

## [Special Contributions]

**The Life and Works of Professor Chie NAKANE,  
1926–2021: A Tribute to Japan’s Pioneer of  
Social Anthropology**

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At her home, May 2006.

Professor Chie Nakane's achievements in research and education as well as her prominence as an opinion leader and as an adviser to government ministries have made her one of Japan's most influential anthropologists. Her work elucidating the unique characteristics of Japanese society through comparison with India, China, and Britain has had an immense impact on how the Japanese see themselves. As an

academic scholar, she is prolific, having published eight books in Japanese and three in English, in addition to training over twenty graduate students at the University of Tokyo to become professional anthropologists. Through her participation on various government advisory councils and committees, Nakane has also been directly and indirectly involved in policymaking. I will trace Nakane's life course and illustrious career as an example of how an anthropologist responds and commits oneself to society.

Nakane is most renowned as the author of *Personal Relations in a Vertical Society* (1967) and as the first female professor at the University of Tokyo. Her influential book has been republished many times in the over half a century since its first release, and as of 2018, it has sold more than 1.17 million copies and been translated and published in more than a dozen countries. Regardless of her success, in her own mind Nakane has always remained first and foremost an anthropologist and an educator. The originality of her scholarship stems from her ability to place herself in the day-to-day life of the people she is studying, carefully constructing close and intimate relationships in order to fully understand their hearts, ideas and actions, and then to concretely explain her findings. At the same time, Nakane is also able to distance herself and objectively analyze the subject of her study.

Leaning in to see microscopic details and stepping back for the birds-eye view is a movement of dynamic gaze; Nakane's natural ability of free movement between the contrasting perspectives is made possible by her openness and free spirit as well as an agility of the mind. Thus, when Nakane "paints a picture" of a specific society, she does it from multiple viewpoints, capturing both near and far-sighted perspectives. All this marks her exceptional ability and originality. Her capability in comparing and highlighting the differences between the society she is describing and various other societies, is another unique characteristic of her work. Nakane calls this method "comparison of social structure", and she is convinced that this is the foundational task of social anthropology.

Beyond the narrow confines of the academy, Nakane has reached out to ordinary readers, bureaucrats, and businessmen in Japan. Among the community of international researchers on India and Tibet, Nakane proactively shared her knowledge in English and earnestly responded to feedback. Her positive attitude to commit her-

self to social and public issues and to communicate with the general public using easy-to-understand words are good examples for us to learn from and follow.

## **1. Observing Japanese society from a far and as a half-outsider: The positioning and style of a social anthropologist**

Nakane's characteristics of an insightful and analytical mind were made possible by her light-footed travelling and careful awareness combined with a broad and deep field of vision. These attributes were naturally gained through experiences Nakane had during adolescence when she spent her teenage four years at the Japanese girls' high school in Beijing before and during the World War II, and lived in Xidan district near west of Tiananmen gate where was not densely populated with Japanese.

At the age of 27, while holding a research associate position at the University of Tokyo's Institute for Oriental Culture, she spent two years in India funded by an Indian government scholarship, which enabled her to do fieldwork among the hill tribes in northeast Assam. Then with another 2-year scholarship from the Wagner Foundation of Sweden, she expanded her field research to the matrilineal systems of the Garo and Khasi tribes in Assam as well as the Nair caste society in southwest India for one year. Living in various places in India enriched Nakane's understanding of the diversity of the local communities in India and the overall structure of the Hindu caste system that encompasses and integrates them.

After her time in India, Nakane went directly to the U.K. with the remaining one year of the scholarship from Wagner to participate in the graduate seminar (a PhD thesis tutorial) of Sir Raymond Firth, a disciple of Malinowski. After London, Nakane went to Italy to receive personal tutoring from Guiseppe Tucci, a prestigious professor of Tibetan studies for half an year. During her journey from London to Rome, Nakane was strongly encouraged to stop in Paris, having received an invitation from Claude Lévi-Strauss. She had rich discussions with Lévi-Strauss, who persuaded and encouraged her to publish a monograph on the Garo and Khasi matrilineal kinship system. These experiences of life in China, India, England, and Italy opened her eyes and sensitivity toward different cultures and societies and sparked

her spirit of free flight, allowing her to escape from the norms and restrictions of conventional Japanese society. This was the foundation and the beginning of the creation of the anthropologist Chie Nakane.

In Japan, she earned her position as an intellectual elite as a professor at the University of Tokyo, and was treated with honour and respect. In a predominantly male environment, however, Nakane was not intimidated by nor boasted being part of this “men’s club.” Being the only woman among powerful male elites, Nakane was naturally isolated. However, this positioning allowed her to view Japanese society from a peripheral vantage point, thinking outside the “common senses.”<sup>1</sup>

The above-mentioned immersion and experiences in very different cultures and societies nurtured and inspired Nakane’s sensibility to and great discernment of different worlds. Her ability to cultivate a detached position and objective attitude toward any culture or society, including Japan’s, became the foundation for Chie Nakane as a social anthropologist. Nakane learned, particularly from Professor Firth’s seminars at LSE, to develop her skills of scientific analysis and build a logical argument fully based on facts and findings from the fieldwork. I understand that even after her study, Nakane and Professor Firth’s family remained close.

The foundation of Nakane’s concept of Japanese social structure, which she introduces in her book *Personal Relations in a Vertical Society*, comes from her grounded fieldwork in her mother’s hometown in Aichi prefecture. She first published her work in English under the title *Kinship and Economic Organization in Rural Japan* (1967). Publishing a work in English that was grounded in the social anthropology

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<sup>1</sup> In a male-dominated society such as Japan her success often gave her an image of a mannish woman with strong will. Her real person and nature seemed to me very soft, charming and friendly. In fact when I had an opportunity to join her meetings in Tokyo with a mix of European, American, Indian, and Chinese male anthropologists, Nakane was relaxed while enjoying the intellectual yet witty conversations—the atmosphere naturally had a warm and welcoming feel to it. Nakane also said that she had never been discriminated against because she was a woman. On the contrary, she is grateful to this day that she was supported and encouraged throughout her career by male mentors. When Nakane was an undergraduate and graduate student at the University of Tokyo, she received personal guidance from Profs. Yamamoto Tatsuro and Egami Namio. When she studied abroad in India, she was able to get personal guidance from Prof. George Nicolas de Roerich, a prominent Tibetologist who coincidentally was living in the city of Kalimpong along the border of Tibet. In Kalimpon Nakane was invited to the Tagore family villa, in England she was warmly welcomed by the family of Sir Raymond Firth, and in Italy she studied with personal tutoring by one of the best Tibetan scholars Prof. Giuseppe Tucci.

of the U.K. tradition demonstrates Nakane's forward-looking intention, from the early stages of her academic career, to prioritise an international voice about a society to which she belonged. As a result of her academic training, influenced by British empiricism and positivism, Nakane's writing demonstrates a clear logical analysis. Without getting bogged down in abstract concepts, she uses plain terminology, which makes her writing easily accessible to a variety of readers.

