

International Academic Exchange in the Era of Globalization: Beyond academic exchanges between Japan and France

**La Société Japono-Française de Sociologie
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1. Starting Point for Sociological Exchanges between Japan and France

La Société Japono-Française de Sociologie was established in 1936 (Tanabe 2001: 349). In 1932 Joseph HACKIN, Curator of La Maison Franco-Japonaise, came into contact with TANABE Suketoshi via YAMADA Yoshihiko, following which Marcel MAUSS sent a letter to Tanabe stating his desire to establish a venue for holding exchanges with Japanese sociologists, which in turn led to the establishment of the society. The end of Mauss' letter contained an exhaustive list of the names of major French sociologists from the time that focused mainly on those in the Durkheimian school, which indicates that this was no mere diplomatic nicety, but that in fact Mauss was earnestly considering academic exchanges with Japanese sociologists.

Tanabe wrote the following in 1933 prior to the establishment of the society:

Research on the stages of development of Japanese society and on collective representation at each of these stages is absolutely essential for contemporary sociology. But as I have just stated, since such research is difficult for foreign scholars it must, by necessity, be carried out personally by Japanese sociologists themselves (Tanabe 2001: 262).

Tanabe asserted that “genuine academic partnerships” could be conducted by having research on Japanese society performed by Japanese people themselves “yield results” and then providing these to French scholars. Unfortunately, the opportunity for these genuine academic partnerships was lost on account of World War II. Yet research on “collective representation” in Japan moved forward even during the war years. For example, ARUGA Kizaemon's *Nihonkazokuseido to kosakuseido* (The Japanese Family System and Tenancy System) (Aruga 1943) was published in the form of the *Series on Sociological Studies Compiled by La Société Japono-Française de Sociologie* in 1943 during the war. This study, which performed a finely detailed investigation into the Japanese tenancy system, was published by La Société Japono-Française de Sociologie.

2. The Major Activities of La Société Japono-Française de Sociologie and the Colloque Franco-Japonais

The society made a fresh start after the war in 1959 with the appointment of Tanabe Suketoshi as its chairperson. Its major activities consisted of: (1) studies on French sociology, (2) studies on French society (including the history of its social thought), and (3) comparative studies on Japanese and French societies. It held meetings once a year and published the *Revue de la Société Japono-Française de Sociologie* in an ongoing manner for the sake of exchanges between Japanese

and French scholars and to introduce the latest trends in French sociological studies. In 2005 it published a five-volume series entitled the *Japanese-French Sociological Series* (Kouseisha-Kouseikaku Corporation) as the result of systematic research on French sociology that had been performed by Japanese researchers (Volume 1: “Durkheim shakaigaku heno chosen (Challenges to Durkheimian Sociology)”, Volume 2: “France shakaigakuriron heno chosen (Challenges to French Sociological Theory)”, Volume 3: “Bourdieu shakaigaku heno chosen (Challenges to Bourdieuien Sociology)”, Volume 4: “Nichifutsu shakairon heno chosen (Challenges to Japanese and French Social Theories)”, Volume 5: “Kyouseishakai heno chosen: Nichifutsushakai no hikaku (Challenges to Symbiotic Societies: A Comparison of Japanese and French Societies)”. From this it could be claimed that the society has occupied a central role of French sociological studies in Japan.

What is more, academic exchanges with French researchers have also served as a mainstay of the activities of la Société Japono-Française de Sociologie. The Japanese-French Academic Symposia’s Sociological Colloquium (Le Colloque Franco-Japonais) is held once every three years.

It wasn’t until 1982 that the academic exchanges dreamed about by Marcel Mauss and Tanabe were finally realized. Pierre ANSART, who had been a driving force behind Japanese-French academic exchanges from the French side, said that he wanted to see French sociologists instantiate periodic exchanges with Japan in order to consider important questions like how Japan had been able to achieve its remarkable, rapid development following World War II (Ansart 2004:7). Therefore, the First Colloque Franco-Japonais was held in 1982 under the theme of “Politique Industrielle et Population” at La Maison Franco-Japonaise. Tanabe Suketoshi’s and Marcel Mauss’ wish had at long last been fulfilled.

