching on the especially important points.

It is perhaps possible to categorize the major problems addressed in Benedict’s work in the following fashion. That is: methodology (Chapter 1), hierarchy in Japanese society (Chapter 3), on and on-gaeshi (Chapters 5 and 6), giri (Chapter 7), honor (Chapter 8), ninjō (Chapter 9), the lack of absolute standards in Japanese morals (Chapters 10 and 11), and childhood training (Chapter 12). Other chapters (2, 4 and 13) are relatively less important compared with these. I will thus limit my thoughts here to the chapters listed above. (For the convenience of Japanese readers, page numbers given below are from the Japanese translation).3

2. Before touching on particular of the points argued in the book, I must first note that the book contains a boundless amount of rich data. I have no way of knowing what (in)conveniences were involved in the gathering of this data or how much time was involved, but regardless, the surprise of us Japanese scholars at how much data has been gathered

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3 Translator’s note: Japanese translation page numbers are rendered “J#”; English language quotations and page numbers, rendered “E#”, are from: Ruth Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1946. Where no page numbers for quotations are given in the original text, the translator has inserted them for the author.
here cannot be suppressed. In contrast to Japanese social science, in which there is a strong
speculative tendency and, as a general tendency, there has not been much interest in
support based on empirical materials, in Anglo-Saxon, especially American, social science
there has been an extreme — from our view — concern with the gathering of such data.
Benedict’s book, as will be noted later, contains profound aspects in regards to theoretical
analysis as well, perhaps even in comparison with many other similar American works. But
the fact that this is supported by such rich data is extremely impressive to us Japanese
scholars. I want to acknowledge here that many Japanese scholars who have read this book
have, at least to my knowledge, all expressed their admiration for its rich data.

3. The second point about which we are interested is that Benedict’s theoretical analysis of
this rich material is exceedingly profound. It may be possible to say that this book, at least
within the limits of my knowledge, is especially deep in analysis even amongst the many
other works of American sociology and anthropology. Benedict does not display much
interest regarding the quantitative measurement of individual phenomena. Rather, her
greatest interests and efforts are in pursuing the mutual interrelationships among Japanese
people’s thought and action and in grasping the whole structure constituted through the
characteristic connections of all manner of actions or ways of thinking. In a word, the book’s
emphasis lies in structural-functional analysis. This is truly cultural anthropological
methodology, which more than anything else emphasizes as the objects of social science not
cultural phenomena in which all component elements are clear but rather cases in which
cultural phenomena are full of the completely foreign or unknown. It is absolutely proper
that the author declares this with confidence.

Benedict interestingly notes that for an author aiming to structurally grasp Japanese
culture, the research problems are “habits that are expected and taken for granted in Japan”
(J: 22; E: 16). Thus, she writes that “In such a study one quickly reaches the point where the
testimony of additional informants provides no further validation. Who bows to whom and
when, for instance, needs no statistical study of all Japan” (J: 23; E: 16). Benedict also writes:

American studies of societies have not often been planned to study the premises on which
civilized cultures are built. Most studies assume that these premises are self-evident.
Sociologists and psychologists are preoccupied with the “scatter” of opinion and behavior,
and the stock technique is statistical. They subject to statistical analysis masses of census
material, great numbers of answers to questionnaires or to interviewers’ questions,
psychological measurements and the like, and attempt to derive the independence or
interdependence of certain factors.... The results of polling tell more about what we
already know. In trying to understand another country, systematic qualitative study of the
habits and assumptions of its people is essential before a poll can serve to good advantage
(J: 24-25; E: 17-18).
All of Benedict’s efforts in this book are concentrated on structurally grasping the character of Japanese people’s action and thought. Through this, Japanese culture is brilliantly thrown into relief as different in pattern from American or European cultures. The success of the book thus returns to its cultural anthropological methodology and the author’s keen analytic ability in using it. However, what we must consider here is that this kind of methodology is needed or useful not just in cases in which Americans are researching about our [Japanese] culture. The same must be said for cases in which we Japanese scholars take our own culture as research object.