When Nakane debuted in the 1960s as a researcher who studied Japanese society, intellectuals referred to as liberals or progressives exerted considerable influence on the Japanese general public, with their discussions and criticisms widely and often introduced in newspapers and magazines. The so-called progressives regarded modern Euro-American civil society as the model and pointed to how Japan was different as a backwardness—a sign of the continuing existence of feudalistic institutions and customs persistent in the country. Nakane was free from this kind of inferiority complex. As a social anthropologist she easily understood that the ideology of Japanese liberal or progressive intellectuals was similar to the theory of social evolution that was popular in the West during the late 19th to the early 20th century. This theory explained differences among various human societies according to different stages of monophyletic evolution; it then placed western societies in the most advanced stage of evolution, explaining that non-western societies had stagnated for some reasons at a previous stage. In other words, according to both social evolution theory and Japanese liberal ideology, western societies have evolved and developed the most, and other societies therefore just need to follow in their steps.

However, in the 1920s, social evolution theory was severely criticised by British and American anthropologists such as Bronisław Malinowski, Franz Boas and their disciples. Instead, the concept of functionalism from Britain and cultural relativism and cross-cultural approaches in America came to be more accepted. Societies that appear to be delayed or inferior to the European Society are simply living in their own traditions inherent developmental paths, customs, and systems. Each society organically structures its members into one whole state of order and stability. Therefore, it is wrong and unethical to judge cultural differences in terms of historical evolution and hierarchy.

Chie Nakane and Tadao Umesao, the most prominent anthropologists of Kanto

(the East) and Kansai (the West) area respectively during the 1960s to the 1980s, gained the spotlight and as they presented a view of Japanese society that did not follow the popular progressive and liberal intellectuals of the era. Their appearance and rise corresponded with Japan's recovery from the total devastation of the war, especially massive air bombing, and post-war reconstruction. During the period of rapid economic growth (Japan had a 10 percent annual growth rate from 1955 to 1973) Nakane and Umesao's writings implicitly encouraged bureaucrats, businessmen, and the general public by acknowledging that Japan is different from Europe and the United States and sending out a message that, "we are okay, Japan has her own culture and history and own way of development." This message was viewed as an encouragement to the Japanese and provided them with self-confidence at the time.<sup>2</sup>

At the same time, Nakane involved herself in the Ministry of Education (currently the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology), the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, etc. Nakane has said that being part of these ministries and attending meetings resembled fieldwork, requiring her to plunge herself in a new and interesting environment. She considered the experience as rewarding as it gave her an opportunity to work with excellent professionals and gain new knowledge. She said of the work, "government officials are actually

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<sup>2</sup> In America, for example, cultural relativism became the basis for protests against racism and sexism, creating counter-discourses and empowering these movements. In the U.K., although Malinowski sought to make anthropology useful for the colonized to improve the situation, his approach never became a mainstream (c.f. Akitoshi Shimizu 1999). Sir E. E. Evans-Pritchard, emerging a bit later than Malinowski, had great influence, and focused on elaboration-oriented methods. Early anthropology had strong intentions to engage in positive social change for the oppressed in both England and the United States. The same might be applied to Umesao and Nakane in Japan. An account of distinguishing traits of Japanese society, as Befu Harumi argues (in *Ideorogi-toshiteno Nihonjin Bunka Ron* (Japanese cultural theory as an Ideology) 1987 [1997]), is often written for mass consumption and focuses on the Japanese self-portrait, indulging in a gloominess and sense of inferiority vis-a-vis the European civilization. Having western modernism as a model for ideal social development or for historical course of evolution, Japan is referenced as being delayed and hence a notion of insufficiency lingers that creates a hungry desire for a more palatable perspective. Umesao and Nakane confronted the narrow view that placed differences between Japan and the West on one linear scale with Japan at the lower developmental stage. They challenged this paradigm, which was generally shared by Japanese liberal intellectualism, by intervening with different Japanese social and cultural theories, and actively supported the view that Japan has a different, but not inferior development path of her own.

well educated, informed and very intelligent, so I didn't have to say much, but if I presented an opinion, as it was from a professor of the University of Tokyo, they listened and tactically used my opinions and suggestions which they also shared beforehand but thought difficult to propose directly. Sometimes, my opinions were very appreciated because it came from a different perspective or offered a new idea for government officials.”<sup>3</sup>

Concerning the Ministry of Education, in the early 1970s, Nakane was behind the creation of, and involved in, the Asian student exchange program, serving as a committee member for the program. She emphasized the importance of knowing Asian neighbours in order to develop friendships and cooperation with them. As a result, many Japanese young scholars were able to study in Asian universities for 2-year periods. I myself fortunately was able to get this scholarship to conduct fieldwork among the Pinatubo Aytas, Asian type Negritos, in western Luzon, the Philippines.

## 2. From personal memories

I owe a great debt of gratitude to Prof. Chie Nakane; thanks to her mentoring, my career as an anthropologist was made possible. It began with Nakane agreeing to be the supervisor of my graduate degree. I recall during the oral exam for my admis-

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<sup>3</sup> The *Dainiji Rinji Gyousei Chosakai* (The second administrative reform council) established in 1981 achieved the “reconstruction of financial administration without tax increase” and announced a “Zero Ceiling” of a zero growth rate in the government budget. Even under these tough circumstances, the Institute of Oriental Culture restructured and expanded from 12 to 16 units (*kouza* 講座), and its success in the increase of staff and budget was due to the strong influence of Nakane who was the director of the institute at that time. She said that she had strong personal ties with high ranking officers in the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Education, who were willing to lend an ear to her request. She served as a committee member of each ministry as follows: the Council for Foreign Economic Cooperation (1977–1985), Council for Finance Cooperation (1977–1987), Finance System Council (1977–1987), Council on Population Issues (1981–1988), Economic Planning Agency Economic Council (1985–1995), Ministry of Education and Science (Academic International Bureau, 1986–1994), Academic Council Member, Ministry of Education, (1986–1995), Director, Rural Environment Center (1991–1997), Council for Foreign Economic Cooperation Society (1994–2001), and the Japan Academy (1995–). Nakane has received the following awards: Mainichi Publishing Culture Award (1959), Women's Issues Merit Prime Minister Award (1985), Medal of Honour, Purple Ribbon (1990), Fukuoka Prize (1991), Cultural Merit Award (1993), Crown of the Second Order (1998), and the Order of Culture (2001) (from Nakane 2009 Professor Chie Nakane's Chronology).

sion to the PhD program, she saw my sunburned face in February and asked, “while it’s true that fieldwork requires a lot of physical strength, you do understand that it’s not like skiing or mountaineering, right?” Later, when I became a research associate at the Institute for Oriental Culture at the University of Tokyo (now the Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia), I was able to observe her work ethic. I learned the crucial skills of how to conduct research, how to teach graduate students, ways to communicate with co-workers, how to manage projects, and many other skills. During the five years I spent at the Institute, our office rooms were side by side on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor, so we built up a close relationship.