Le Colloque Franco-Japonais that was held in 1985 was conducted under the same theme as the first colloquium, but its setting had been moved to France (Paris, Lyon, and Aix-en-Provence).

The colloquium in 1988 was held at La Maison Franco-Japonaise under the theme of “Education et Société”. In 1991 the location moved to Sorbonne University, University of Strasbourg, and University of Montpellier, where theoretical and empirical debates were held over the course of one week on the theme of communication issues in both Japan and France. Not only that, but after the colloquium had ended the participants visited former French territories in North Africa (the Maghreb countries) to perform a joint study on the actual state of development in the Maghreb countries and their connections with both France and the European Community (EC). As this shows, Le Colloque Franco-Japonais carried out by la Société Japono-Française de Sociologie has allowed for substantial academic exchanges to be periodically carried out that incorporate reports, debates, joint studies, and more over a length of time of one week or longer.

In 1995, 1998, 2001, and 2004 symposia were held under the theme of “La Qualité de la Vie dans les Sociétés Vieillissantes” a total of four times. The results of this were published in France in 2004 in the form of *Quand la vie s’allonge France-Japon*, L’Harmattan (Sous la direction de Pierre Ansart, Anne-Marie GUILLEMARD, Monique LEGRAND, Michel MESSU, SASAKI Koken).

Table. Le Colloque Franco-Japonais

	Year held	Theme	Location held
1	1982	Politique Industrielle et Population	La Maison Franco-Japonaise, Soka University, Nihon University, Tenri University, Takasaki City University of Economics, and others
2	1985	Politique Industrielle et Population	Paris 7 University, University of Lyon, Aix-en-Provence
3	1988	Education et Société	La Maison Franco-Japonaise
4	1991	La dimension sociale de la communication en France et au Japon	Paris Sorbonne University, Paris 7 University, Strasbourg, Montpellier
5	1995	La qualité de la vie au sein de la société en vieillisse : clivages entre la réalité sociale et la conscience individuelle (comparaison France-Japon)	La Maison Franco-Japonaise, Kinjo Gakuin University, Kwansei Gakuin University, Soka University, Nihon University, Chuo University, and others
6	1998	La qualité de la vie dans les sociétés vieillissantes Approches sociologiques comparatives	Sorbonne (University of Paris), Lyon, Nantes
7	2001	Société vieillissante et qualité de vie : comparaison France-Japon	Iwaki Meisei University
8	2004	Longévité et Politiques Publiques	University of Nancy 2, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS)
9	2007	L'insécurité sociale: comparaison France-Japon	Kwansei Gakuin University, Koyasan University
10	2011	Generation of Culture in the Era of Globalization: The Tolerance for Cultural Diversity and Peace-building	EHESS

At this series of symposia, the participants were made acutely aware of the structural risks that aging societies will inevitably be saddled with, as well as the importance of responding to these in various domains throughout society. At the same time, they were also made acutely aware of the necessity of presenting a “sociological vision for safe and secure societies” that could contribute to

erecting such safe and secure societies. Therefore, in 2007 a symposium was held that was called “L’insécurité Sociale: Comparaison France-Japon” (at Kwansei Gakuin University and Koyasan University). At this symposium the participants debated risks that threaten safety and security in contemporary societies. In particular, it pointed out that one challenge faced by advanced, information-based sociologists is that over-circulating information on risks produces more anxiety in people than is strictly necessary, whereas conversely failing to disseminate information on risks produces the possibility of magnifying the damage caused. These results were compiled into a special feature entitled “L’insécurité Sociale: Comparaison France-Japon” in the *Revue de la La Société Japonno-Française de Sociologie* (17th edition). It affirmed that it is utterly crucial to achieve a harmonious coexistence through multicultural understanding within globalized societies in which the entire world is closely interconnected. The contemporary issue of “cultural diversity” that was presented here tied in with the theme for the next symposium in FY2011.

3. Challenges that Are Currently Being Addressed

In 2011 a symposium entitled “Generation of Culture in the Era of Globalization: The Tolerance for Cultural Diversity and Peace-building” was held at L’École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) in Paris (with the backing of the Japan Foundation).