That is, while it goes without saying that methods for the quantitative grasping and measurement of social phenomena are both necessary and valuable, there are limits to this. This is because, unlike in quintessentially modern civil societies such as America — in which quantitative measurements are both possible and easily done since human behavior, thought, mutual interactions, and so forth, in the end may be reduced to extremely clearly homogeneous elements — our society is a hierarchy composed of various heterogeneous elements. At least until recently, much of our Japanese behavior or thought has been regulated to an extreme by the structural moment of this feudal hierarchy, the various concrete manifestations of which have thus been important to us. However, conversely, in cases where we attempt to understand the cultures of what are for us foreign places such as Europe or America, here again grasping these structurally is essential. Doing such research from our position is a major scholarly task now set before us.

However, this is not to say that quantitative research methodologies are not important in conducting research regarding our own nation’s “culture” (in the cultural anthropological sense). Rather, having first clarified the patterns of Japanese behavior and thought, measuring the strength of the regularity and the frequency of these patterns is in reality extremely valuable and necessary in a society such as contemporary Japan which continues to change and transform. In contemporary Japan, new patterns of behavior and thought are growing in counter to old, traditional patterns. It is of great scholarly interest to clarify in what ways and to what degrees the former are coming into realization vis-à-vis the latter. In fact, such clarification would be of great value. Thus, not only do I not wish to deny the importance and value of quantitative methodologies for the study of everyday “pattern of culture,” but rather I wish to strongly advocate their use. I believe that for such research, attitude surveys will be of greater necessity than anything else. Such must be the issues that we henceforth deal with. But, what I wish to say here is that as prerequisite for such [quantitative] research, the kind of qualitative research which Benedict advocates is essential (on this point, I have elsewhere written about methodological issues, see:

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4 Translator’s note: brackets are used for words inserted by the translator for clarity.

5 Translator’s note: the “patterns” in Benedict’s book subtitle was translated as “kata” (型), a multifaceted word meaning “type,” “model,” “pattern,” “mold,” “matrix,” and so forth. Kawashima used this Japanese term throughout, but inserted here the original English phrase “pattern of culture” in the singular form.

4. Benedict, who pours all her energy into structurally grasping Japanese culture, begins (in Chapter 4) with an analysis of hierarchy as the ultimate foundation of Japanese culture. She systematically grasps hierarchy in Japanese society and the complicated social rules which support it. In particular, she points out that hierarchy in Japan is built on the foundations of the Japanese family system, and using rich supporting materials she demonstrates that the ultimate regulator of Japanese people’s thought and behavior is that sense of hierarchy directing each individual as to their proper status. Especially her explanation that the conceptualization of the Emperor held by the Japanese is essentially the same as that of a sacred chief, politically involved or not, as is frequently manifest in the Pacific Islands, will offer many issues for consideration by future research on the emperor system.

However, the main points of Benedict’s account that I question are as follows. First, her explanations of familial hierarchy (J: 71, 74, 76; E: 54-57) do not necessarily apply to all Japanese. Many rural tenant farmers, day-laborers, fishers and members of the urban petty-bourgeoisie have family systems without patterns of such authoritarianism, and neither the ratio of these types of families in the Japanese population as a whole, nor the roles their behavior and thought occupy in the lifeways of Japan as a whole, can be called negligible. Further, although Benedict suggests that [tonari gumi, literally “groups of next-door neighbors”] “seldom function today in villages” (J: 111; E: 83), this is a major misunderstanding of reality. Indeed, these associations do not retain the same structures nor do they perform the same functions as in the past. However, in many rural communities, the essence of the tonari gumi system has not changed and still continues (in districts where travel is inconvenient there are even now not a few locations where they carry out many functions as in the Tokugawa Period), while in the cities as well there are neighborhood associations with genealogical origins linking them to the tonari gumi. It is for this very reason that Japanese totalitarianism was able to use this structure, reorganizing and strengthening it, and on this foundation construct a resolutely authoritarian organization. Japanese totalitarianism was certainly not the same as that of Nazi Germany. Explicating the social (here, excluding economic or political) foundations of Japanese totalitarianism is an issue for future social science, and at least one of these foundations is that of the tonari gumi.

The next question that I have concerning Benedict’s thesis regards the nature of the social structure of the Japanese military. Benedict suggests that *keigo* polite language use was abolished in the military, that rising from private to officer’s rank was not related to family background but possible for anyone based on individual ability, and that regardless of being

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6 Translator’s note: the phrase used by Kawashima is “rinpo dantai” (隣保団体), a now outdated expression for “neighborhood group,” but in Benedict’s book the original Japanese phrase “tonari gumi” (隣組) is used.
rich or poor or of being from the countryside, all equally received a military education. Based on such things, Benedict claims that in many respects the military played a role in democratization.

