

**Brokering Anime: How to Create a Japanese  
Animation Business Bridge between Japan and  
India**



Ryotaro Mihara

St Antony's College

University of Oxford

A thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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## **Abstract**

This thesis ethnographically examines the globalising of the Japanese animation (anime) business in the context of the creative industries, of Japan's politico-economic position in Asia, and of brokerage. Influencing the world's entertainment, creators, and youth culture, anime is one of the crucial lenses through which one can examine Japan's presence in the world. Despite the prevalent assumption that anime is globally popular, this thesis highlights the precarious performance of the anime business overseas, and examines it through an entrepreneurial anime business project trying to bridge the Japanese anime business into the Indian market.

The ethnography of the project centres on its founding entrepreneur, focusing on how he tried to ally with insiders in the Japanese anime sector and the Indian market. The thesis's 12-month fieldwork accompanied his business in Japan (Tokyo) and India (Delhi), revealing a perspective of the entrepreneur as a broker who intermediates between the discrepant positions of his stakeholders to keep his business afloat. It also highlights the two most critical discrepancies: the dichotomies of art versus commerce (one of the central topics in creative industries studies) and the 'Japanese' versus 'Indian' ways of doing business (one of the prominent topics in Japan's political economy *vis-à-vis* the Asian region). The ethnography found the entrepreneur's liminal dual agency in bridging, blurring and reorienting the dichotomies was a driving force carrying his business forward.

This thesis counterbalances previous anthropological studies on the creative industries (including anime) that tend to advocate the centrality of creators and fans, by focusing on the businessperson in a creative project. It also suggests that the broker is a crucial point of reference when examining how to create workable compromises between art and commerce, and allowing Japanese and Asian businesspeople to get along. The thesis also enhances our understanding of entrepreneurship by revealing most of its function as brokerage.

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## Glossary

*gametsui* (がめつい): greedy

*kokoro ga tsujiru* (心が通じる): (to be able to) have a heart-to-heart talks

*manga* (マンガ/漫画): comics

*mura shakai* (ムラ社会): small-town community

*nihonjinron* (日本人論): discourses on ‘Japaneseness’

*oniisan* (お兄さん): older brother

*otaku* (オタク/おたく): geeks, anime fans

*surechigai* (すれ違い): passing each other, two ships passing in the night

*yamashi* (ヤマ師/山師): speculator, wildcatter

## Chapter 1: Introduction

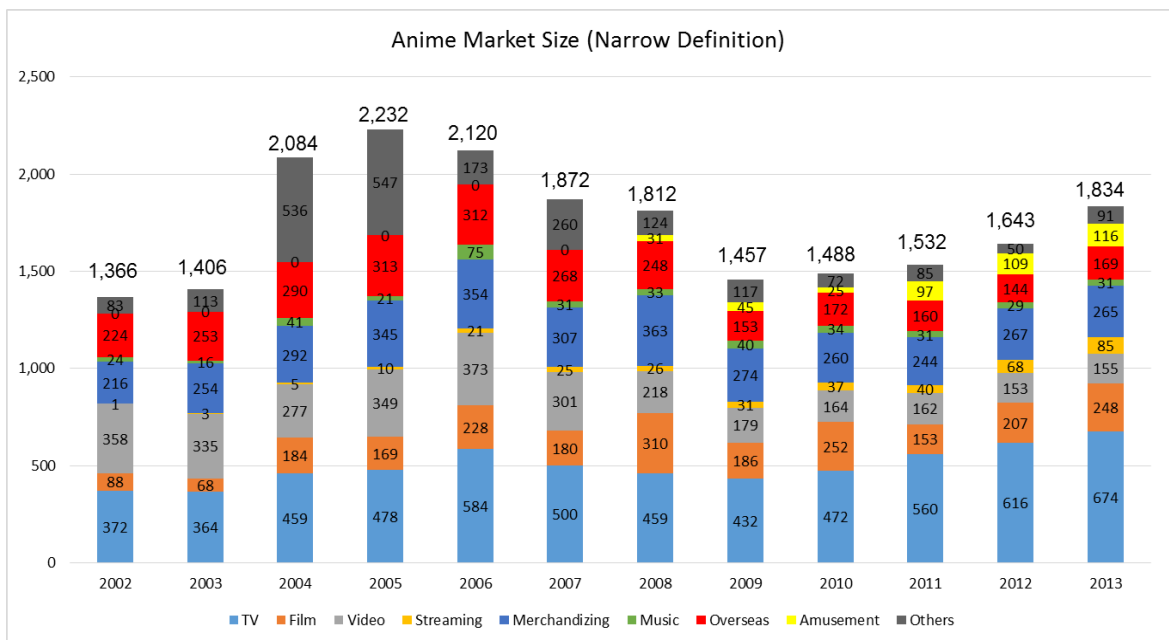
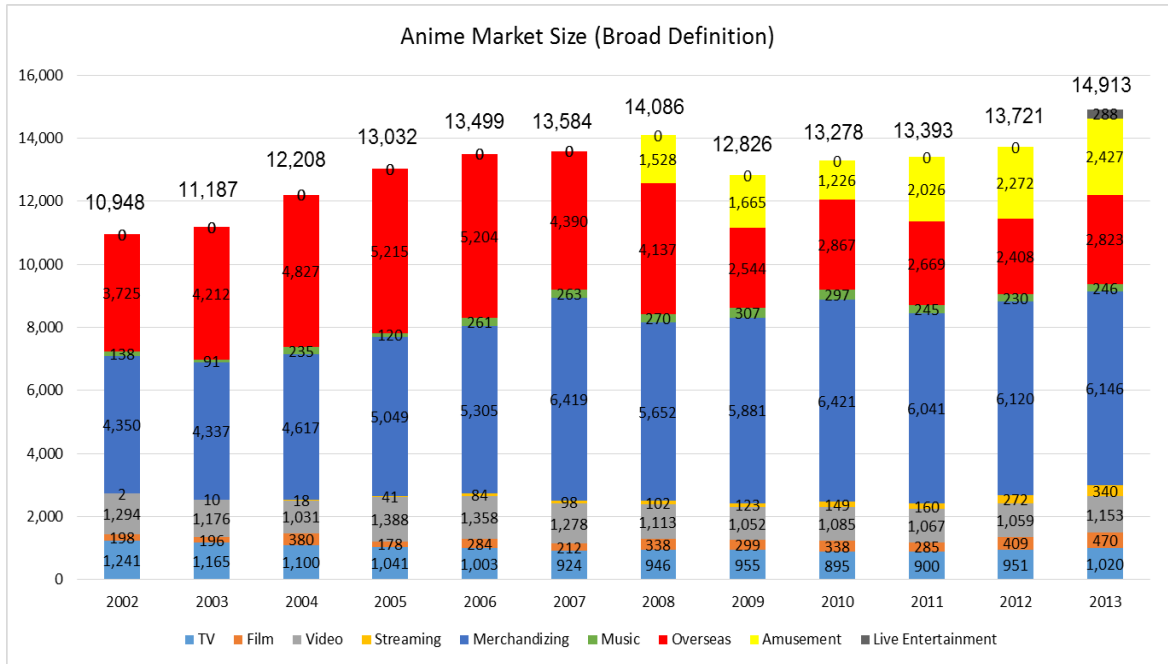
*A big puzzle: why do the business aspects of anime's globalisation remain uninvestigated?*

It is about two decades since animation (anime) became a popular discussion topic about Japan in and outside the country, and in and outside universities. Anime is one of the most globally prevalent elements of Japan, influencing the world's entertainment, creators, and youth culture. It is one of the crucial lenses through which people interested in Japan – including anthropologists – can examine the country's presence in the world in a global context.