On my first day as a research associate at the Institute I went to Nakane’s office to greet her. Her first advice was, “be polite and respectful to everyone in the building. Just because you earned your position does not make you any better than anyone else. This institute is running not only because the academic staff are working hard, but also because of those in the administrative and supportive sector. In the beginning, you won’t recognise who works for what position, so you must greet everyone you pass by in the hallway.” I remember thinking to myself, this sounds like something my mother told me on my first day of primary school. However, when I re-read *Personal Relations in a Vertical Society*, I realized that Nakane’s advice to me about working in a Japanese organization was in fact not different from her advice about conducting fieldwork abroad in a different culture. When I think back, the wisdom about conducting fieldwork that Nakane gave me was to respect the intellectuals and ordinary people alike, to build friendly relationships with them both, and to think on your own.

Moreover, when Nakane became the Dean of the Institute, I joined several negotiation sessions as vice-chairperson of the labour union of the institute. I had refrained from making comments in the tense atmosphere, feeling extremely out of place. This was when I understood the negotiation relationship between the Dean and the labour union secretary in Japanese society was embedded in the coded social mannerism of *tatema*e (a public stance), carefully carrying out ritualistic conversation. I understood this as a clear example of the “vertical society” of Japan. Later, when I talked with Nakane, she intimated to me that even union members in this



country would not be able to deviate from certain cultural norms.<sup>4</sup>

Nakane often initiated casual conversations with me during lunch or coffee time on how to improve Japan's cooperation with other countries. Her ideas were to involve cultural anthropologists more in practical works, not only in academia. She believed that more anthropologists must become active in international exchange in organizations such as JICA (the Japan International Cooperation Agency), the Japan Foundation, global partnership funds, government agencies, and local governments. Nakane often shared this idea with me and I took it as a personal message that I was not well suited for academics, but could make a more active contribution through a career in international exchange or development projects.

Nakane believed that university professors and government officials are not superior to the staff of external organisations, local governments, and NGOs and that professionals and experts should, regardless of their position, have a high ability to understand and work with different cultures and implement measures in a variety of ways. As will be introduced in the following sections, Nakane applied anthropology to her work with The Supporting Organisation of JOCV (Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers), commissioned projects of the Japan Foundation, and in advising the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology. Emphasising the uniqueness and importance of the discipline, she urges anthropologists to establish positions that can make use of their

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<sup>4</sup> After completing the five-year research associate position at the Institute for Oriental Culture at the University of Tokyo, I could fortunately get a tenured job as an associate professor at the College of Liberal Arts, Kyushu University. Before leaving Tokyo for Kyushu University I was told by Professor Nakane, "don't relax now, I strongly encourage you to compile all your research results into a doctoral dissertation." For the liberal arts system at the time, a doctoral certificate was awarded to a well-established professor at nearly retiring age. Nakane further encouraged me by saying, "from now on, Japanese scholaras must actively go out to international symposiums and research conferences. To do so, they must have a doctoral degree. If not, the international platform may not think of you as accomplished researchers. The Ministry of Education won't justify an institution where there is a system and opportunity created to obtain a doctorate degree, but students graduate without one. So, you must complete a doctorate thesis before I retire almost in two years." With this motivational push, I gathered several journal articles I had written, and significantly polishing along the way, completed my doctoral thesis. It took me almost one year to complete it. During the writing period, I would send Nakane a draft every time I was done with each chapter and visited her office or home for discussions. As a result, I completed my thesis half a year before Nakane's retirement and completed my oral examination two months before her retirement.

knowledge and experience more practically. Nakane herself was deeply involved with the JOCV from the beginning, serving as the chairperson of the supporting organization of JOCV from 1986 to 1997. Nakane has also written practical guides for those involved in the field of international development on efficient ways of communicating concrete explanations, building on her foundation of understanding various cultures and traditional contexts (see for example *Nihonjin no Kanousei to Genkai*, [Japanese possibilities and limitations] 1978).

An episode from a planned inspection tour of the Seikan Tunnel under Tsugaru Strait connecting Aomori and Hakodate has resonated with me, especially when highlighting Nakane's humble awareness of her position and surroundings, which often influences her decisions. When she was a member of the Ministry of Finance's Fiscal System Council (1977–1987), she had the opportunity to visit the construction site of Seikan tunnel, which was a significant national project connecting Honshu-island and Hokkaido-island. Just before leaving for Aomori, the chief manager of the project told the council through the Ministry of Finance's representative that the construction workers were incredibly anxious about a woman entering the tunnel. There is a belief in Japan that if a woman enters a tunnel under construction it will provoke the mountain goddess to trigger an accident. Fear based on this belief might unsettle the construction men. The representative was nervous to make the request, but Nakane did not think twice when she heard this, saying, "if there is this kind of belief, then it must be respected" and she did not join the tour. The Ministry of Finance representative was grateful and relieved.<sup>5</sup>

### *Academic career making*

As mentioned earlier, Nakane was trained in anthropology by Sir Raymond Firth at the London School of Economics or LSE. Sir Firth offered a seminar for those students who completed fieldwork and were writing a PhD dissertation. In the U.K., ba-

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<sup>5</sup> In addition to the Ministry of Finance, Nakane also served on the Prime Minister's Secretariat Council, the Council for Economic Cooperation (1977–1985), the Ministry of Education's Science Council (1986–1995), as a Ministry of Education Science Officer (in the Academic and International Affairs Bureau, 1982–1994), and also served as a council member for the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare and the Ministry of Environment.

sic training before conducting fieldwork required the graduate students to be fully versed in foundational texts as well as previous works related to each student's research topic. Upon returning from fieldwork, students were expected to present his/her research findings by analyzing the facts and data from the field from a comparative point of view. Nakane was considered an accomplished anthropologist, having already done fieldwork in India on matrilineal societies such as the Garo and Khasi people and the Nair community. Around this time, anthropologists in the U.K. began to cultivate an interest in the diversity of social structures based on the rich accumulation of research on various patrilineal tribes in Africa. In this context, Nakane's work on matrilineal societies in India was a front line and highly-appreciated theme and her research was published in English by the French publisher Mouton.

Sir Firth's seminar and mentorship solidified the fundamental ideas of social anthropology for Nakane: the discipline is not about having abstract discussions on readings and theory, but rather understanding the lived experiences observed during fieldwork.<sup>6</sup> Nakane's education and knowledge of social anthropology are undoubtedly deeply rooted in the U.K., as she prioritises fieldwork experience and data, and praises empirical research. While she was not completely convinced by Clifford Geertz's interpretive anthropology and Victor Turner's symbolic anthropology, both influential theories in the 1970s in Japan, she did occasionally refer to them. Her scepticism of these ideas may be due to her strong awareness of anthropology as a discipline of social science rather than the humanities.<sup>7</sup> Nakane served as a vice-chairperson of the World Council of Anthropological Associations (1973–1983), being invited to various international conferences to give lectures and reports. This was a platform for opinions to be exchanged with researchers across the world

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<sup>6</sup> That said, Nakane's pre-fieldwork graduate school seminars were demanding. It was mandatory to participate in class discussion after a main speaker presented a summary of the assigned reading. At times, seminars were abruptly cut short if the presentations were poor. Since anthropology is a social science, she always insisted that students precisely define important concepts and ideas first, analyze the data and information using the concepts, and then logically push forward a conclusion. Nakane emphasized that if the basic concept was not understood well, no debate could be clearly done.