However, this is a misunderstanding of Japanese military social structure. _Keigo_ polite language was certainly not abolished in the military. It is just that, in order to bring order to the unified organization of the modern military — composed of people gathered from various regions, social classes and occupations, who had received but the lowest levels of education and who moreover held the lowest of abilities to themselves maintain order in group living — the complex and subtle _keigo_ which reflected the complicated hierarchy of the pure feudal system of the Tokugawa Period was not appropriate. Thus, for these reasons, an extremely simply form of _keigo_ polite language was created.

Furthermore, in the military, while family background was not an issue in terms of the military’s external structure, in fact as a result of the fact that only rural land owners or land-owning farmers — that is, people with high status in feudal villages — had the ability to send their children to intermediate schools, those who could then enter Army or Naval military academies were limited to people from these classes. In other words, within the military, while the feudal hierarchy of the provinces or of the outside social world were not reproduced as such, such hierarchy was simplified and maintained in response to the needs of the National army, and there was no change in the fact that military society was extremely feudalistic. I thus question the point that the military had a democratizing function.

5. Next, let me offer some remarks regarding Chapters 5 and 6, concerning the notion of “on” [恩], in which Benedict has expended the most energy and which are most superior in content. It has already become common sense that social coherence in Japan is not mediated by free thought or consciousness between individual subjects but to a high degree is based on inter-personal or control-obedience relationships. However, there has been comparatively little theorization regarding just what sorts of consciousness have supported such relationships, or regarding the systems of norms upon which they have been structured. I believe that two principles should be recognized as the ultimate foundations of such relationships. One of these principles is that of “on” [恩; a personal sense of obligation or debt of gratitude] and the other is that of the family or “ie” [家; household] system. Benedict only occasionally touches upon the “ie” principle, but provides many real examples and spends many pages in arguing about the principle of “on.”

That “on” and “giri” [義理; duty, social obligation] are extremely important as principles of Japanese social cohesion early on drew the attention of Japanese scholars (see Sakurai Shōtarō, “On to Giri” in _Shakaigakuto_ 8(4-5), 1934), but these did not necessarily become central concerns or issues in Japanese sociology. We must deeply respect the fact that a foreign scholar, who did not once set foot in Japan, recognized the decisive importance of these issues and provided an acute analysis of them. The insights that relationships of
control·obedience in Japan are composed of the duty [gimu:義務] to repay a debt [on-gaeshi:恩返し] incurred, that such duty to repay is limitless, and that personal relationships of obedience are born of such limitless duty, offer important keys for understanding Japanese social structure. Especially that Benedict searched but was unable to find an American concept equivalent to that of on and thus was at great pains to explain on to American readers is for us Japanese exceedingly interesting.

The following points must be noted here. Benedict notes that not on as such but the repaying of on [hô-on:恩] is a virtue. In other words, behaviors expressed with various words including “kindness” [shinsetsu: 親切] — which while within the context of a particular personal relationship of bonding represent a moral obligation to some extent borne by the party in power — do not represent a general moral obligation one bears as a “person.” This point is extremely important. On this point, Benedict (J: 160-162; E: 117-118) delineates the significant difference with classical Chinese Confucianism as ultimately founded on the virtue of benevolence [jin: 仁]. Similarly, it is extremely important that Benedict points out (J: 156; E: 114ff) that the relationship between on debts and their on-gaeshi repayment may be considered in the same fashion as might financial debts and their repayment in America.

Conversely, the part of Benedict’s argument that most raises one’s doubts is that regarding the character and categories of debt repayment [hô-on] and social obligation [gimu]. According to Benedict, the obligations of repayment may be divided into gimu and giri categories. The former type of obligation is limitless in duration and one remains unable to completely repay a debt once incurred however much one so endeavors. The latter form of obligation is temporally delimited and it suffices to repay an equivalent to the amount of benefit received. Examples Benedict provides of the former include chû [忠: duty to the Emperor, the law, Japan]?, kô [孝; duty to parents and ancestors (by implication to descendants)] and ninmu [任務: duty to one’s work], while examples of the latter include “giri-to-the-world” (including one’s liege lord, affinal family, and others) and “giri-to-one’s-name” (see J: 156).