Many reports, articles, and books attest to anime's global popularity. The journalist Douglas McGray's pioneering 2002 article in *Foreign Policy* suggested that the growing influence of Japan's popular culture on the world was making Japan a global cultural superpower at the same time as the country was declining in economic influence (McGray 2002). A statistic given by the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), that 60% of the world's TV animation broadcasts are Japanese, is widely quoted (e.g. Condry 2013: 1, 221). Another journalist, Roland Kelts (2006), showed how Japanese popular culture artists (including in anime) have heavily influenced American pop artists (and vice versa). For some opinion leaders in the Japanese entertainment sector, the fact that anime has influenced artists globally shows that Japanese popular culture – which has long been influenced by foreign creativity – has entered a critical turning point, allowing Japan to enhance both its

economic and its cultural influence (e.g. Hamano 2005; Sugiyama 2006). Anime changed the audiences' lifestyle, and sometimes their lives themselves, on a global scale: it changed the way children play through media and toys (Allison 2006), broadened the world of teenagers (e.g. Napier 2001: 240), enabled a jobless librarian to 'keep going' despite her uneasy future (Napier 2007: 20), and even dissuaded a depressed youngster from committing suicide (145). Some scholars argue that anime fans (*otaku*) in the world are forming a distinct transnational community through the Internet (e.g. Condry 2013; Ito et al. eds. 2012), and that their discourses and activities embody a post-Fordist type of labour in the globalisation era (LaMarre 2006). Anime's global spread can be used to enhance what Nye calls the 'soft power' (2004) of Japan as a nation (Watanabe 2011: 86-92), or to form an independent 'fantasyscape' which could be added to the five 'scapes' identified by Appadurai (1996) as the categories of contemporary global cultural flows (Napier 2005: 293). Given anime's impact on the world, one may assume that the future of anime must be bright.

**Chart 1: The transition of the market size of anime**



(Extracted and translated from AJA 2014: 67; yen in hundred millions)<sup>1</sup>

When we turn our eyes to the business aspect of anime, especially its performance in overseas markets, however, we find a different side of the reality of anime’s globalisation:

<sup>1</sup> ‘Amusement’ is calculated from 2008 (it is included in ‘others’ in 2002-2007 in the anime market size in its narrow definition). ‘Live Entertainment’ is calculated from 2013. ‘Overseas’ in its broad definition is defined as ‘sales from the end-users in overseas markets (screening, broadcasting, videos, merchandising, etc.).’ ‘Overseas’ in its narrow definition is defined as ‘overseas revenues by video sales, licensing and so on’ (AJA 2014: 67).

its precarious performance. Chart 1 shows the shift of anime's market size from 2002 to 2013 (AJA 2014: 67). The upper diagram shows anime's market size in its 'broad definition,' i.e. the revenue from anime itself plus related businesses. The lower diagram shows the market size for anime in its 'narrow definition,' i.e. the revenue of the anime production studios. In both diagrams, the third bars from the top in red are the revenues from overseas markets. What we can see from these diagrams is that the revenues from overseas market have been generally shrinking in the last ten years, not only in amount but also in percentage terms. As for the 'broad definition' anime sector, the revenue from overseas markets in 2013 (about £1.4 billion) has fallen to about a half that of 2005 (about £2.6 billion), the time when the revenue was the biggest. The percentages of the revenues from overseas markets in the total revenues are also generally declining. While between 2002-2008 the percentages were roughly around 30-40%, they dropped to generally below 20% after 2009. As for the 'narrow definition' anime sector, the revenue from overseas markets in 2013 (about £85 million) was also about a half of that of 2005 (about £157 million), when the amount peaked. The percentages of the revenues from overseas markets in total revenues are also generally declining. While between 2002-2008 the percentages were roughly around 13-17%, they dropped generally below 10% after 2009. According to these diagrams, the Japanese anime sector has been making less and less money out of the overseas market. Although the overall market size of anime seems to have resumed its growth since 2009, and although the percentage of the revenue from overseas is hoped to expand beyond 2013, the nature of the

Japanese anime sector's performance in the overseas markets as a whole could at least be evaluated as precarious, which is far from the rosy image of anime's global popularity assumed in the public debates depicted above.

This also means that anime is a domestic industry relying heavily on the Japanese market. The state of the domestic anime sector as an industry is further highlighted if we contrast the figures in the above chart with similar ones from Hollywood. While anime (in its narrow definition) relies less than 20% on foreign markets, Hollywood films usually earn more than twice as much from international markets as from the domestic market (US and Canadian: MPAA 2014: 4). Hollywood made \$25 billion (£17 billion) from international markets in 2013, while anime's revenue from overseas markets in the same year (£85 million) was only 0.5% of that amount (Ibid.). In this sense, McGray's (2002) expectation was wrong at least in terms of the anime business: no 'superpower' anime companies (as powerful as major Hollywood studios) seem to have emerged since 2002.

Moreover, when it comes to the world's *animation* industry (not the *anime* industry), the Japanese anime sector is often oddly omitted from discussions of it. For example, in the European Commission's report on the world's animation industry (EC 2015), Japan was unable to be analysed 'at all due to a lack of data' (7), while China and Korea were analysed. Similarly, the Japanese anime sector only peripherally appears in articles examining the global production network of the animation industry operating in the world (e.g. Yoon and Malecki 2010). One may wonder how it could be possible for the Japanese anime sector to

be so invisible in debates on the world's animation industry when many people are euphorically talking about anime's global popularity as depicted above.<sup>2</sup>

Here lies the big puzzle that this thesis intends to tackle. What is happening in the overseas anime business? Why is the Japanese anime sector's business performance in the overseas market so precarious, although it has long been celebrated as globally popular? Why does the Japanese anime sector seem unable and unwilling to cultivate the overseas market? How can we understand the sociocultural context of the globalisation of the anime business? This thesis is devoted to answering this set of questions. As briefly stated above, and as will be examined in detail in the following sections and chapters, previous arguments have not sufficiently addressed these aspects of anime's globalisation. This thesis intends to fill this gap.

In so doing, I will use the case of a certain entrepreneurial anime business project that tried to expand its business from Japan to India, and ethnographically examine what happened when a business player actually tried to cultivate the overseas anime market. The reason for choosing this case – an *entrepreneurial* project rather than a more established project, and an *Indo-Japanese* project rather than an overseas anime business in other countries – is to highlight as boldly as possible the sociocultural context of the globalisation

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<sup>2</sup> Some people question the validity of the figure that 60% of the world's TV broadcasts of animations are Japanese. According to an ex-JETRO official, for example, the original source of the figure was Korea's governmental body KOCCA (the Korea Creative Content Agency: see Mizuho Bank 2005: 27). Although the grounds for such a percentage are unclear, JETRO uncritically quoted the figure in several reports, and many scholars and journalists outside Japan have re-quoted it from JETRO. The ex-JETRO official worried that such an ill-founded figure would become a standard argument for anime's global popularity (personal communication).

of the anime business. India cannot be ignored as a market for the future growth of the Japanese economy (including the anime sector) due to its market size (cf. METI 2012d), but it is a relatively untapped market with few previous instances, especially for the Japanese anime business. Indians are considered as ‘unfamiliar’ people to do business with, at least compared to Eastern and Southeastern Asians (and even to Euro-Americans) (see Chapter 2). The project in question was started and proposed to the Japanese anime sector by an ‘outsider’ ex-investment banker entrepreneur, the type of person of whom the anime sector is most sceptical (see Chapter 3 and 4). Such conditions require the Japanese anime sector to reconsider and change their routine regarding overseas business, and it is in such a context that their stance towards the overseas anime business can be most illuminated. As a social science dictum has it, the best way to understand a specific situation is found in the attempts made to change it (cf. Bronfenbrenner 1976: 6).<sup>3</sup> Comparative aspects will also be provided through the observations of, and interviews with, the players relevant to the overseas anime business, including members of other Indo-Japanese anime business projects, to examine how the case study of the entrepreneurial Indo-Japanese anime business might represent the overseas anime business in general.

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<sup>3</sup> The dictum ‘If you want truly to understand something, try to change it’ was often attributed to the group dynamics psychologist Kurt Lewin, and referenced by a number of social scientists (e.g. Fujita and Kitamura eds. 2013: 81; Schein 2006: 296).