<sup>7</sup> When Nakane was invited to the University of Chicago (June 1959 to July 1960), Clifford Geertz was there and they would come across each other, but she was not fascinated by his style of interpretive anthropology.

and it was in these conferences that Nakane learned of the latest trends in the academic world anthropology. Nevertheless, Nakane's opinions were never swayed as she was very confident in her research style that was grounded in empirical data, information and analysis.

I have asked Nakane a few times about the student movements that occurred in Japan in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Her most prominent memories were of the heated discussions that happened in classrooms. Some questions thrown her way were critical yet harsh, and Nakane made sure to respond to her best abilities rather than avoiding debate. Looking back, Nakane reminisced about the passion that the youth of that time had, noting that young people should be a little rebellious and that engaging with opposing opinions is good for an anthropologist.

Nakane always focused on basics as the heart of her seminars rather than pursuing "new" or "cutting edge" trends in the academe. When graduate students returned from their fieldwork, she paid great attention to supporting her students with useful advice and suggestions for a draft of an article, motivating them to become renown researchers. Many of them sat in her class with graduate students for one or two years before getting a job in an university mostly not in Tokyo but in a provincial capital. After they left Tokyo for job Nakane continuously provided them with moral support and encouragement to continue the research with passion and tension. For example, when Nakane organized a UNESCO research project at Toyo Bunko (The Oriental Library) in the early 1980s for a few years, she invited those young scholars (seven to eight) as core members of the project and held two to three seminars a year in Tokyo. These seminars were good opportunities for them to present an idea and a plan for a Ph. D or a monograph book, followed by comments, advices, and heated discussions.

Nakane believed that young scholars in rural regions were disadvantaged, as they did not have chances to engage sincere and severe discussion in friendly and rivalry mode with peer group. Dinners usually followed after a seminar, and at times, Nakane invited the group to her condominium home near Shinagawa station for further casual drinks and discussion. The first time I visited her house was after a seminar dinner at a Chinese restaurant in the Roppongi area. A taxi took us to her condominium, and she and her mother kindly and pleasantly entertained us with prepared

drinks and snacks. We drank whisky, letting the time pass with relaxed and pleasant conversations. Despite Nakane's busy schedule, her graduate students were given careful, precise, and constructive guidance on their ideas and theses drafts. In addition, she never got tired of writing letters of recommendation, which had great influence. Students who left to study overseas often sent letters to Nakane for advice and suggestion as well as words of encouragement and she was always willing to respond.

What I remember from building and maintaining a student-professor relationship with Nakane is best explained from the process behind publishing the trilogy of commemorative books on her retirement, *Contemporary Cultural Anthropology*. The University of Tokyo press was hesitant to publish these, as they thought a retirement commemorative in general, especially a voluminous one with contributions from most of her students, would not sell well. Nakane had long been a board member of the press, which meant she knew the strained circumstances of their finances, and she was sandwiched between her students and the press.

It is said that her words to the publisher were, "I cannot just say no to those who made every effort to contribute a good article for the book project, we have to make something happen—look, I promise to write something that sells well." Thus, *Social Anthropology: A Study of Asian Society* (1987) was written by her and published. This book's revenue cancelled out the deficit of the publication of the trilogy. It was a very comprehensively written learning material that covered the basic concepts and methods of social anthropology and included a comparative analysis of kinship and social structures in India, China, Korea, and Japan. I used it as a textbook for teaching the introduction of social/cultural anthropology and Asian society when I was teaching at the liberal arts college of Kyushu University in Fukuoka.

### **3. Road to a bright debut: Fieldwork and cross-cultural experience**

An interview article serialised in the *Asahi Shinbun* in September 2017, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of *Personal Relations in a Vertical Society*, precisely introduces Nakane's character (*Nakane Talks: Gifts of Life*, *Asahi Shinbun*, September 4–15, 2017). In the first instalment, Nakane's experi-

ences abroad are introduced as a significant part of her self-construct and an important asset that enables her to have an outsider's view of Japan. In the article, Nakane says:

I wrote this book [*Personal Relations in a Vertical Society*] when I was 40 years old, and it holds a long history. It contains my history of living in Beijing as a girl, visiting rural areas in Japan as an adult for research, my time in India for a long period studying the social structure of local communities, and studying in the UK, Italy, and the United States... Eventually, the characteristics of Japanese organisations and having a vertical structure was what I began to think about and develop. The idea derived from my realization that the style of social communications and exchanges I had in the farming community and the faculty meeting at the university were the same. Perhaps it was my external point of view of Japan that became the foundation for re-discovering Japan. (*Asahi Shinbun*, September 4, 2017)

Nakane's career to become an anthropologist began in 1938 when she moved to Beijing in the autumn of her 6th year in primary school. She had travelled with her family to join her father who was managing a law office there, and enrolled in the Beijing Japanese Elementary School. Nakane lived west of Tiananmen Gate, where the Japanese population was relatively low. In one of her first days in Beijing, Nakane recalls feeling very lonely when she got lost on her way back from school. Walking in an alley of unfamiliar faces, she explains that it was like being dropped in an unknown world. The following year, in April 1939, she enrolled in the newly established Beijing Japanese High School for Girls until the summer of her 4th year. It was through her experiences and observations at this time that Nakane began to forge her path to anthropology. At a young age she saw the harsh realities of life—in the early morning of winter, Nakane remembers a truck that went around her neighbourhood collecting frozen dead bodies that were left on the sidewalks.

Nakane also experienced a somewhat romantic and dreamlike event that fed her fascination with the far western region of China. One day, coming back home from school, she found two camels and merchants resting in front of her house before de-

livering coal to the city center. Young Nakane was amazed by this encounter. She thought, if these merchants travelled so far from the west, she too could travel there. Suddenly her dream of travelling to the far west of China felt more realistic than ever. The Silk Road connected Beijing and the far west, and witnessing those camels were proof that the countries Nakane had dreamed of surely existed. She gained a strong desire to visit those countries, believing that she herself, and the place she was standing, was an extension of the road the merchants had travelled.

Understanding that English would be crucial to connect her to the world out of Japan, Nakane set her mind to entering Tsuda Womens University, which was well known for its English education. She returned to Japan in the summer of 1943 when she was in the fourth year of the secondary school. Nakane has repeatedly stated that she has been blessed in her life and fortunate to have had the support of numerous people. Her first luck came her way on her return trip to Japan from Beijing. After moving to Okazaki City, Aichi Prefecture, where her mother's parents lived, Nakane moved to Tokyo to transfer to a high school. When her train temporarily stopped at Shizuoka station, an uncle from her mother's side, a high school teacher, came to see her. He recommended the Tokyo Prefectural Women's High School No. 8 near Aomonoyokocho station, as his friend lived there. Nakane was admitted to the school, but because the education level of her school in Beijing was relatively poor, she remembers struggling in math. At first, she studied by borrowing notes from her classmate and as time passed, her diligence was rewarded and she moved to an advanced class, which ultimately led to her acceptance at Tsuda Women's University. Thus, Nakane took her first step to becoming an academic.