As a result of globalization, in contemporary societies the production, distribution, and consumption of new culture is being driven forward at the global level, such that steady advancements are being made in the standardization of culture. But unless cultural diversity is accepted in contemporary societies and that its value is actively recognized and created, then peace-building simply cannot be achieved. The thinking was that by focusing on the generation of new culture that accompanies globalization and the diverse cultures that this continues to produce, as well as deepening our understanding of the true meaning of cultural diversity, we could offer up important clues for the peace-building that we must strive for.

This symposium primarily featured the following three characteristics by way of its method for approaching this theme and its research methodology.

- (1) Researchers from primarily Japan and France, but also Brazil, took up contemporary “culture” in each of these three countries, exchanged opinions, and performed a comparative social theory comparison from the perspective of multiple fields—including sociology, anthropology, philosophy, psychology, and ethnology.
- (2) The researchers attempted to perform a theoretical revision of the general concept of culture and the contemporary phases of the phenomena pointed out by this based upon specific data covering a wide range both temporally and spatially.
- (3) They also perceived of the mounting risks and growing societal anxiety found in contemporary societies as a cultural issue by relating it to the generation of new culture.

The reason that the approach described above was adopted was due to the thinking that the risks that must be surmounted in contemporary society are characterized by the “individualization” of said risks. Having been freed from the bonds of traditional families and collective bodies,

individuals in contemporary societies must now confront risks directly. To put this another way, it means that individuals are becoming divorced from the traditional cultures that had been an integral part of these collective bodies as well. Generally speaking, individuals must now respond to the risks arising from things like employment, consumption, disasters, and accidents under their own personal responsibility. As such, almost as if in concert with this phenomena, new cultures are being produced that are divorced from these traditional collective bodies.

As if in response to the societal anxiety brought about by this “individualization” of risk, new cultures have emerged in such forms as a search for a way to restore the connection between the dead and the living, as well as a consumer culture that serves as compelling conduct in life that underpins one’s individual existence. This also erupts as “culture” that is thoroughly suffused with negative aspects in the form of insurrections and domestic violence.

Such circumstances are common to both Japan and France, and represent important themes that must be clarified equally within advanced countries. But due to the differing historical and social backgrounds in Japanese and French societies, the manner in which their problems manifest themselves vary. For example, in French society, which has proactively accepted immigrants since the 19th century, the entry of Islamic immigrants into the labor market has been producing various conflicts in recent years. A trenchant example of this would be the riots in the autumn of 2005. On the other hand, in Japan violence occurs in more intimate quarters, like with social withdrawal and bullying. These points were discussed by the researchers from Japan, France, and Brazil.

4. Initiatives since 3.11

La Société Japonno-Française de Sociologie reached the 75-year anniversary in 2011. To commemorate this, it had initially planned to take up the history of Japanese-French exchanges in sociology from the angle of academic history at the meeting’s symposium. But because the Great East Japan Earthquake occurred on March 11 the symposium’s theme was hastily changed to “*Risque, Insécurité et Disparité: Penser la Société D’après Mars*” (cosponsored by La Maison Franco- Japonaise). This theme took over where the subject of “*L’insécurité Sociale: Comparaison France-Japon,*” which had been addressed by the society through the Colloque Franco-Japonais, left off.

At present, Japanese society has been thrown into disorder by the composite disaster that exceeded all expectations, which included the damage from the earthquake and tsunami as well as the accident at the nuclear power plant that this produced. Yet the problems have not been confined just to within Japan. Aid workers from countries all around the world came to Japan, and intensive coverage was devoted to the nuclear power plant accident in the news from around the world. From such examples it can be seen that this disaster was not only composite in nature, but was also globalized. In the midst of all this, what sorts of paths should be considered when it comes to erecting safe and secure societies? This is an extension of the theme of “*L’insécurité Sociale: Comparaison France-Japon*” from the 2007 Colloque Franco-Japonais.