### *Contextualising the research*

Why should we ask these questions? Why should we focus on anime? What is the impact of ethnographically examining an entrepreneurial Indo-Japanese anime project, which has a very limited economic impact on the global entertainment market? This thesis is not only devoted to resolving the above counterintuitive puzzle specific to anime, but it also intends to make general contributions to the body of literature (mainly anthropological literature) on the facts found in the ethnography of this thesis.

The ethnography of this thesis focuses on a certain Japanese entrepreneur (an ex-investment banker under the pseudonym of Takahiro Ikeyama) who tried to expand his anime business to the Indian market by establishing a one-man company (with a few collaborators in Tokyo and Delhi) that operated an online platform through which the Japanese anime sector could distribute their anime-related products in India. The ethnography mainly examines how he negotiated (and failed to make) business alliances with the players in the Japanese anime sector and in India to develop his business, i.e. in creating the transnational flow of anime business between Japan and India. The ethnography finds that, throughout this negotiation process, he consistently faced two ‘discrepancies’ in the positionalities of his business stakeholders: discrepancies between art versus commerce, and between the ‘Japanese’ and ‘Indian’ ways of doing businesses. The Japanese anime sector was heavily dominated by an ‘art for art’s sake’ mindset, and was thus highly sceptical of money-motivated entrepreneurs like Ikeyama; the sector also considered the way in which

their Indian business counterparts carried out their businesses was widely different from those of Japan. It also finds the significance of the 'brokerage' role that the entrepreneur (Ikeyama) played in resolving such discrepancies in the positionalities among his stakeholders so that his business could be carried forward.

While there are many ways to academically contextualise the above ethnography, in this thesis I will attempt to make it speak to the following bodies of literature (including, but not limited to, anthropology): the creative industries (including anime studies); the Indo-Japanese relationship; entrepreneurship; and brokerage. The discrepancy between art versus commerce is one of the main topics in the literature on the creative industries. One of their main focuses is how art and commerce can compromise in carrying creative business projects forward (e.g. Caves 2000), and some studies explore how such a convergence can be made on an ethnographic basis (e.g. Moeran 2009). This perspective is missing in some mainstream anthropological studies on anime (cf. Morisawa 2015). Examining how the discrepancies between the 'Japanese' and 'Indian' ways of doing business could be resolved might provide an on-site picture of the shifting nature of the political economy of the Indo-Japanese relationship in particular and of Japan's position in Asia in general (cf. Iwabuchi 2001). Brokers once caught the interest of anthropologists in the context of modernisation of the non-Western countries as a link to connect the rural community to the national centre (e.g. Wolf 1956; Geertz 1960). In response to the current rise of globalisation, in which the ethnographic sites have come to be understood by anthropologists not so much in terms of

national borders but as the area where multiple global forces intersect, brokers have recently been revisited by many anthropologists as ‘an exemplary methodological entry-point for an anthropology concerned with borders, mediation, translation, and transnationalism’ (Lindqist 2015: 162). In such a context, brokers are depicted less as mere mediators who just bridge already established borders, and more as ‘active participants in the reworking of cultural boundaries’ (Bai 2012: 393; Rothman 2012) who ‘are not only products, but also producers, of the kind of society in which they re-emerge’ (James 2011: 319). The anthropology of entrepreneurship, which is waning (Rosa and Caulkins 2013: 100-101), could be broadly included in the anthropology of brokerage.

The analytical vantage point through which I examine the ethnography of this thesis is thus to frame the case entrepreneur (Ikeyama) as a broker who intermediates the two dichotomic forces of art versus commerce and the ‘Japanese’ versus ‘Indian’ ways of doing business to generate social changes in the Japanese anime sector, i.e. to expand the socioeconomic boundaries of business to the untapped Indian market. By framing the ethnography of this thesis in this way (which will also be explained in detail in the following chapters), this thesis intends to provide ethnographic answers to the following set of analytical questions. How can art and commerce be intermediated in the context of a transnational creative business project? How can we understand the contemporary Indo-Japanese relationship? How can we understand an entrepreneur as a broker, especially in the transnational context? What kind of role does a broker play in resolving the discrepancies

between art versus commerce and between business customs? How can we highlight the shortcomings of previous anthropological studies on anime? How can we understand the shifting nature of contemporary Japan's presence in a global context?

*The 'Rashomon effect': discrepancies in doing the fieldwork in the Japanese anime*

*sector*

One of the main sites of the fieldwork for this thesis was the Japanese anime sector. I observed and interviewed people inside the sector, as well as the outsiders who try to do business with them. I would here briefly like to mention what it is like to do fieldwork in the Japanese anime business sector, which has held researchers at arm's length so far. As briefly mentioned above, the overarching features of fieldwork in the sector could be described as 'discrepancies' – the conflicts, confrontations, contradictions, mismatches, miscommunications, etc. – among the players' positionalities (standpoints, backgrounds, mindsets, orientations, sentiments, etc.) in and outside the Japanese anime sector. As I will examine in detail in the following chapters, the Japanese anime sector is filled with such discrepancies. The anime industry seems to be a highly complex, decentralised, multifaceted sector that refuses any kind of analytical simplification. It is extremely rare for the sector to reach a consensus on anything. If a scholar makes a certain argument on the anime sector based on his/her research in the anime industry, for example, one may always find a number of people in the sector who disagree with it, sometimes saying (scornfully) that the scholar

knows nothing about the reality of the sector or that he/she interviewed the wrong people or those who catered to his/her assumptions. A Business School once made a business case of GONZO (Globis Management Institute 2004: 117-156), one of the anime production studios in Japan, to understand the anime business, although some people in the anime sector discouraged me from using GONZO as a point of reference (and GONZO later ended up being delisted from the Tokyo Stock Exchange). Some argue that animators are exploited and paid much less than they deserve (e.g. JAniCA 2015, Morisawa 2013). Who, then, is disintermediating? Many players in the anime sector blame one another for this. Some accuse TV stations; some advertisement agencies; others pinpoint top-ranked creators (such as the CEOs of anime production studios who have direct power in deciding how to treat animators). There are rumours that a CEO of anime studio A has a luxurious wine cellar in his house, that anime studio B's CEO lavishly spent a huge amount of money in Kyoto to hold a big geisha party, that the CEO of studio C suddenly bought a Mercedes at the end of a certain fiscal year, and that the reason for production D's bankruptcy was the unbelievably high percentage of its business portfolio devoted to its expense account. Others accuse the animators themselves, because they are neglecting to enforce their worker's rights in negotiating with their employers for better working conditions or forming their own union. There seems to be no clue, at least for an outsider researcher, as to how one might persuasively summarise this kaleidoscope of blame within the anime sector.

The French sociologist Frédéric Martel (2012[2010]) points to the American entertainment industry's 'culture' (10) of hiding insider information from outsiders and of providing information for their own sake to reinforce their own positions inside the entertainment sector when approached by an outsider researcher:

Who will answer my call for interviews under this omerta of silence? Of course, everyone will. The top man of a big company talks about rival companies and an independent filmmaker talks about the majors. Some talk 'off-the-record,' and some will only anonymously talk on background. [...] Union affiliates talk, creators talk, and agents and bankers talk a lot [...]. Everyone talks for themselves, and they talk to advertise. [...] After all, if China controls its information for political reasons, big American companies restrict their information for commercial reasons. A movie, a disk, is a highly strategic commodity under cultural capitalism. But the result is the same in China as it is in the United States. They practice a culture of secrecy, or a culture of dishonesty (Ibid.).

I do not intend to say that the players in the anime sector are telling lies to researchers, or that they are totally disguising what is going on inside the sector. Things are much trickier than that. Just as Martel argues for the American entertainment industry, it is dangerous for a researcher focusing on the Japanese anime sector to blindly accept his/her interviewees' answers without examining their positionalities (Why does this anime producer accuse advertisement agencies as the true culprits for exploiting animators? How does this producer benefit by portraying ad agencies as villains?). As one dissatisfied player in the anime sector laments, there are some in the anime sector who can talk for the sake of their specific positions in the sector, but nobody can talk for the sake of the anime sector as a whole. The trickiest part of this 'omerta' in the anime sector is that a researcher who copes with it will often be led nowhere, or to a kind of fallacy of composition: one simply cannot reach a

conclusion on any issue by just adding up such ‘talks for themselves,’ i.e. all the discrepancies in the positionalities of all the relevant players on the issue (for example, the question of who is financially exploiting animators after all). The more you hear from the players in the anime sector, the more deeply the ‘truth’ (for example, about the true oppressor of animators) seems to wander into the grove of accounts.