Another fortuitous event in Nakane's life was receiving funding from the Wagner Foundation. When her time in India with an Indian government scholarship was coming to an end, a visitor showed up at the guest house she was staying in. This guest happened to be from the Foundation and asked Nakane about her research and future plan. Of course, Nakane had no clue who the woman was and remembers speculating if the visitor was a spy. Unbeknownst to her, the visitor was looking for a scholarship candidate and the casual conversation was an interview. Nakane became one of the final candidates, and when the Foundation contacted Tadao Yanai-hara, the president of The University of Tokyo at the time who happened to be in

Stockholm, he highly recommended and praised Nakane as an intelligent and well-established researcher despite having not met her before. These two events are merely an snapshot of luck that Nakane has experienced in her lifetime. These moments of luck translated as encouragement and support, which she is immensely grateful for.

In 1944, Nakane graduated high school and entered Tsuda Womens'University's Department of Foreign Languages. Upon graduating in 1947, just as the University of Tokyo began accepting women, Nakane got enrolled in the Department of Oriental History where she was mentored by Profs. Namio Egami and Tatsuro Yamamoto. Graduating in 1950, Nakane continued on to graduate school, receiving her master's diploma in March 1952. By April of that same year, she was hired as a research associate at the University of Tokyo's Institute of Oriental Culture. The basic foundation and preparation for Nakane's publication of eleven books (as mentioned earlier) was made possible by a four-year research leave from June 1953 to August 1957, which started one year after working as a research associate.<sup>8</sup>

In the first three years, she worked in India, and the next years were spent studying in England and Italy. Because she became a widely-known public intellectual, at times she seems to be perceived as an academic who ended up utilized by both government offices and corporations. It is worth highlighting that before she came to be known widely as a public intellectual, Nakane was a rare scholar, who was highly regarded by the Western anthropological community thanks to her publications in English. Indeed, she was the Vice President of the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Societies for 10 years (1973–1983).<sup>9</sup>

Nakane's research achievements as a social anthropologist are concentrated in the 10 years from the late 1960s to the late 70s. As soon as she returned to Japan from her research and studies in India, England and Italy, Nakane published her first

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<sup>8</sup> At that time, the Ministry of Education assumed that researchers would go on long term overseas researches and study abroad, and there were no regulations regarding the duration of research trips. However, since then, in principle, the maximum duration of consecutive research trips has been set to two years.

<sup>9</sup> During 1969–1970, Nakane was invited as a visiting associate professor to the University of Chicago, as a visiting lecturer at London University from 1970 to 1971, and from 1973 to 1974 she was a visiting fellow at the Institute of Advanced Study, Princeton.



book, *Mikai no Kao, Bunmei no Kao* (The face of the primitive, the face of the civilisation) (1959), a summary of her life and research during fieldwork. Her characteristic style surfaces in her writing, which provides an accurate depiction written comprehensively to be enjoyed by the public.<sup>10</sup> Nakane begins the book by declaring, “This is not a research report, nor an expedition or a travel record. In short, it is a collection of drawings from various people I encountered during my fieldwork [Nakane 1959: 5]” and the blurb for the book reads, “A social anthropologist’s deep insights from a comparative journey of civilisations!” Nakane expresses her positioning as a social anthropologist as, “I wanted to communicate and depict honestly the living worlds, without bending any facts, of those I have met throughout my fieldwork to the Japanese people—this way, I can express my gratitude and friendship to those I met during my fieldwork.”

The titles of the book’s eight chapters (*Assam, Himalaya, Kolkata, Indian people living in eternal, Stockholm, England, Rome, and The Return*) reveal the settings of her field work in India, West Asia, and Europe. Within all those regions, however, Nakane recalls that it was in India where, “I have stayed the longest as it is my concentrated field, and the place I wanted to introduce the most [*ibid.*: 6]” and hence it accounts for more than half of the book. Even so, Nakane notes that, “I feel like I was only able to write a small section about India. In other words, it is difficult to write about this country. Not only that, there is too much to understand [*ibid.*: 6].” She continues, “India, like China and Western Europe, would not accept Japanese adorations or standards—It is an intense world of strong-rooted principals, with no

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<sup>10</sup> The insight and discussion that form the framework of this book had been introduced earlier in a travel essay titled *Onna Hitori Himalaya ni Yuku* (A Woman alone travels to the Himalayas) in the April 1957 issue of *Fujin Asahi* (Madam Asahi, monthly journal). In the essay, Nakane writes about the ways in which the high and respected status of women is protected in her field sites. She writes about her experiences of being a guest of the Kingdom of Sikkim in a kimono, the polygamy practices of this region, and introduces the Nair’s matrilineal society. With these examples, Nakane emphasizes the significance of the respect that women have in these regions, and the positive aspects of holding a high status, writing, “in whatever condition a child was conceived in, the child is acknowledged as a full member of its mother’s clan and a tragedy of illegitimate child would never happen here. Even if your marriage ends in separation or divorce, your family will support you, so financially there is nothing to worry about—overall, there is simply equality between men and women, and the derogatory phrase “it’s because you’re a woman” does not exist.” [Nakane 1959: 56]

leeway to mediate the neutral, having no window for elegance, delicateness or sentiment.”

The first 6 months after entering such a world is a whirlwind of intense and exciting stimulation and discovery. After that, you are mentally exhausted where a numbness gradually takes over you, losing your notion of common knowledge and values—it is an incredible feeling of discomfort. Promises are broken, loyalty betrayed, private life destroyed, and even a small desire of cleanliness and to feel beautiful is completely crushed. Conveniently, it is around this time when Malaria or Amoebiasis pays a visit to your weakened, strengthless body. You find yourself being demoralized by India—experiencing ultimate defeat, sucked into a thick pool of mud with no escape or hope, just broken. Having gone through such a period with bitter heat, the monsoon comes to an end, and the tropical Himalayan winds begin to gently blow into the tropics. I remember this breeze kindly yet powerfully wrapping around me, and truly feeling the love from mother earth. The sensation is similar to the satisfaction you feel right after an intense game of sports. This is when I felt I had begun to understand India [*ibid.*: 7–8].

Nakane’s experience is common at the beginning of living in a different culture and it is lived by many anthropologists. There is excitement at the beginning, followed by the feeling of overwork and discomfort, culture shock, and stress from physical, physiological, and sensory experiences.

#### **4. The impact of the best seller, *Personal Relations in a Vertical Society***

The originality of *Personal Relations in a Vertical Society* lies in its ability to compare the characteristics of Japanese society with India and England. Nakane’s shock in experiencing various episodes and cultures so contrary to Japan motivated her curiosity. Her analysis of her experiences became a mirror that reflected a new perspective on Japanese society. After returning from her far-reaching journey to another

er world, her outlook of culture and society (her eyeglasses to see the world, using the metaphor of R. Benedict) had altered: Nakane was now able to observe her own country from a different lens, as if it was her first encounter with the Japanese people. In a sense, Nakane had been slowly but surely acquiring this lens during her adolescence in China, as a young researcher in India, and her education in the U.K. and Italy.

Through comparing India and Japan, Nakane's coined two terms of group analysis: *ba*, or frame, and *shikaku*, or attribute.<sup>11</sup> India and Japan are the most extreme contrasts in this regard, as Nakane explains:

This is a prominent and persistent tendency in Japanese society, representing a social configuration contrasting with that of Hindu caste society. For Japanese peasants, a village (local group) has been always the distinct group to which their primary membership was attached...Throughout Japanese history, occupational groups, such as a guild, crosscutting various local groups and institutions have been much less developed in comparison with those of China, India and the west" [Nakane 1967: 30].