Here, there is confusion not visible in other parts of Benedict’s work. There is no doubt that there is a limitless repayment of on debt derived from chû and kô. However, to suggest that one’s obligations (what Benedict calls “giri”) toward one’s liege lord, other persons, or at times close relatives, are inherently limited in content or time is mistaken. Moreover, it is difficult to understand Benedict’s explanation of what she labels “ninmu,” the duties toward one’s work, as an obligation of on debt repayment. This is because on is an obligation toward other people. Similarly, Benedict considers “giri-to-one’s-name” as one type of the obligation of repayment, but when one has been subject to insult or slander, the obligations to vindicate one’s name, to seek revenge or to stand on decorum are not necessarily obligations toward a debt of on received from another person. That is, while various examples of instances in

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7 Translator’s note: English translations here are from Benedict’s “Schematic Table of Japanese Obligations and Their Reciprocals” (1946: 116).
which Japanese might feel a moral obligation are enumerated, it is not necessarily the case that all of these have a relationship with on indebtedness.

Further, there are problems with Benedict’s explanation of giri. She rightly points out that there is a special category of moral obligations among Japanese called “giri” and that such do not require the voluntary or subjective exercise of one’s will but are those whose execution, however disliked, is carried out under external sanction (the obligation-to-the-world) and with social approval. That such obligations are frequently called “giri” is a fact. However, conversely, not all things called giri have these characteristics. One cannot suppress one’s sympathy for an author who — not having visited Japan and thus not having witnessed the diverse phenomena labelled giri, nor having opportunities to encounter various cases of the word’s use — is guilty of making such a mistake, but this is a point which, for us Japanese, appears in part most ludicrous. However, as to date there has been little research regarding “giri” as a type of gimu obligation, I believe that, despite her errors, Benedict’s scholarly achievements must be highly evaluated.

My own thoughts on giri obligations are as follows. The word giri was originally a term used to indicate moral obligations in general but, as feudal morals were erected on the unreasonable ignoring of human emotions they often fell into contradiction with those natural human emotions (ninjō; 人情). The contradictory, oppositional conflict between giri obligations and ninjō feelings was one of the fates of feudal morality.

However, morals demand solemn realization even in such cases of contradiction. It is in such cases where the realization of feudal morals can be glimpsed from the negation of “natural” humans — or, more strictly speaking, in cases where morals are realized not based on the internalized feudal morals or self-restraint — that Benedict’s concept of “giri” applies. That is, in Benedict’s meaning of giri, in the oppositional relationship of ninjō human feelings with feudal morals, the former were unable to completely refute the latter. It thus follows that in many cases it was not among the warriors, who were the original bearers of feudal morals, but among the townspeople and farmers in which this was phenomenon was manifest, and that this is thus but one aspect of feudal morals.

6. Chapter 9, concerning “ninjō”, is also of interest and full of lessons for us Japanese, but in my thinking is a bit off-center from the main issues. Benedict states that for her it was unexpected that Japan’s ethical codes should so leniently tolerate the pleasures of the five senses. It is surprising to Benedict that among the Japanese there are not ways of thinking such as the Buddhist rejection of worldly pleasures, or the European and especially Christian world view in which there is a forced opposition of body and soul or a rejection of the flesh, and that such might appear inconsistent with the Japanese ethical code “which requires such extreme repayment of obligations and such drastic renunciations” (E: 177).

This is truly an intriguing problem. However, it will remain a riddle as long as one insists on an ethical system in which these two inconsistent ethical principles are placed on the same plane and united. The answer is only to be found in history. The thorough-going self-
renunciation (that is, the demand that one at times take lightly or deny one’s own life, for example in hara-kiri, double-suicide, and so forth) found in Japan is a morality peculiar to feudal systems and may be found in the feudal systems of other countries.

However, in Japan, approval of the human flesh, or the affirmation of human feelings [ninjō], was a manifestation of the “natural human” (shizen-teki ningen: 自然的人間) of the common people (townspeople, farmers) as not fully incorporated into the feudal ethics system. In other words, it was an unconditional affirmation of the natural, bodily human feeling as unmediated by self-restraint. This unconditional affirmation of the human flesh among the common people of Japan is widespread because, despite the steady downward penetration of warrior class ethics during the Tokugawa Period and despite the fact that the feudal ethics supported by the warriors were propagated and taught to all commoner Japanese by the absolutist governments after Meiji, these have been unable to sink firm roots among the general populace.