This confusion in approaching the Japanese anime sector overlaps with what anthropologist Karl Heider (1988) calls the ‘Rashomon effect,’ i.e. competing and self-serving accounts of the same incident by different people. *Rashomon* is the title of the film made by Akira Kurosawa in 1950 that takes such contradictory truths as its subject matter.

The film is set in 12th-century Japan and concerns the encounter in the forest between a bandit and a samurai and his wife. The mystery of the film comes from four quite different accounts of the same event (a sexual encounter that may be rape, and a death that is either murder or suicide). Each account is clearly self-serving, intended to enhance the nobility of the teller. Each account is presented as a truth at a trial by the bandit, the samurai’s wife, the samurai (who, having died, testifies through a spirit medium), and a passing woodcutter who may have been an onlooker. As each of the four testifies, we see that particular version of the events on film, so that the apparent truthfulness of the visual image supports each testimony in turn. But unlike the familiar detective story on film, where accounts that are later impeached are given only verbally, *Rashomon* commits itself to, and convinces us of, the truth of each version in turn. And unlike the detective story, we are not given an explanation wrapped up nicely in truth at the end. (74)

Heider proposes to take the plot of *Rashomon*, i.e. multiple deponents giving contradicting and self-serving accounts on the same event, as a kind of metaphor to explain the disagreements among multiple ethnographers on the same culture they study. Some discussion followed among anthropologists on which character could be analogised as an

ethnographer and which as informants (Rhoades 1989, Heider 1989). I would argue that it is rather the detective's position that ethnographers are to take, as one who has to collect all discrepant accounts and make up his/her mind on what actually happened, recalling the fact that this part of the film was based on the novelist Ryūnosuke Akutagawa's short story *Yabu no Naka* (In the Grove) (Akutagawa 2009[1921]) in which the story develops from the viewpoint of the detective (*kebiishi*) in charge of arresting the true murderer of the samurai (and who interviews more than four suspects and witnesses). This Rashomon effect is, according to Goodman (2000), 'one of the very few Japanese concepts to have entered the social scientific vocabulary' (165), and it has been used in a number of studies to analyse contested events (e.g. Horowitz 1985, Mazur 1998, Morris 1979, Roth and Mehta 2002). Although Goodman suggests that the Rashomon effect might make an ethnographer confident in his understanding of the field he/she studies by allowing him/her to perceive the field setting from a variety of different angles (Goodman 2000: 162), I argue that, when it comes to the Japanese anime sector, the Rashomon effect makes an ethnographer less confident about his/her understanding of the field.

The Japanese anime sector's overseas business is no exception to such Rashomon-type discrepancies. Each account of the overseas anime business is so discrepant that an ethnographer would lose all track of what is happening. For example, the Japanese government's measures to promote the overseas expansion of the anime businesses (the Cool Japan policy) was both refused and accepted by the sector. Cultural critic and ex-manga

editor Eiji Ōtsuka (2005) furiously claimed that the government should not intervene in the sector but ‘leave them alone’ (190); in contrast, one executive of an anime company insisted that the anime sector had entered the phase of getting on skilfully with the Japanese government (interview by the author with an executive of an anime company, February 2015). After being overwhelmingly criticised by the public, which claimed the governmental policy was sanitising the bawdy part of anime (according to some people, one of the critical sources of anime’s creativity) (e.g. Daloit-Bul 2009: 257, 262), the Japanese government was again criticised by the Diet as supporting companies which were selling bawdy anime goods (sexy anime figures) world-wide.<sup>4</sup> During my fieldwork in the Japanese anime sector, I heard four different evaluations about the result of a certain overseas anime business project. One said it was a huge success; one said it was a moderate success; one said it was a total failure; and the other said it was a pioneering project. While one film producer concluded that it is economically rational for the anime industry not to go outside the Japanese market, as it is the world’s third biggest market (interview by the author, March 2015), the White Paper on International Economy and Trade issued by METI (Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry) (METI 2013) emphasises the importance of stopping the Japanese economy shrinking and argues that there is a positive correlation between the productivity of Japanese companies (the increase of which is indispensable for the growth of the Japanese economy)

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<sup>4</sup> See the minutes of the meeting in the lower house of the Diet on 15 October 2014 ([http://www.shugiin.go.jp/internet/itdb\\_kaigiroku.nsf/html/kaigiroku/000218720141015002.htm](http://www.shugiin.go.jp/internet/itdb_kaigiroku.nsf/html/kaigiroku/000218720141015002.htm)) (accessed 18 November 2014).

and their business expansion to overseas markets (especially to the rising Asian market). When told by an American anthropologist that he was disappointed to see that anime creators did not seem to think about overseas audiences when creating their works, Hosoda Mamoru, an anime film director known for *The Girl Who Leapt through Time*, *Summer Wars*, and *Wolf Children*, ‘laughed gently’ (Condry 2013: 52) and told him that he respected his audiences. On another occasion, however, Hosoda ‘became grouchy all of a sudden’ and ‘spat out’ that anime creators should just care about what they want to make (*tsukuritai mono o tsukureba iindayo*) when asked by a Japanese marketing professor whether he was going to consider the needs of overseas audiences (personal communication with the marketing professor). Some even told me during my fieldwork that they did not trust the statistics issued by the AJA (the Association of Japanese Animations, one of the industry groups in the Japanese anime sector) – including the diagrams that form the basis of Chart 1 – because they do not represent the anime sector as a whole and the AJA is close to the Japanese government.

How then can one make a persuasive argument about the overseas anime business?

It is because this discrepant nature of the Japanese anime sector, alongside the fact that this issue (the overseas anime business) has remained uninvestigated, that this thesis employs an ethnographic case study approach. This approach will be made in an exploratory manner (cf. Yin 2009), supplemented with one-shot interviews with key players in the anime sector (see the methodology section of Chapter 2). I do not intend to insist that the following ethnographic account (the story about the entrepreneurial anime business project reaching

out from Japan to India) is a comprehensive or exclusive way to explain the overseas anime business in general: one will find different pictures if one chooses different projects aimed at different countries. The diagrams in Chart 1 are the starting point of this thesis and not its goal; it is not our objective to verify whether the diagrams are right or wrong. In this sense, this ethnography as a whole – including qualitative materials, quantitative statistics, and my own positionality (this will be examined in detail in the next chapter) – could be qualified as my narrative ‘interpretation’ as a fieldworker (e.g. Van Maanen 1988: 34-35) about anime’s globalisation. However, by the same token, I do intend to argue that this ethnography at least depicts a certain ‘partial truths’ (Clifford 1986: 1, see also 7) about the globalisation of anime.

Just as anthropologist Derek Freeman’s (1983) ethnography counterpoised Samoa’s competitive aspects against Mead’s (1928) emphasis on its harmoniousness, laying stress on discrepancies in the Japanese anime sector – to remark ‘the anime sector is indeed competitive’ against the previous understandings of anime sector as unafflicted (cf. Freeman 1983: 143) – might vex those who have intended to contextualise anime’s sociality as a harmoniously affinitive landscape without any affliction (see Chapter 2). While I do not intend to refute such arguments, I do intend to raise an alarm by this ethnography that as anime’s globalisation takes place, it is not insulated from such discrepancies but rather revolves in the midst of them, becoming enmeshed in the web of discrepant relationships of relevant players.

### ***Outline and structure of the thesis***

The next chapter (Chapter 2) will review the relevant literature, and explains the methodology behind the thesis's ethnography. In the literature review, I address how the ethnography of this thesis will contribute to previous studies (including anthropological studies) on Japanese anime, the creative industries, the Indo-Japanese relationship, and entrepreneurship/brokerage.