*Personal Relations in a Vertical Society* became a best seller and its revised English version *Japanese Society* (1970) has attracted attention from academics across the world, receiving many reviews. Despite the book's clear analysis, however, the phrase "vertical society" came to have a life of its own apart from the book; not many reviews seemed to really grasp Nakane's analysis. Many neglected the important contrast between *Ba* (frame) and *Shikaku* (attribute), preoccupied with the

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<sup>11</sup> Nakane explains *Shikaku* (attribute) and *Ba* (Frame) as follows: "Attribute may mean, for instance, being a member of a definite descent group or caste. In contrast, being a member of X village expresses the commonality of frame. Attribute may be acquired not only by birth but by achievement. Frame is more circumstantial. These criteria serve to identify the individuals in a certain group, which can then in its turn be classified within the whole society, even though the group may not have a particular function of its own as a collective body. Classifications such as landlord and tenant are based on attribute, while such a unit as <a landlord and his tenants> is a group formed by situational position. Taking industry as an example, 'lathe operator' or 'executive' refers to attribute, but 'the members of Y Company' refers to frame. In the same way, 'professor,' 'office clerk' and 'student' are attributes, whereas 'men of Z University' is a frame." (Nakane 1967: 2)

characteristics of the vertical relationship, which was in fact one among many features of *Ba*; the tendency was to approve or disapprove a particular behaviour presented in a case study. Some argue that the notion of a vertical society does not apply to Japan today, as there is an increase in those who talk back to their bosses. Apart from opinions arising from misreading, Suenari (1994) introduces criticisms regarding the pros and cons of Nakane's macro model that treats Japanese society as a single entity, disregarding regional and class differences. For example, Toshinao Yoneyama points out in *Nihonjin no Nakama Ishiki* (Japanese sense of camaraderie) that in western Japan, horizontal relationships are found within the communities of a village or town, that the vertical power is not as total as described by Nakane. Thus some critiques of *Personal Relations in a Vertical Society* note that the "vertical society" described by Nakane is a social system that only exists in the Kanto or Tohoku regions in eastern Japan [Suenari 1994: 344–45].

Many critics highlight that Japan cannot be discussed as one homogeneous entity as regional differences between Kanto through Tohoku to Hokkaido in the north and Kansai, Kyushu, Okinawa, in the south-west are each distinct and unique and the contrasts, especially from the furthest north to the south, are outstanding. In the case of India, the differences between regions and language groups are extreme and extensive far beyond the scale of Japan.<sup>12</sup> However, Nakane's book dares to ignore the regional cultural and social variations within the country in the cases of both India and Japan. In fact, focusing on the basic structural differences between Japan and India was a brilliant strategy of Nakane to consciously challenge Japanese academics at the time. Mainstream theories of Japanese society and modernization at the time, as mentioned earlier, positioned and compared Japan with the United States and European countries, or the West as a whole. Thus, Japan was "under the spell" of the premise of social evolution, believing that Japan needed "to catch up"

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<sup>12</sup> The criticism of Ruth Benedict's *Chrysanthemum and Sword* by Takeyoshi Kawashima, Kizaemon Ariga, Tetsuro Wada, Kunio Yanagida, and others – that it does not take into account regional and class differences, ignoring changes of eras and creating a homogeneous and static image of Japanese society..., is published in *Minzokugaku Kenkyu* (Ethnology Research) Vol. 14, No. 4 (1949). Hiroshi Minami is the only one with a positive evaluation.

to Western civilization and modernity.<sup>13</sup>

Although challenging academic theories and popular notions of the time, Nakane's *Personal Relations in a Vertical Society* was written with all readers in mind, and as a result, it does not include a list of references usually required in academic books. Also, no specific place names, government offices, or company names appear. This leaves the impression that the book is based on a pre-conceived idea of the Japanese society. However, Nakane's extensive fieldwork and textual research of historical documents to support her discussions and analysis must be fully recognised.

Nakane's book *Kinship and Economic Organisation in Rural Japan* (1967), is also a product of her diligent work. The concept of this book came from her preparation for lectures she gave as a visiting scholar at SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies) and LSE (London School of Economics) during 1960–1961. The subjects of the analysis are local villages across Japan spanning over 300 years from the Tokugawa era. Paying careful attention to regional differences and changes in the Japanese society, Nakane analyzes the Japanese concepts of household and kinship-social groups that persist beyond changes in time that are at the core to the collective society of Japan. In addition, Nakane's fieldwork in Gorobei Shindenmura in Saku City, Nagano Prefecture, and Koshiozu Town, Tawara City, Aichi Prefecture are also included as descriptions in the book. Gorobei Shindenmura is a village that was established in the early days of the Edo era and flourished because of the construction of an irrigation channel. Nakane's friend from the University of Tokyo, Shinsaburo Oishi, has done meticulous research on this village as well. Stories Nakane had heard about the village history and the social structure of Ozu-shio in Atsumi Peninsula are an influence as well, as this was her mother's family village (grandfather's birthplace), about whose stories she would hear every time they paid a visit. The list of references in the book go on for 15 pages (pp.183–197) and the book is a kind of historical anthropology of kinship and social structure in rural Ja-

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<sup>13</sup> A distinct characteristic of the popular discourse on Japanese society has long been that the capitalist print media ceaselessly produces self-portraits for mass consumption; the self-portraits are typically based upon widely held perceptions of how Japan is different—either very inferior or very superior—from the West.

pan.<sup>14</sup>

The problem Nakane faced and constantly had in mind was that British social anthropological theory and study of patrilineal society, which was the mainstream approach at the time, did not apply to Japanese society, a structure which had not changed much throughout history. At the same time, even similarly non-unilineal societies, such as the Ilongots in Northern Luzon and the Maori of New Zealand, where lineage-like loose social groupings are formed, or Sri Lanka's Pull Areas, where birthplace and descent lines carry important meanings in social organization, also differ greatly from Japan. Elucidating the characteristics of Japanese family, kinship, and social structures among and clarifying its position vis-à-vis such non-unilineal societies made Nakane's book relatable for English readers. Her clear statement that "the primary elements which provide the frame of organization in rural Japan are a household, local corporate group and village, not family, descent group or status group" (Nakane 1967: 167) was persuasive based on analysis of historical materials. Furthermore, Nakane thoroughly explains the important concepts of *Ie* (household) and *Oya-ko* (parent-child as a metaphor for patron-client relationship), deepening understanding of Japanese society.<sup>15</sup>

In 1967, in addition to the two books on Japanese social structure in English and

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<sup>14</sup> There are two main types of historical research on the family: the French Annales School and the English Cambridge School. The former focuses on the emotions (loving) and the mentality that create and support the modern family, and the latter tries to elucidate people's behavior and social structure based on the analysis of statistical data. Emmanuel Todd, an anthropologist of family and social structure studies that bases his work on population history, is developing original research, using ideas from both schools. Nakane can be considered quite similar to Todd in that their scholarships are both historical, utilize frames of comparative civilization, and address and connect a wide range of issues.