In order to get a grasp of disasters from a Japanese-French comparative perspective,

Henri-Pierre JEUDY, the author of *Le Désir de Catastrophe* (2010, Circé) was invited from France with the aid of La Maison Franco-Japonaise and asked to give a keynote speech. In addition, MIKAMI Takeshi (Kobe University) and MATSUMURA Sachiko (Open University of Japan) from the society offered research reports.

Jeudy raised questions about how disasters are perceived in modern societies based on a study of Chernobyl and a study of the museums related to disasters in Japan such as Minamata disease and the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake. In particular, he critically discussed systems that exploit the vagueness in the distinction between natural disasters and man-made disasters in an effort to reclaim disasters that had originally been deemed man-made disasters as natural disasters. In addition, he pointed out that risk management ideas based on the myth of completely eliminating risk are giving rise to a new ethic and serving to constrain society itself. He also asserted that the ethics of risk avoidance was what lay behind this deep-seated anxiety. Mikami likewise presented the notion that social theories of risk were barely viable in the form of “solidarity based on anxiety”, and that it was “diabolic” that solidarity based on risk management had already become impossible. Matsumura took a social welfare perspective in claiming that information that underpins people’s daily lives following an earthquake is unreliable, and advocating for the need to qualitatively transform the lifestyle in Japan.

5. Current State of and Problems with International Academic Exchanges

Moving forward, a broad-ranging debate will have to be carried out regarding whether we should carry on with the academic exchanges between Japan and France in the same manner as they have previously been handled.

To start with, it is gradually growing increasingly more difficult to raise the funds to hold the meetings. Furthermore, given the fact that the obligations from teaching and the other routine work of university teachers, who are the main constituents of the society, are increasing from year to year, it is hard to secure the time and labor required for the fundraising process. The same holds true for the researchers on the French side. Moreover, while symposia like those to date have been valuable as international symposia because they pursued large themes, the recent trend in sociology is for ever-increasing fragmentation in each field, with this being particularly pronounced among the younger generation. The situation is the same on both the Japanese and French sides. But as expected, the greatest point of contention is the question of whether the changes in the world of the 21st century can be captured solely through a bilateral comparison of the two nation states of France and Japan. In the most recent symposia this was broadened out beyond a bilateral comparison through the participation of Brazilian researchers. But if we adopt the point of view that this is the “era of globalization,” then surely it will be necessary to construct a more expansive framework for research.

Here it should be pointed out that two challenges emerge from the question of how the internationalization of sociology should proceed that are not limited to exchanges between Japan and France.

Challenge 1: What should the language of sociology be when it comes to international exchanges?

Challenge 2: To what extent are comparative studies and research via a nation state framework valid?

The question of what language sociologists should use to express themselves merits a bit more debate. Most of the Japanese sociologists write their papers in Japanese. Yet when discussing internationalization the papers and writings that are primarily referenced are those that have been written in English. This is premised on language unification for internationalization (standardization in English). But is English really the superlative choice as the language for sociological papers and description? This issue has not come up for discussion. At the very least it is considerably trying for researchers who do not use English as an everyday language or as an academic language to give reports at academic conferences and write academic papers in a language other than the one with which they are most familiar.

At a meeting of the International Institute of Sociology (IIS) from several years back a report was given by a Romanian researcher (I myself was one of the reporters). This researcher began their report by first interjecting an apology by saying, "Please excuse me for giving my report in such broken English." The majority of the other reporters, myself included, were researchers from the non-English world, and harbored the impression that we could significantly boost the quality of our reports if we could express them in the languages that we normally spoke.

In addition to which the organizers of the working groups proposed that they would like to compile together and publish all of the reports, with themselves as the editors, and to all appearances they were going to produce results befitting an international academic conference. They collected together the manuscripts early on, but before long we were informed by the editors that the publishing company that they had originally planned to use contacted them to say that a number of the papers that had been scheduled for publication were expressed rather clumsily in English, and that it had deemed them unfit for publication. Even after this the process leading up to their publication did not exactly proceed smoothly on account of the fact that it took a considerable amount of time to obtain the approval of the publishing company. In truth there were likely various different considerations, such as problems with the level of quality of some of the papers, but in the end they were eventually published by an Italian publishing company (in English!). But the editors asked the authors to have native checks of the English texts done by native speakers.