I will argue that one of the distinctive features of this thesis's ethnography is that it focuses on the businesspeople in a creative business project, and not on the creators and fans, who have been central to many previous (anthropological) studies on anime and the creative industries. By focusing on the business players in a creative project, this thesis will counterbalance such a bias and suggest a more dichotomous perspective to examine how the globalisation of anime (creative industries) is dually driven by creators/fans *and* businesspeople. On this basis, this thesis will ethnographically depict the dynamics behind the way the two dichotomic orientations of 'art for art's sake' and 'let's make money' interact and compromise in the context of a transnational creative business project.

I will also briefly overview the modern history of the Indo-Japanese relationship, and explore the implications that the ethnography – as a case study of an *Indo-Japanese* business project – might have on Japan's contemporary relationship with India and Asia. The overview highlights (and this ethnography of an Indo-Japanese business project will also highlight) how Japan's orientation (especially its politico-economic orientation)

towards Asia has heavily gravitated towards Eastern and Southeastern Asia, and how India (South Asia) has been peripheralised in the contextualisation of Asia. The features of the relationship between Japan and India could be summarised as *surechigai*, i.e. two ships passing in the night: they have failed to establish a comprehensive relationship with each other. However, the overview also highlights – and the ethnography will exemplify – how India has recently emerged as a global economic superpower, so that Japan now understands that it should enhance its politico-economic relationship with the country to stimulate its stagnating economy. This gap – i.e. the momentum behind Japan’s desire to do business in/with India, despite the country’s contextualised unfamiliarity with Japan – has come to be considered as a lucrative one to be arbitrated by entrepreneurs in Japan (such as Ikeyama). The conflict in business customs between the ‘Japanese’ and the ‘Indian’ way of doing business thus embodies the struggle of contemporary Japan to make a relationship with India (and Asia more broadly). I suggest that the ethnography of Ikeyama’s business project – especially of his business negotiations with his Indian counterparts – will thus shed light on the crucial aspects of Japan’s relation-building with India specifically, and with Asia in general.

Ikeyama’s Indo-Japanese anime business project is also an *entrepreneurial* one that tried to generate socioeconomic change in the Japanese anime sector by enhancing the currently fragile overseas anime business – and in so doing trying to resolve the discrepancies between art versus commerce and the ‘Japanese’ versus ‘Indian’ way of doing

business. The ethnography that depicts how the case entrepreneur tried to intermediate such sociocultural discrepancies among his stakeholders for his business to survive highlights the brokerage aspects of entrepreneurship, and thus proposes the analytical perspectives to see an entrepreneur as a broker. I will review how both topics, i.e. entrepreneurship and brokerage, have been approached by the relevant studies, including anthropology, and address the ethnography of this thesis as an intersection between the two bodies of literature to explore how such a convergent vantage point (entrepreneur as a broker) might be possible. The ‘dual agency dilemma’ of a broker is one of the critical focuses for this thesis: a broker inevitably stands in a socioculturally/morally ambivalent and ambiguous position when brokering two groups, because he/she has to represent the (sometimes conflicting) interests of the groups at the same time.

In the methodology section of Chapter 2, I will explain how I conducted my fieldwork for this thesis, including how I encountered my interlocutors (especially Ikeyama), how I built a rapport with them, and how I participated in and observed Ikeyama’s business project. I will especially examine my own ‘nativity’ towards the field i.e. the Japanese anime sector. I disclose in this section my professional and personal background: that I was in fact one of the active players in the Japanese anime sector before launching this research project (as a government official in charge of Japan’s creative industrial policies, a grass-roots activist to introduce Japanese popular culture to the world, and so on), and how such a ‘native’ (ex-native) positionality facilitated (and constrained) my approach to the Japanese anime

sector. This interrogates the debate of native anthropology on whether a ‘native’ can represent the culture that he/she belongs to. I will argue that my nuanced positionality towards the Japanese anime sector suggests that the issue of ‘nativity’ is not a dead concept when approaching the Japanese anime sector, unlike what some anthropologists insist, but that it requires more careful and explicit consideration.

Chapters 3-6 are the ethnography chapters. These chapters will show how the above two discrepancies between art versus commerce and the ‘Japanese’ versus ‘Indian’ way of doing business constantly appear as crucial dichotomies for Ikeyama’s business, as well as for its background context. The chapters will also examine how such discrepancies were resolved (or not resolved) by focusing ethnographically on the brokerage activities performed by Ikeyama throughout his negotiation process with his business counterparts in the Japanese anime sector and in India. Chapter 3 ethnographically overviews the structures and features of the Japanese anime sector as a whole in the Tokyo area. I identify its enigmatic ‘domestic market centrism’ – the strong tendency to prioritise the Japanese domestic market and peripheralise overseas ones in everyday business practices – as one of the critical factors that makes the Japanese anime sector unable and unwilling to cultivate overseas markets. Incorporating the Clifford Geertz’s concept of ‘involution,’ I show that this ‘circular flow’ of domestic market centrism is becoming more and more intense. Extracting the player’s entrepreneurship as key to inverting this involutory tide, I will also show how such entrepreneurial interventions have faced protectionist hostility from the

Japanese anime sector itself, utilising the dichotomies of art versus commerce and the ‘Japanese’ versus ‘foreign’ way of doing businesses. In other words, an entrepreneur should resolve the two discrepancies if he/she is to successfully carry out an entrepreneurial project with the sector to expand anime business overseas.

Chapter 4 ethnographically examines how Ikeyama behaved in involving the players in the Japanese anime sector to develop his business in terms of the two dichotomies, and of his dual agency as a broker in resolving them. Especial attention is paid to his collaboration with his business partner inside the sector, an anime producer named Katsuyuki Dobashi (pseudonym). Chapter 5 ethnographically examines how Ikeyama behaved in involving the players in India to develop his business in terms of the two dichotomies, and of his dual agency as a broker in resolving them. Attention is paid on how he *failed* to establish the business alliance (joint venture agreement) with his business partner inside the Indian market, a young Indian cultural entrepreneur named Raghav Menon (pseudonym). Chapter 6 puts Ikeyama’s entrepreneurial business case into the broader context of the Indo-Japanese relationship to show that his case does not stand alone, but represents some crucial aspects of the Indo-Japanese anime business as a whole and Japan’s relationship building with India in general. The presentation meeting held in Tokyo, to which Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was invited as a main speaker in September 2014, and other Indo-Japanese anime business projects implemented in parallel during my fieldwork, will be examined to provide this comparative and comprehensive perspective.

Chapter 7 concludes this thesis by summarising the answers to the set of questions posed in this chapter that were discovered as a result of the thesis' ethnography. The chapter also discusses the future developments of the debate exhibited in this thesis.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review and Methodology**

The first half of this chapter will be devoted to reviewing the body of literature to which this thesis (especially in terms of its ethnography) intends to contribute. As stated in Chapter 1, this literature covers the creative industries (including anime studies), the Indo-Japanese relationship, and studies of entrepreneurship/brokerage. The central focus is on anthropological literature, but literature in other fields will also be considered. The second half of this chapter covers the methodology I adopted in researching this thesis, detailing how I conducted the fieldwork for the case business project and for other relevant players and events.

### **Literature Review**

#### ***Overview of literature on the creative industries***

One of the central propositions of this thesis's ethnography is to approach anime from the perspectives of the creative industries, especially in terms of the dichotomic interactions between the two orientations of art versus commerce. In other words, the ethnography of this thesis prompts us to see each anime project as dually driven by creators and by businesspeople. This perspective is critically missing in current studies on anime, which mainly focus on creators and fans. Their arguments, I will argue, tend to over-advocate them, and to be overcautious about investigating anime's commercial aspects. Similarly,

anthropological studies on the creative industries in general tend to portray ‘creativity’ as being constrained one-sidedly by commercial issues as the creative projects develop (e.g. Moeran 2011). By setting a certain businessperson as the central character of an anime business project, and by examining his interactions with the ‘creative’ side in developing his business, this ethnography intends to counterbalance such a bias in anthropological studies on anime specifically and on the creative industries in general. This ethnography will show how the ‘creative’ orientation and the ‘commerce’ orientation constrain (or facilitate) *each other* in the development of a creative business project. The rest of this section, and the following section, is devoted to unfolding this argument.