<sup>15</sup> Nakane's point is that by comparing Japan to India and China, we see that the "shared space" of life and work is a unique feature of Japan, and it is in the way a group is established in the shared space where the vertical relationship is formed. The focus of this vertical relationship is similar to what Ruth Benedict describes as "occupying the decent momentum" in Chapter 3 of her book *Chrysanthemum and the Sword*—that the Japanese interact with others with a hierarchical social structure in mind. When writing *Personal Relations in a Vertical Society*, even when she was drafting the English translations of this book, Nakane noted she had not read Benedict's book. While the subject of both books, Japanese society, was the same, Benedict approached it through comparison with the United States of America and Nakane through comparison with India and China. It must be highly praised that Benedict wrote an excellent book on Japanese social theory without ever coming to Japan. However, the empirical and comparative view based on fieldwork, historical data, and research dating back to the Tokugawa Dynasty with supported analyzes could only be done by Nakane.

Japanese, Nakane also published a book of comparative studies on two matrilineal societies based on research she conducted in the Assam Highlands of India entitled *Garo and Khasi: A Comparative Study in Matrilineal Systems*. This book was highly regarded as a monograph on the kinship and social structure of the matrilineal societies of mountainous minorities in Asia, particularly at a time when British anthropology was attempting to widen its perspectives on matrilineal and bilateral societies after a series of studies were published about patrilineal societies (in Africa). Undoubtedly 1967 was a tremendously successful year for Nakane, as she produced three books in one year, two of which were in English.

In 1970, Nakane released *Japanese Society* in London and California, which was a revised and translated version of *Personal Relations in a Vertical Society*.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, in 1970, she published the grand 450-page research book *Kazoku no Kouzo: Shyakai Jinruigakuteki Bunseki*, or *Family Structure: Socio-Anthropological Analysis*, which was a compilation of her researches in Japan, China and India. In the first part she introduces the theoretical framework, concepts and method to analyze family, household, kinship, and social organization in general with referring to Japan, China and Indian cases. In the second part she focuses Indian cases especially with extended big families and matrilineal systems.

## **5. Committing to Grassroots International Cooperation: Chairperson of the Supporting Organisation of JOCV (1986–1997)**

Nakane's work and accomplishments in several Japanese ministries are prominent, but her work with the JOCV (Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers) and her contributions in the field of international development aid are not well known. Her response to the request to lecture some trainees at JOCV in 1965, led to Nakane's various contributions in training their members and a long-term commitment to

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<sup>16</sup> The book was re-published in 1973 by Penguin Books. With a low price the Penguin sold well to share a result of the deepening enrichment of the scholar's conceptualization; its analyses and explanations are based on easy-to-understand, if highly schematic, models. Similar to the new Japanese paperback edition, it has become a useful guidebook for foreign businessmen and diplomats to understand Japanese society.

JOCV. Nakane had given lectures at the training centre of the American Peace Corps (founded in 1961) while living in the United States, which peaked her curiosity and interest in the Japanese international youth volunteers. During her time with JOCV, Nakane visited the Philippines and Malaysia in 1975, and Kenya, Ethiopia, and Bangladesh in 1976, meeting with volunteers and carefully listening to their experiences and activities.

Through these experiences, Nakane gained a better understanding of international development. To be more precise, she understood the nuances of development better than when she wrote *Tekiou no Joken* (Conditions for Adaptation) (1972), discussion and suggestion on how the Japanese get accustomed to and socialize with peoples with different cultures. As a project of the Asian Economic Research Institute, this book expanded on an English report on the relationship between Japanese and local employees in Japanese joint ventures in Malaysia, Singapore, and India, specifically concentrating on how the Japanese related to other cultures. The conclusion of the Japanese attitude is relatively negative. However, Nakane found herself with an opposite impression upon meeting the JOCV cooperation members who were active in the field in Asia and Africa and therefore wrote a book on this discovery titled *Nihonjin no Kanousei to Genkai* (The possibilities and limits of the Japanese people) (1978).

She emphasizes two points as opposing characteristics: 1) “The ability of the Japanese to adapt to different cultures can be quite high—individual differences exist, yet, at least one third has great adaptability skills and, looking from a global standard, some are blessed with the quality to work in a developing country” and 2) “The intensity of the young people in the cooperation team, who have moved away from their Japanese work environment and put themselves in a completely new world, are still strongly influenced and controlled by the Japanese societal beliefs.” Nakane concludes that, “the actual serious issue here, is not on the Japanese cross-cultural response but is deeply rooted in, and stems from, the Japanese-ness of it all.” [Nakane 1978: i–ii].

*Nihonjin no Kanousei to Genkai* (1978) was written based on this recognition, as Nakane broadly discusses the advantages and limitations of the Japanese and their involvement in overseas development cooperation, by introducing stories of



hardship and the Japanese volunteers' experiences in their field sites. While she analyzes Japanese social structure and human behaviour in terms of abstract concepts of vertical society, she addresses very concrete issues that the Japanese overseas volunteers encounter on the ground in *Nihonjin no Kanousei to Genkai* (Possibility and Limits of Japanese). Nakane further provides advice around concerns and difficulties in living, behaving, and interacting with local elites and villagers, extending to practical guidance. Although she provides guidance, Nakane is not sympathetic to complaints, saying, "I can say this with confidence—being an anthropologist, in my twenties, when conducting fieldwork, I spent time in much worse conditions than anybody among the volunteers in these remote areas... Hence, observing experiences of the volunteers at their sites, I have never sympathised in terms of their living situations" [Nakane 1978: 61].

Nonetheless, Nakane holds great expectations of the JOCV members, as their postings and contributions would surely become the multi-layered network that ties Japan with nations across the world and encourages grassroots international cooperation. She hoped that upon this network Japan would open up to the future. This is why Nakane agreed to be the chairperson of The Supporting Organisation of JOCV from 1986–1997. During the same period, she served as a board member of the Japanese Society for the Promotion of Ethnology (1986–1999). Academic fieldwork and the work of JOCV volunteers are both practices of cross-cultural collaboration, something at the core of the Japan Society of Ethnology (renamed the Japanese Society for Cultural Anthropology in 2004) and extremely important for Nakane. Foreseeing the future of Japan through the activities of JOCV, Nakane states the following under the subheading "Global Construct Perspective.":

I would like to emphasize here that aid to developing countries has an important universal meaning beyond national interest and moral obligation. As mentioned earlier, the Japanese perspective is based on unit isolation and is not suitable for current situations. The World Government...seems improbable at present, and creating a world government is not always the best solution... Without such central control, it will be crucial, above all, to form a functional policy that unites the countries of the world and does not allow the absolute

control of a particular country or countries. A more important and feasible method is for a part within a country to have a close relationship with a small town or village of another country (countries). The more this relationship experiences hardship, the more it leads to trust and stability. For this, this area or section of a country should not be monolithic but have the leeway to move and work freely. [Nakane 1978: 12–14]

Nakane's bird's eye view of the world is reflected in her use of the word "global" rather than "international." It is worth noting that she used "global" before it became a widely used term in the 1990s, as if it has been a timeless and prevalent term.<sup>17</sup> Again, this represents Nakane's ability to observe from afar and her all-embracing attitude in trying to comprehend an entity. Moreover, unlike the normalcy of male-dominated Japanese society, the JOCV offered great opportunities for women, especially for them to take on active roles, hence, Nakane pushed for more women to proactively join the volunteer organization:

For Japanese people, women have a higher competence in adaptability than men. In fact, for example, females adapt to local food faster than males. In many societies, women are treated with more respect—Therefore, it can be said that there is nothing negative for female volunteers compared to male volunteers, in fact, females may bring more positive outcomes. With this perspective, there are no issues with the working field site, but it is within Japan that problems exist... In any case, I strongly hope that there will be an increase in the number of intelligent women within JOCV (Nakane 1978: 112–113, 120).

