Types and Areas in Japanese Society
—Some Problems in the Study of Regionalism in Japanese Society.—

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This paper is a chronological and theoretical analysis of recent studies of regionalism in Japanese society and culture. In this paper, term of 'regionalism' means the cultural and social differences by areas in Japan. Studies of regionalism in Japan can be divided into two periods. The first is the period from 1950s to 1960s, when studies of regionalism were actively conducted in various fields, agricultural economics, sociology, anthropology, folklore and others. The recent studies after the 1980s form the second period. The studies of regionalism in the second period are characterized by the refinement of the theories and typologies developed in the first period, the advent of the "cultural area theory" as an new idea from cultural anthropology, and the activation of the study of regionalism in archaeology and history.

Changes seen in the development of the study of regionalism after the 1980s can be summarized into the following three points: Firstly, conventional studies of regionalism, which had centered around social organizations such as family or kinship or village society, changed into studies covering a wide range of cultural elements. The study of regionalism developed from the study of "regionalism in Japanese society", to that of "regionalism in Japanese culture". Secondly, recent studies of Japanese regionalism for understanding the origin and historical dynamics of Japanese culture were added to the conventional studies which has been centered around understanding of the contemporary Japanese social structure. In particular, many new studies of Japanese regionalism from cultural anthropology, history, and archaeology have put a strong emphasis on this point. Thirdly, conventional studies which first set out various types of social organizations, and then clarified their regional distribution, have come to concentrate on the setting out of regional cultural area such as east or west, south or north, coastal area or inland, etc., according to the distribution of cultural elements. In other words "cultural area theory" has been added as a new idea to the conventional "typology".

In this paper, while attention is paid to the difference between typology and area
theory in the studies of Japanese regionalism, the study of Japanese regionalism so far as conducted are rearranged, and their problems and future themes, especially the necessity and possibility of interdisciplinary study of Japanese regionalism are examined.