What are the creative industries? This category seems to have emerged from the appeal to adapt each country’s political economies to the global cultural economy. In 1998, the UK Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) defined the creative industries as ‘those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property’ (DCMS 2001). The specific industrial sectors in this category include advertising, architecture, the art and antiques market, crafts, design, designer fashion, film and video, interactive leisure software, music, the performing arts, publishing, software and computer services, television and radio (Ibid.). This was one of the UK’s attempts to reboot its political economy, erasing the image of a conservative, collapsing former empire and replacing it with that of a young, progressive, rising country. For example, people in and

outside UK were encouraged to see Liverpool as the home of the Beatles rather than as a shipbuilding centre. Since then, a number of countries and international organisations, such as UNESCO (2006) and UNCTAD (2008, 2010), have created their own definitions of the creative industries and have celebrated their potential. In Japan, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) established a Creative Industries Division (CID) in 2011 to promote the Japanese creative industries. They issued a report in 2012 that defined the creative industries as follows:

“Creative Industries” consists of goods, services, and workforce whose market competitiveness lie not so much in price but in added value of creativity.

“Creativity” here means original or unique endeavors which result from an individual or organizational process of production, offering, and distribution of goods and services, and such skill and talent that a person has as a human resource. “Original or unique endeavors” include artistic, cultural, intellectual, traditional and innovative activity. (METI 2012a: 8)<sup>5</sup>

There are a number of ways to categorise the industries that cope with cultural products (for example, the cultural industry, the copyright industry, the contents industry, and the entertainment industry: see Tanaka 2009), but one of the main features of the various definitions of creative industries is that they place the ‘creativity input’ at the centre of their criteria (see also Cunningham et al. 2005). This can be observed in the above definitions.

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<sup>5</sup> In the report, METI named the following industrial sectors as forming the core of their categorisation of creative industries: fashion (textile, apparel, and beauty and cosmetics), food (food service, agricultural products, processed foods, and tableware and cooking devices), content (film, video and broadcasting, including anime, music, publishing including manga, video games, and software), local products (traditional crafts), housing (architecture and interiors), tourism (hotels, Japanese inns, and tourists sites, facilities and agencies), advertising, art, and design. One of the most distinctive characteristics of their definition of the creative industries is that it includes ‘food,’ ‘textiles,’ ‘beauty and cosmetics,’ ‘hotels,’ and ‘Japanese inns’, categories which are not normally included in definitions put forward by other countries or international organisations (METI 2012a: 12).

Throsby (2001) proposes the ‘concentric-circles model’ (113) of the definition of creative industries<sup>6</sup> that is ‘centred around the locus of origin of creative ideas, and radiating outwards as those ideas become combined with more and more other inputs to produce a wider and wider range of products’ (112). In other words, the model, ‘with the arts lying at the centre, and with other industries forming layers or circles located around the core, extending further outwards as the use of creative ideas is taken into a wider production context’ (113).

Aside from politico-economic debates on whether the creative industries will enhance economic growth, job creation, or nation/regional branding (e.g. Florida 2002; Goto 2013; Kawashima 2009; Leonard 1997), one of the central debates on the creative industries revolves around how to approach ‘creativity’ in its industrial settings. One argument assumes that creativity is solely a matter of individual talent or inspiration and emphasises its psychological, irrational, and uncontrollable aspects (Bilton and Leary 2002: 54; Boden 1992, 1994; De Bono 1992). Another line explores, against the background of this ‘myth of genius’ (Weisberg 1993), how creativity can be processed or managed on an organisational basis when carrying out creative projects. The latter position can roughly be subdivided into two. The first is the business school/consultant type of argument, which is mostly interested in how to capitalise on creativity and provide clients with ‘managerial prescriptions’

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<sup>6</sup> Although Throsby himself uses the term ‘cultural industries’ in his original text, according to Goto (2013: 12) it could be virtually identified with the creative industries since, in my reading, he uses the term in a very different sense from that of Horkheimer and Adorno (1991[1944]).

(Prichard 2002: 270) on how to tame it and make it useful for their businesses (e.g. Amabile 1997; Amabile et al. 1996; Kao 1989, 1997; Oldham and Cummings 1996; Sternberg et al. 1997). The second line of argument, which this thesis follows, focuses on the dynamics of the interaction between creativity and business/management in creative projects.

In other words, the dichotomy between art and commerce is one of the central frames of reference against which to develop arguments related to the creative industries. As Throsby (2001) points out, '(t)he history of art is replete with accounts of how important money has been to many artists, from painters of the Florentine Renaissance, through Mozart, Beethoven, and Stravinsky, to any number of writers, visual artists and musicians working today' (98). Economist Richard Caves (2000, 2003) argues that the dichotomy between the mindset of artists (who care only for the artistic qualities of their work: 'art for art's sake'), and the mindset of businesspeople trying to make money out of art, forms one of the most distinctive features of the creative industries, separating them from other industrial sectors.

This perspective seems to be especially prominent when we try to approach creative industries from an anthropological or sociological point of view. The anthropological or sociological arguments behind the interaction of art and commerce, or the moment 'when culture meets industry' (Negus 2006: 207), such as the industrial production, distribution, consumption, and commodification of cultural products, can be traced back to Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno of the Frankfurt School. They pointed out the critical presence of a 'culture industry' in post-war, mid-1940s mass society (Horkheimer and

Adorno 1991[1944]). Their argument was that culture industry habituated the mind of passive audiences to the logic of capitalism through cultural products, such as commercial films. For them, the culture industry made consumers less and less autonomous, so that they would tamely and uniformly sustain capitalist society.

Since then, this topic has developed along several different, but overlapping, paths of debate (cf. Throsby 2001: 11). These include cultural studies that mainly criticise Horkheimer and Adorno's position on culture industry by emphasising the autonomy of consumers who often 'decode' the media texts provided by media corporations to digest and appropriate them into their own lives (e.g. Ang 1985; Hall 1980; Mōri 2012); the so-called post-modern arguments that interrogate the previously clear modernist boundaries between, for example, 'high' and 'pop' culture, 'production' and 'consumption,' 'professional' and 'amateur,' 'official' and 'informal,' 'time' and 'space,' 'grand' and 'small' narratives, and 'reality' and 'virtual' (e.g. Baudrillard 1994[1981]; Harvey 1990; Jameson 1991; Lyotard 1984[1979]; McShine 1989); and the creative industry arguments that focus on 'creativity' as performed through individuals and organisations, and its politico/socio-economic implications (e.g. Caves 2000, 2003; Florida 2002; Goto 2013; Shapiro and Varian 1998; Throsby 2001). Anthropological or sociological approaches to this issue include the work of the sociologist Howard Becker (1982), who focused on the collaborative network and everyday practices facilitating the projects of artists and their collaborators (such as patrons, investors, distributors, and governments), and Pierre Bourdieu (1993), who conceived of the

realm of art as the field of competition in which relevant players struggle for a leading position. Media scholar Keith Negus (2006) criticised the abstractness of the key notions used in the debate surrounding the cultural industry (capitalism, power, mass audiences, and so on) and proposed shifting to a more individualistic analysis by using the framework of Becker and Bourdieu:

[...] I am suggesting that the study of cultural production should draw insights from Becker's art world of co-operative interactions and Bourdieu's field of cultural production made up of position-takings and struggles for position. Becker's symbolic interactionism and Bourdieu's structural sociology provide significant insights into the visible interactions and the less tangible structural forces through which power is manifested and contested during cultural production. It is my belief that a more sophisticated understanding of cultural production can be developed if we pursue the issues opened up by these approaches along with a willingness to follow Adorno in interrogating (rather than attempting to resolve) the tensions, paradoxes, and possibilities that are generated when culture meets industry. (207)