Nakane's efforts have led to a gradual increase in the number of female members in the JOCV since 1998. In 1977, the year before her book was published, out of a total of 2,270 dispatched members, only 294, or 13 percent, were women [Nakane 1978: 114]. Today the number of female members exceeds the number of males.

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<sup>17</sup> When the adjective "global" was first used in the academic world, it was wrongfully referred to as "environmental terminology" in the Oxford New Dictionary (1991) (Shimizu 2013: 430).

## 6. Concluding remarks: A Free Spirit

I have discussed Nakane's background, intertwined with personal memories, how she came about gaining her intellectual knowledge, and how Chie Nakane, a social anthropologist, was formed. At her core, growing up in Beijing among Chinese local people for four years before returning to Japan, where society categorised her as a "returnee from the continent," she was a kind of foreigner in her own country, at a marginal position in a country she called home.<sup>18</sup> During her time in Beijing, Nakane recalls keeping her distance from the Japanese community geographically and psychologically—she loved Beijing, the community of Xidan, neighbours and local people. She was a rather peculiar student, remembering that:

I was always drawing or playing all the time rather than studying, so some called me a 'bohemian girl.' There were many excellent teachers in my school, but they would often comment on me 'what an easy-going, careless student.' That didn't stop me from taking on the role of class president. I found ethics class or *Kokutai no hongei* (the essence of Emperor system of Japan) to be quite boring and once said so by accident during class. Of course, the teacher got upset with me and I was stripped from the title of class president. You can see, I was not a very serious student. [Yokoyama: 153]

Nakane truly is a free-spirited soul, untangled from the norms of Japanese society. She once said, "I love being free... I never thought about getting married. To be honest, I think it would've been impossible for me. I couldn't leave my husband in Japan,

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<sup>18</sup> While discussing Nakane's life and works, what comes to my mind is Benedict Anderson's words in his autobiographical book *A Life Beyond Boundaries*. He points out that excellent political scientists specializing in nationalism studies are mostly European (not American) and overwhelmingly Jewish. I think the reason is that the Jews have been excluded from Europe as genuine members of any nation-state in Europe. Because of the peculiar nature of European nationalism that excludes the Jews without any reasonable ground, and being members of that excluded and marginalized community, Jewish scholars could analyze nationalism with a cool head and objective mind. Just like Jewish scholars in Europe, so does Nakane in Japan as a marginalized intellectual as a woman, a repatriate from Beijing and a long sojourner in India, England, Italy and United States.

right? I would constantly wonder how he is or if he's being faithful..." (*Asahi Shinbun*, September 13, 2017). Thus, she chose freedom, chasing her dreams, meeting and encouraging those she encountered along the way. Nakane admits her free-spirited life was possible because of the encouragement and support she received from the many people around her.<sup>19</sup>

Looking back on Nakane's life, I feel that she has lived by following the milestones noted by Confucius: "At the age of fifteen my heart was set on learning, at thirty I stood firm, at forty I had no doubts on my way, at fifty I knew the vocation of heaven, at sixty my ear was obedient, at seventy I could follow my heart's desire without overstepping the boundaries of what was right." Witnessing the camels and merchants in front of her house in Beijing was a revelation for Nakane, willing her admiration for the Central West Asia to come to life. Being hired as a research associate at the University of Tokyo's Institute for Oriental Culture, and leaving for her fieldwork in India the following year at the age of 27 led to her studies in England and Italy and at 31, Nakane returned to Japan. Further, at 33 she became a visiting professor at the University of Chicago, and at 34 the University of London. For Nakane, her fieldwork did not end in India, but continued to her life and studies in London, Rome, and Chicago.

At the age 40, Nakane produced two publications in English (*Kinship and Economic Organization in Rural Japan, Garo and Khasi*), and one in Japanese (*Tate Shakai no Ningen Kankei*), putting herself firmly on the road to becoming a world renown anthropologist. In total Nakane produced ten publications during her 40s

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<sup>19</sup> Nakane's father was also very liberal and free-spirited, an extreme contrast to the traditional father figure in a Japanese family at the time. Her mother was a kind and warm person, and both Nakane's parents were supportive of whatever future she chose to strive toward. After retiring from the University of Tokyo, Nakane made her dream come true by buying a holiday home in Kamogawa, Chiba. She used it as a studio, where she drove her BMW on the weekends and started painting. Referencing photographs and her memories, Nakane created nearly 10 landscape paintings and portraits of the scenery in Tibet. Her passion for painting ended after two or three years—she took on several positions, which robbed her time to paint, eventually leading her to sell her car and holiday home. However, Nakane kept an atelier set up in the reception area of her condominium in Shinagawa, where a painting of the streets in Lasa is silently placed on her easel, not yet finished and the walls are decorated with three completed landscapes. Nakane becoming the president of the Seikado Bunko Museum of Art in her later years was perhaps an honour to herself—a way to fulfil an unsatisfied dream of becoming an artist.

and 50s. British social anthropology was at the core of her work and she incorporated it into her writings. She was determined to write analytical articles in English and publish in anthropology journals, which she did on the subjects of the Garo and Khasi people living in the Assam Highlands of India, the Nair caste's maternal community, and the Japanese society and its concept of *ie* (household). Around age 50, she began acting as an advisor to government ministries, worked with the Japan Foundation and the Supporting Organization of JOCV, and served as a board member and advisor to multiple organizations, committing her time for social contributions and proactively raising her voice in the mass media as if it was her fate. The audience Nakane had in mind including Western and Japanese academia, general Japanese readers, bureaucrats, and businessmen. Nakane was always aware of her audience and what message she wanted to deliver to them.

Cultural and social anthropology is known to take time, as a researcher often spends their entire life conducting research. It usually takes almost ten years from preparation in graduate school through fieldwork to monograph publishing. It does not end there: after publishing, another journey awaits an anthropologist, as they must respond to various people including local residents in the research field, peer academicians in the country, readers and reviewers of an monograph (ethnography), and readers in general public.

Nakane's achievements began with her leap outside Japan, escaping into a wider perspective of the world, being in touch with cross-cultural experience, gaining an intellectual knowledge in social and cultural anthropology—a study that compares and corresponds various cultures, thus allowing her to be set free from the gravity of the norms and prejudice of Japanese society. For someone like myself, who wanted to study anthropology to free myself from restraints of my own culture, Nakane's dynamic trajectory and a writing style that manifested liberation and a free spirit were mesmerising and greatly influential. For that, I am deeply grateful and have a strong sense of gratitude to Chie Nakane, beyond what words can express.

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