In this way, Benedict fails by trying to abstractly unify on the same plane abstractions themselves derived from the histories and the social statuses or classes of two different systems of social norms that exist(ed) in oppositional or contradictory relation to each other. Still, the issues Benedict raises are nonetheless keen and for us Japanese especially interesting. However, there is room for doubt regarding several of the data that Benedict offers as evidence of “the affirmation of the fleshly human,” particularly the facts she gives related to bathing and sleeping, but as these problems are rather detailed, I forego further discussion here.

7. Chapter 10, entitled “The Dilemma of Virtue,” is also quite interesting. In this chapter, Japanese ethics and those of “American people” — that is, of American civil society — are compared. In Japan, ethics are separated into various circles, and in judging others the Japanese do not judge them based on their being subjects with integrated personalities but based on whether “they do not know kō” or “they do not know giri.” Benedict writes that “Instead of accusing a man of being unjust, as an American would, [the Japanese] specify the circle of behavior he has not lived up to” (E: 195). Japanese ethical demands are not directed toward the construction of an integrated ethical spirit but instead exist within an intricate knot of various ethical demands.

The tragedy of the Japanese people is rooted in the contradictions of these ethical circles. And, because of the contradictions of the external world, it is impossible to raise the ethical spirit of Japan to an inner unity. Ethics are not secured by a subjective and independent spiritual world but by heteronomous external forces (including, being laughed at). Such points are quite correct. And, Benedict is also quite right to point out that after Meiji there was a forceful movement towards an integrated nationalistic ethics of loyalty (chū: 忠) by the absolutist government.

But what factors lead to such breaks and contradictions in the ethical system, and thus to divisions in people’s ethical spirit and to the failure to form an integrated personality? Such
explanations are not given even in this insightful author's analysis. I believe that such is afforded only historically. Attempting to integrate all of these ethical circles on the same plane is a waste of effort. The causes for the division of these ethical circles, of those which originated in the hierarchy of Japan's feudal system and those particular to each social status, may be found in their mutual inter-penetrations, in the forcing or infiltration of upper class ethics especially into the lower strata of society, and in the forceful attempts to compose a nationalist ethical system by the feudal-clannish absolutist governments after Meiji. Concrete research about these remains an issue for future social science.

An important problem related to the dilemma of virtue that Benedict points to is the ethic of “sincerity” (makoto; まこと). I myself was from elementary school onwards persistently instructed about “sincerity.” For me, this was at first something that I did not understand at all. But, with the continued repetition of such persistent explanation, I somehow came to feel that I understood. As Benedict notes in her chapter [12] on “The Child Learns,” the virtue of “sincerity,” persistently taught and thus embodied from childhood, occupies an extremely important place in the ethical system of the Japanese. One cannot but be amazed that Benedict, a foreigner, has so put her finger on this and at the same time that Japanese people are so deeply touched by a foreigner’s having pointed this out to them. “Sincerity,” as Benedict very correctly analyzes, is “the requirement that one carry these [code of duties] out with all one's heart and with all one's soul and with all one's strength and with all one's mind” (E: 215) and is “the zeal to follow the 'road’” (E: 217). Further, from an American's gaze, this is conceived as “the enthusiasm of the zealot for his creed” (E: 219).

Many Japanese will no doubt feel indignant at seeing “sincerity,” which they consider the highest of virtues, being so conceptualized. However, that “sincerity” may for one people be a virtue of the highest ideal while for another people it may be evaluated only as the enthusiasm of fanatics for their own doctrine teaches us Japanese that the value standards that we hold are neither universal nor timeless truths.

That so important a thing for Japanese people's value system has not to this day been the object of scientific research by Japanese themselves is not necessarily something that may be blamed solely on Japanese scholars' own negligence. Because this virtue has been so important and was forcefully and in authoritarian manner inculcated (e.g., in the Imperial Rescript to Soldiers and Sailors) by the power of the nation-state, it was in fact impossible to make it an object of scientific analysis. It would be the same as if, under the power of the absolutist governments after Meiji, political science had had to fight and suffer imprisonment and even death in order to establish itself as a discipline. Reading Benedict's analysis of “sincerity,” I could not help but keenly feel that democracy (including academic freedom and freedom of speech) is an indispensable condition for the pursuit of science.