A number of case studies and anthropological studies suggest that the way in which art and commerce interact, and how they become interconnected in specific creative projects, depends heavily on their sociocultural contexts. On the basis of his experience of fieldwork in multiple creative projects (such as pottery, fashion magazines, and advertising), anthropologist Brian Moeran (2011) proposes viewing creativity in terms of the numerous constraints guiding the choices of creative personnel in the course of their work. Such constraints include material/technical, temporal, spatial, social, representational and economic issues. A case study on German theatres (Eikhof and Haunschild 2007) showed that there was no single standardised way for theatre managers (the management side) to get

along with their artists: their human resource management was highly personalised and heavily relied on one-to-one talks in cases of conflict between artists and theatre organisations. Art and commerce intersect among players in egalitarian as well as in horizontal relationships. As an example of the former, Moeran (2009) ethnographically depicts how an advertising campaign photo shoot in a Japanese studio was carried out by 'motley crews' including a client (advertiser company), an art director from an ad agency, models, freelance photographers, hairdressers, and make-up artists. He described the moment, right after the shoot had finished and the team members were preparing to leave, when a hairdresser asked a photographer to take an additional picture with an alternative effect as she thought it would be better than the ones already taken. This was declined by the art director, who insisted that 'each should know where to draw the line in terms of perfection' (974). As for the latter, marketing professor Yuichi Washida (2014) argues that the reason why Japanese home electronics companies failed to make their products design-oriented (in contrast with competitors such as Apple and Samsung) was because their top executives did not commit to interface design in their management practices.

Ethnographies and case studies also show that the boundary between arts and commerce is not as clear-cut as it appears. For example, anthropologist Sherry Ortner (2013) points out that independent films in the United States, which often try to place themselves on the arts side away from more commercially-orientated Hollywood films, actually represent 'a spectrum of what counts as independent films, with a more Hollywood-y end of

the spectrum and a more radically avant-garde and experimental end' (4). This has emerged as a result of 'cross-fertilization' (9) between major Hollywood studios. Similarly, anthropologist Andrew Bowsher (2014) explains how the discourse and practices of 'independent music' in the United States trying to place itself in contrast with 'major' labels developed in the middle of the capitalist US music market, benefitting from it. Artists, or artists' organisations, such as theatre actors in Germany (Eikhof and Haunschild 2007), Japanese hip-hop artists (Condry 2006), and small theatrical companies in the Tokyo area (Sato 1999), are unable to confine themselves to the logic of 'art for art's sake' if they are to continue their creative careers (e.g. to keep on being offered creative projects), but should find some middle ground between the twin poles of art and commerce by 'marketing' themselves to some degree on the scene.

The relationship between art and commerce is not always hostile, but is often a paradoxical mixture of cooperation and conflict, and their characteristics of interaction will change over time. Through interviews with a number of producers (management side) and directors (creative side) in the Japanese film industries, Yamashita and Yamada (2010) depict the 'subtle relationship' (*bimyou na kankei*) between producers and directors. An example of this is when a director demands that a producer constructs a separate or additional indoor set to shoot a better picture than could have been achieved outside, but the producer has to decline such a proposal due to a lack of funds:

If they argue this issue just as a matter of constraints, that they have no money to construct the set, producer and director enter an adversarial relationship. However, if they discuss it as a matter of how to shoot as good a picture as possible, their relationship becomes a cooperative one. (121)

Anthropologist Tejaswini Ganti (2012) reports how the ‘corporatization’ of the Hindi film industry in Bombay (Bollywood) was first aspired to by the industry members, but regressed later into the standardised dichotomy between art and commerce:

While industry members asserted, in the late 1990s, that poor planning and the haphazard way of making films were the reasons for the poor rates of commercial success in the industry, since the mid-2000s, the lack of knowledge and absence of “passion” have been offered as the reasons for the continued commercial disappointments, despite the introduction of organization, discipline, and professionalism into the industry. (276)

This thesis mainly follows the trajectory of the above lines of argument concerned with the dynamic interactions between art and commerce, examining them in terms of ethnographic complexity. Nevertheless, one of this thesis’s major points of difference will be in the way it approaches ‘creativity.’ To my reading, many studies (especially anthropological studies) set creativity (and not commerce) at the centre of their analysis, as pointed out comprehensively in the above argument of Moeran (2011). Some influential anthropological studies on creative industries tend to celebrate the ‘improvisation’ among creative players (e.g. Ingold and Hallam 2007: 1) but pay much less attention to the business players and how the two sides interact in actually carrying out their creative projects. There is even an implicit tendency among anthropologists to advocate creative players as naïve ones who would otherwise be easily and one-sidedly exploited and constrained by the capital

power of the Euro-American entertainment conglomerates. In other words, in their analysis of creative industries they tend to celebrate the power of creativity against commercial force but also tend not to examine creativity in terms of its interaction with commerce. Anthropologist Sherry Ortner (2013) confesses, regarding the independent filmmakers in the United States:

At one level, of course, they are themselves full of unexamined elements of the dominant ideology, and of various political and cultural contradictions, just like Hollywood movies. How could they not be? They are part of American culture too. But insofar as one is sympathetic with what they are trying to do, it does not make sense to deconstruct and demystify them as if they were Hollywood movies. Rather, the effort must be to figure out how and in what ways they are constructing themselves as critiques of, and alternatives to, Hollywood and the dominant cultural order. (10)

In contrast, this thesis sets ‘commerce’ at the centre of its analysis of the creative industries to counterbalance the existing analytical bias in favour of creators (creativity). The central character in the thesis’s ethnographical case study is an entrepreneurial businessperson; the creators take backseat roles. This thesis therefore ethnographically examines the interaction between art and commerce from a commercial perspective. By doing so, it suggests a more dichotomous perspective to examine the creative projects, not in terms of *dualism*, but in terms of the *duality* of art and commerce (e.g. Jeffcutt and Pratt 2002: 226). In other words, it examines how creative projects are driven by creators *and* businesspeople, and how creativity and business constrain (and accelerate) *each other*. On this basis, this thesis will ethnographically depict the dynamics behind the dichotomic

orientations of ‘art for art’s sake’ and ‘let’s make money’, investigating how they interact and compromise in creative business.

### *Anime as a creative industry*

This section examines how anime and anime studies fit into the above arguments on creative industries. The central focus will be on the dichotomy of art versus commerce in terms of anime, especially the way the above attitudes towards the creators (the creative side) become even more intense when it comes to mainstream studies on anime. The studies are so dedicated to interrogating the world-wide exploitative capitalist power of the Euro-American entertainment conglomerates that they are over-cautious about coping with the business aspects of anime, thus over-advocating creators and fans as promising an alternative to the globalisation of the creative industries. The ethnography of this thesis also intends to function as a counterbalance to this analytical bias.

Few disagree that anime (or animation) should be included in the definition of creative industries as reviewed above. In terms of the dichotomy of art versus commerce, post-war Japanese anime (on which most anime studies focus) could be evaluated as a heavily commercial-oriented sector. This could be emphasised further if we classify animation in general in terms of its country of origin (animation in Canada, France, the UK, Russia, the Czech Republic, and so on), its materiality or methodology (computer graphics animation, cel animation, cut-out animation, shadowgraph animation, clay animation, and

so on), and its history (post-war Japanese anime was developed in parallel with the development of Japan's commercial television stations to provide them with entertainment content) (e.g. Tsugata 2005). In other words, there are many other art-oriented animations created in other parts of the world, using different methods, and at different points of time. Anime is thus driven dually by the needs of art and commerce.