Sparing precious research time to writing papers in English is hardly productive. Even more problematic is the fact that when something is expressed in English or another foreign language its meaning is somehow subtly shifted from how it was expressed in Japanese. Some are even of the opinion that it is the problems borne from this subtle shift in meaning themselves that are indicative of sociology's "lagging behind" as a science. Yet there have been no attempt to at least simply standardize the language used in sociology like was done with the natural sciences. Naturally, it appears as if there is a certain "something" that can only be expressed in the language with which one is accustomed to speaking; what you might call "linguistic embodiment." Furthermore, it is

essential to not only pen papers exclusively in highly specialized academic jargon (or in foreign languages such as English), but we must also publish papers and writings that can be read by the people in the regions targeted for study. In this sense the significance of allowing people to write research papers in the language with which they are most familiar cannot be denied—such as in Japanese if they have fluent command of that language.

6. Offering a Model for Bilateral Academic Exchanges

The circumstances at bilateral exchanges such as the academic exchanges between Japan and France envisioned by Mauss and Tanabe differ from those at international academic societies that gather together numerous researchers, such as IIS and ISA. The academic exchanges between Japan and France differ from the model of having a standardized language via English or the like by carrying out exchanges in Japanese and French. This type could be called a two-directional model. Since Japanese people can speak in Japanese it does not produce the feelings of inadequacy such as I experienced in the IIS working group.

Yet this is not to say that there is not a problem at a more fundamental level. There is the question of the extent to which comparisons through a nation state framework are valid, which was brought up as the second challenge. Tanabe has asserted that studies on Japanese society should be conducted by Japanese people themselves. Yet in light of the unitary nature of Japanese society that this presupposes, would just promoting exchange not be insufficient? This matter is full of questions about what sort of direction sociological theory as a whole should take in the future. While this is not something that I can argue in great detail here, I would like to make one point: which is that nation states are not monolithic. Internally they contain multiple ethnic groups. Moreover, there are also peoples who lack a single state despite being recognized as belonging to the same ethnic group. If we fail to take this point into consideration then there will implicitly be limitations with moving forward with joint research that performs bilateral comparisons that are predicated on the notion of nation states.

Finally, in place of the unified model via a particular language (primarily English) I would like to consider the possibility of expanding such exchanges out to three or more countries (or three cultural spheres) without being limited merely to exchanges between two countries that are based on this two-directional model between two countries by taking this idea into consideration. To start with, when adopting multiple languages at academic meetings and academic conferences this is relatively easy to do with two languages. Yet when this grows to three or more languages then there will be many cases where this will be difficult to achieve in practice due to financial and other such constraints, even if it is fully possible in a technical sense.

Conversely, in a technical sense it would not be all that difficult to create an electronic journal system that guarantees that papers would be written in not just a single language, but multiple languages. For example, it would be quite simple to post papers in three languages on a particular theme to such a system. But just by doing this alone the papers would only be readable to people who understood the languages used to write them, and this would rob it of its meaning as a form of international exchange. Consequently, in the case of researchers who use Japanese for example, this

would necessitate that they have papers written in Japanese translated into different languages. In doing so, the circumstances will vary when it comes to what languages to select according to questions like what languages the researcher is fluent in, the sort of people in the region that they would like to convey their research results to, and what region the people are from that constitute the members of the researcher's community. There would not be just one answer.

Hereafter, exchanges of a type that differ from exchanges with countries that gave birth to sociology—such as France—are sure to grow in importance. Opportunities for academic exchanges are sure to increase in East Asia in particular. For such exchanges adopting a non-East Asian language such as English or French as the common language could hardly be called productive in that textual representations would have to be checked since said language is not used in any of the regions there, to take but one example. There is no doubt that the need has arisen to promote the two-directional model like that with the academic exchanges between Japan and France via three or more countries. In so doing I personally hope that an electronic journal written in East Asian languages will be created at the outset in particular research domains. This would entail the creation of a system in which a paper could be read in not only one language but in multiple languages. For this there will be questions that must be considered, such as the issues of a peer review system for and the translation of papers, but such a venture would by no means be impossible.

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