8. Chapter 11, on “Self-Discipline” (shūyō; 修養) is also extremely interesting. Surely many Japanese will be surprised by Benedict’s pointing out that which is definitely not natural, in things that for us Japanese are commonsensical or taken-for-granted. Benedict very
accurately portrays the essence of self-discipline in Japan. The real meaning of “self-discipline” lies in the effort expended to become unaware of one’s own self-sacrifice or self-control. I respect Benedict’s powers of understanding and analysis, seen in her ability to come to such conclusions despite not once having come to Japan.

Then, just how do such requirements for “self-discipline” come into being? That is the problem. In whatever society, for there to be such society, it is impossible not to require of its members some forms of self-sacrifice or self-control. However, in modern civil societies such as America, as individuals mutually respect their freedom, such demands for self-discipline are kept to a minimum, and thus, because of this “reciprocity” of self-sacrifice, self-discipline stands on those individuals’ “spontaneity” of free will. Thus, in America there is no striving for Japanese-style “self-discipline,” while conversely in Japan, self-discipline is thought necessary since “Japanese people feel self-surveillance and self-supervision to be a burden.”

Here, it seems to me that in Japan the effort expended to prevent people from having a consciousness of self-suppression or self-sacrifice as being such perhaps originates from the state of affairs in which in feudal society there was not a reciprocity of self-sacrifice but a self-sacrifice “balance-sheet” of being creditor or debtor recorded by the subjugated. Still, I have the following doubt: if the requirements of the Japanese for “self-discipline” were founded on this, wouldn’t one also expect that in medieval Europe similar demands for such “self-discipline” would have been common? But were conditions in medieval Europe as such? I don’t know the facts about this point, but were I to offer a rather bold conjecture, it would be as follows: That is, by requiring a “selfless” (muga: 無我) character, or demanding that one “be already dead” (shinda tsumori; 死んだつもり), and thus by not permitting a consciousness of self-sacrifice as such, one denies a subjective moment in self-sacrifice — of self-versus-self. This was not something commonly observed in European feudalism, and as a pattern of culture was rather a special feature of Asian societies. If that is the case, then not only can one not say that this is a feudal pattern of ethical code but, at the same time, one cannot say that it is simply a Japanese(-like) matter.

9. Chapter 12, on “The Child Learns,” will probably be of great interest to all Japanese readers. It is one of the achievements of cultural anthropology to seek in the manner of childhood training in a given society the means to elucidate the patterns of social behavior in that society and the structures of social relationships built on these. The success of this chapter, as the author proudly proclaims at the beginning of the book, lies in the scholarly achievements of cultural anthropology. Although there are points that require some correction or delimitation — for example, one must not overlook the fact that child training practices differ between the upper- and lower-classes, nor overlook the dynamic dimensions of the influence and spread of upper-class practices into the lower classes — the gathering of a great deal of data here is certainly admirable. This chapter is perhaps the best part of Benedict’s book.
10. The final chapter (13), on “The Japanese Since VJ-Day,” painfully reveals each of the many wounds of the thoroughly battered and bruised Japanese people. This chapter appears to have been written with the practical goal of the Occupation in mind, but it is of great practical interest for us Japanese who now, with our own subjective efforts, must pursue a democratic revolution. I believe that the greater portion of what Benedict has written here is correct.

11. I have already used much space, but in conclusion would like to note my thoughts on the book as a whole. As already noted several times, it is most admirable indeed that Benedict, who did not once come to Japan, was able to compose the principles of Japanese thought and behavior so comprehensively and so wholly and structurally. It is not necessary here to comment further on the numerous misunderstandings or mistakes that Benedict would no doubt have been able to correct had she come to Japan and done her investigation herself. The existence of such misunderstandings is not of essential importance for the appraisal of the scholarly value of the book. Thus, I will here make a few final comments on Benedict’s methodology.

Firstly, I must point to the fact that in Benedict’s analysis, the historical aspects of things are excluded from view. This, as I will note in more detail below, is connected to her placing importance solely on clarifying the patterns of thought and behavior of the average Japanese person. Of course, I too recognize that there is a division of labor in the academic world. And, I realize that there are suitably justifiable reasons that American sociology has thus far paid comparatively (if not very) little consideration to history. However, surely without a consideration of history scientific analysis is extremely inadequate, at the least as regards the observation and analysis of societies such as contemporary Japan that are in the midst of dynamic change and revolution.

