

## Preface

The 14th International Symposium of the International Research Center for Japanese Studies was held on November 10-13, 1999, under the title of "Crossing Cultural Borders." The symposium was co-organized with the *Fondation Transcultural*, which has searched for a new perspective in the area of mutual communications and cross-cultural understanding between different cultures in the field of humanities as well as in human cognition in general.

The purpose of the *Fondation Transcultural* is to re-examine the Euro-centrism hidden in scientific methodology. It has tried to search for the academic as well as the practical and ethical conditions necessary to the reciprocal exchange of human knowledge. It has aimed at proposing alternative research methodology to be applied and developed in the investigation of alterity in cultures. Put into question were such conventional frameworks as "participating observation versus distanced observation," differences between *etic* and *emic* or "the positionality of the observer." It has focused on the inter-disciplinary exchange of opinions from different disciplines crossing over different cultural spheres. It has, until now, especially encouraged participation from non-Western people.

In the last ten years, the *Fondation* has organized many conferences, not only in Europe (Louvain-la-Neuve, Paris, Santiago de Compostella, Bologna, Florence etc.) and in the United States (Chicago), but also in such non-Western countries as Malta (Balletta), Tunisia (Hamamette), Mali (Tounbouctou, Bamako, Mopti), Hongkong, Macao and mainland China (Guangzhou, Sian, Turfan, Dunhuang, Urumqi and Beijing). Until this present symposium, however, the *Fondation Transcultural* has not had an occasion on which to develop discussions of high critical interest in Japan with Japanese colleagues who are sensible to the problematics of "Otherness" and the inequality in relationships between observers and the observed, between victimizers and victims.

Although the international environment is described as being borderless, intercultural misunderstanding originating from cultural differences in manner and customs has raised new issues. Even within the narrow confines of Japanese borders, friction occurs between the "outside" and the "inside" of society. This symposium, held under the theme of "Crossing Cultural Borders," has invited scholars specializing in the

problems of intercultural exchange to discuss the ethical questions involved. Such proposals as "facing up to the arbitrariness in rescue intervention," "the meteorology of cultural conflicts," and "border-crossing as cultural treason and self-revelation" will serve as key notions to get beyond the limits of "reciprocal anthropology."

As the convener of the symposium, I hope that the present publication will serve as a milestone for further discussions on the issue of "border crossing" as a critical moment of transgression in mutual understanding. This publication will also be an initiation to the poetics and poietics of the "border-crossing."

A special word of gratitude goes to Professor Kenneth L. RICHARD who assumed the painstaking task of editing the English papers provided by non-native speakers and discussants. Among members of the Center Staff, let me express my thanks to Ms. HONDA Ayako, Ms. MURAMOTO Haruko, and Ms. MORITA Misao, as well as to Ms. KATAHIRA Nagisa, Doctoral candidate in the Graduate University of Advanced Studies. Without their devotion, the publication of the proceedings would not have been possible. Additional thanks go to Ms. SUMIKURA Mariko in the Research Exchange Division of the I.R.C.J.S., and her team, for their administrative handling and care taking during the symposium period. In Ms. Sumikura's three years of service at the Center, this was her last and much appreciated contribution, felt equally by the organizers as well as by the participants in the symposium. Let me take this opportunity to acknowledge her enthusiastic job as a border-crossing partner to our three days of heartwarming intellectual adventure.

INAGA Shigemi

Convener of the 14th Symposium

N.B. Technical problems encountered during the printing process of these Proceedings has meant that diacritical marks for French, Spanish, Chinese, and Japanese original language inscriptions could not be systematically rectified within the time and budgetary constraints of the present publication. The editors apologize to both readers and contributors for any irregularities that remain in regard to the orthography of non-English vocabulary.