For example, in contemporary (or post-Meiji) Japan, feudalistic and modern civil societal things, or Japanese or Asian and Western things, overlap and have become like a type of multiple-exposure print. And, there is a dynamic process in which these influence and reflect other such things. To the extent that one views such various phenomena, having different so-called “patterns,” without historical consideration and as standing together on the same plane, one loses sight of the mutual inter-relationships among them of resistance, infiltration, reflection and influence. I believe that what is lacking from Benedict’s book is a self-conscious pursuit of these kinds of historical issues.

In numerous places throughout the book, Benedict uncovers mutual contradictions in Japanese people’s thought and behavior and she lays out the problem of why such contradictions exist. As I earlier noted regarding the contradiction between the moral of self-sacrifice and the affirmation of the natural/physical human being, I believe that many of these issues may be solved if one analyzes them from a historical perspective. Benedict is not

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8 Translator’s note: Kawashima was known as a representative figure of the so-called “postwar progressive intellectuals” in Japan.
satisfied to simply describe facts but endeavors to explain the reasons for their being and for their internal relations. However, at least as regards contemporary Japanese culture, if one is attempting to pursue explanation then one simply cannot exclude historical angles from view.

Secondly, for Benedict, “the Japanese” fully appear as but the totality of a “homogeneous” people, and she seems to have essentially lost sight of the various concrete differences among Japanese arising from class, region, occupation, and so forth. That is, Benedict’s aim is to investigate the patterns of behavior and thought of the “average Japanese person.” I do not deny the practical or scholarly significance of investigating such “patterns of culture.” No, when attempting to throw light on Japanese society as intellectually totally different from American society, it is truly natural that such intellectual distinctions should appear first, and as a matter of research procedure it is thus necessary to clarify these first. As such, cultural anthropological studies of Japan, which have as their goal the grasping of the whole of Japanese people’s behavior and thought, must first attempt to clarify the generalized figure of the patterns of behavior and thought of the “average Japanese person.”

As noted above, that Benedict’s analysis excludes an historical perspective is connected with this. There are no doubt academic bases which justify such methodology. Be that as it may, it must be emphasized that connected to the problems which Benedict addresses are the facts that Japan is a society that is undergoing continuing change and reform, and that amidst this there exist various oppositional or rival groups, classes and powers. For Benedict, the task of her book was to pragmatically contribute to the war effort and to the Occupation of Japan by clarifying the relations between those powers that supported Japan’s war and those that (were hoped) could bring an end to the war, and between those forces that have attempted to restore or to solidify the older patterns of Japanese society and those working to reform these and transform Japan into a democratic society that is a member of the international family of countries. Thus, in order to draw concrete conclusions able to contribute to Benedict’s pragmatic mission, it does not seem appropriate not to analyze the sundry oppositional tendencies and forces within Japan and to just paint Japan in simple monochrome “patterns.”

As I have already repeatedly noted, the Japanese-like culture patterns that Benedict describes, as the figure of the generalized Japanese, are as a whole quite correct, with the exception of some extremely detailed parts. However, such a whole image or general tendency is, upon analysis, nothing but the dynamic relation consequent to various opposing “social forces” attaining equilibrium. To take one example: the feudalistic patriarchal system that appeared in the [1898] Civil Code or in post-Meiji elementary school ethics textbooks was supported by the political demands of Meiji absolutist governments and was a “pattern” imposed from above on all Japanese nationals. The incessant efforts of the government were successful in having this “pattern” penetrate to some extent into the behaviors and thoughts of the populace. However, in opposition to this, there existed among the common people other patterns of patriarchy and it is not that there were no influences from democratic
thought in post-Meiji Japan. Moreover, although certainly not broad, the latter has a base for further growth. The fate of the patriarchal system in Japan and the potentials for its reform may only be clarified through analyses of the social dynamics supporting such "patterns."

As long as one presumes Japanese society to be integrated and homogeneous, such dynamic analyses are impossible. Are not the patterns of Japanese culture that Benedict conceives far too static and uniform? Analyses of the differences, divisions and mutual oppositions of behavior and thought engendered by distinctions of class, region, occupation, age, and so forth, are essential to further advance Benedict's research. Rather than being important for the Occupation, such is necessary for us Japanese to pursue democratic revolution, rebuild Japan and make our own history.

I had looked forward to the day when Benedict could come to Japan and conduct research not for the Occupation but for our democratic revolution. It is extremely regrettable indeed that Benedict has passed away without our being able to realize such happiness.