The literature on Japanese anime, however, has rarely approached it from the perspective of the creative industries, or from this dichotomy of art versus commerce. Since its global rise in the late 1990s, anime has captured the interest of scholars outside Japan. It is seen as 'a cultural phenomenon worthy of being taken seriously, both sociologically and aesthetically' (Napier 2005: 4). Anime has been approached from various perspectives, including film studies (e.g. LaMarre 2009; McCarthy 1999; Napier 2001, 2005; Newitz 1995; Ruh 2004), media and communication studies (e.g. Steinberg 2009, 2012), political economy (e.g. Daliot-Bul 2009; Nakamura and Onouchi eds. 2006; Otmazgin 2013; Valaskivi 2013), cultural studies (e.g. Choo 2011; Iwabuchi 2002, 2007), and fandom/consumer studies (Azuma 2001; Eng 2012a, 2012b; Kinsella 1998; LaMarre 2006; Leonard 2005; Miyadai 2006; Morikawa 2003; Napier 2007; Ōtsuka 2004; Saitō 2000, 2009; Thiam 2013). The perspective of approaching anime in terms of the creative industries has rarely been proposed. It seems odd that anime studies have not yet made the connection with the debate on the creative industries, although the transnational interest in both areas (anime and the creative industry) arose around the same time. Between the late 1990s and the early

2000s, anime, represented by *Pokémon*, was recognised as playing a substantial role in the rise of ‘cool Japan’ in the midst of the country’s protracted recession (e.g. McGray 2002). At the same time, many countries and international organisations (spearheaded by Britain) started to contextualise creativity as one of the most prominent sources of economic growth, job creation, and national branding, to compete in the global economy.

This omission in the literature on the creative industries (especially in terms of art versus commerce) is also observable in anthropological studies on anime. Although they do focus on what cultural anthropologist Ian Condry (2013) refers to as the ‘social side’ (2) of anime (the individuals and organisations who deal with anime and the organisational, institutional, and socio-cultural settings within which anime is created, produced, distributed, and consumed), the central focus of these studies is on anime fans/creators and their improvisational interactions (e.g. Allison 2000, 2006, 2009; Condry 2009, 2013; Ito 2012a, 2012b), paying little attention to anime businesspeople and their interactions with the creative side. They generally follow the tendency observed in the anthropological studies on the creative industries to set creativity (and not commerce) at the centre of their analysis. They sometimes even try to exclude the commercial aspects of anime from their analysis. For example, Napier (2005) clearly declares that ‘(i)nvestigating anime as a cultural force is even more fascinating than inquiring into its commercial aspects’ (8). Similarly, although Condry (2013) admits that the anime production process is carried out by both creators and ‘sponsors’ and ‘merchandisers’ (3), he restricts his argument on anime so as not to ‘follow

the money', in other words to ask questions which

[...] give us the opportunity to rethink how we understand the emergence and spread of distinctive cultural forms as something other than a game of "follow the money." Instead, we need to follow the activity, the energy, the commitment of those who care, starting with what is most meaningful to them. (2)

Why does the anthropology of anime try so hard to keep itself away from the commercial sides of anime? To my mind, the reason seems to lie in a certain orientation that many anthropological studies seems to share in contextualising anime: they use anime (and its creativity) as a case to interrogate the cultural globalisation 'from above' that is represented by the Euro-American entertainment conglomerates, and to propose alternative paths of cultural globalisation 'from below.' For them, the globalisation of anime is a perfect case representing such globalisation at the grass-roots level.<sup>7</sup> The transnational and emergent connectivity between anime creators and fans that is generated by their altruistic motivation to share their enthusiasm and love of anime, enhanced by the Internet, is contextualised as the critical (and embraceable) case by which they could counteract the cultural globalisation that is carried forward by the capitalistic power of the Euro-American entertainment conglomerates. In other words, many major anthropological studies on anime are so dedicated to opposing the exploitive capitalist power of the Euro-American

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<sup>7</sup> In my view, globalisation points to the rapid enhancement of cross-border communication and intersection between people, goods, capital, information, and so on. Such articulations, especially enabled by the Internet, obscure the previous modernist boundaries and distinctions, such as compressing the sense of time and space, deconstructing the institutional borders of nation states, and de-centring the politico-economic world order. These articulations also make such global-scale encounters and assemblages more unstructured, random, contingent, and fractal (for the arguments on globalisation in general, see Appadurai 1990, 1996; Comaroff and Comaroff 2000; Hall 1995; Hannertz 1996; Harvey 1990; Mazzarella 2004; Ong and Collier 2005; Tomlinson 1999).

entertainment conglomerates that they often end up being overcautious about coping with the commercial side of anime, and over-advocating creators and fans as providing an alternative globalisation model for the creative industries and as vulnerable players to be otherwise easily exploited by capitalism.

For example, in his book on the globalisation of anime entitled *The Soul of Anime: Collaborative Creativity and Japan's Media Success Story*, Ian Condry (2013) emphasises how anime 'went global without the push of major corporations' and how anime 'thus represents a kind of globalization from below' (2). According to him, the key success factor behind anime's globalisation is 'collaborative creativity' among the relevant players:

I argue that collaborative creativity, which operates across media industries and connects official producers to unofficial fan production, is what led to anime's global success. Put simply, success arises from social dynamics that lead people to put their energy into today's media worlds. This collective social energy is what I mean by the "soul" of anime. (2)

Through the ethnography of anime production studios and relevant players in the Japanese anime sector, Condry depicts how anime creators and fans transnationally share and generate anime's 'soul' through collaborating at the grass-roots level. Such collaborations include the creative resonance between anime creators (observed in, for example, script meetings held at the anime production studio), communication between creators and fans around the world, and the 'creative' activities of online/offline fan communities (such as fansubs).<sup>8</sup> What Condry tends *not* to focus on is the interaction between creators and management: he does

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<sup>8</sup> 'Fansub' indicates an anime which has been translated into a non-Japanese language by non-Japanese fans, subtitled into the translated language, and distributed by fans on the Internet, usually for free. A 'fansubber' is an anime fan who makes and distributes fansubs. Technically speaking, therefore, to make a fansub of an anime infringes the legitimate rights of its holders (cf. Mihara 2010a: 11).

not refer to the commercial side of anime, in other words he does not ‘follow the money’, as quoted above. Moreover, he only highlights the altruistic aspects of the interaction between art and commerce, ignoring the discrepancies between the two in carrying the anime projects forward. He briefly depicts, for example, one ‘stressful’ meeting held in an anime production studio regarding the commercial side of anime. In this meeting, young production operators (the management side of anime) were harshly questioned by their boss about why they were unable to gather key anime frames punctually from the animators who were commissioned to draw them. Right after depicting the ‘harshness of this producers’ meeting,’ however, Condry quickly turns his eyes to the ‘world of animators’ and admires ‘the social energy and the comfortable camaraderie among’ the creative players in the Japanese anime sector (139). The commercial side of anime has a very insignificant position in his argument as a whole. Indeed, in the concluding chapter of his book, he reaffirms that globalisation ‘is not always driven by major corporations and the West.’ He emphasises that anime is ‘a remarkable example of contemporary media partly because it is [...] difficult to capitalize on, yet it remains a sustainable and vibrant media form’ which ‘draws our attention to grassroots and independent efforts that build economic and social networks that gradually expanded beyond their original locales’ (215). In the last paragraph of the chapter he concludes:

I don’t deny that corporate and national power often guide collective activities, but too much focus on corporate underpinnings of media can give a distorted perspective of what makes media important. Questions surrounding the collaborative creativity of anime allow us to map other kinds of collectiveness and organizing principles and thereby allow us to see our own, however modest, roles in shaping the world around us. [...] By considering how our cultural

practices support, undermine, or alter entrenched political and economic configurations, or simply make an open space for collaborative energy to build, I hope this book has helped illuminate some of the ways that alternative cultural phenomena can emerge, take shape, and spread. (217)

Similarly, in her ethnographic research on the transnational spread of anime fans (*otaku* in Japanese term), cultural anthropologist Mizuko Ito (2012a) declares, in a celebratory manner, that *otaku* is ‘arguably the most wired fandom on the planet’ and tries to examine *otaku* culture’s ‘common set of characteristics that make it recognizable as unique cultural movement’ (xi). Such characteristics include, according to Ito, its ‘transnational nature’ (xxvii) and ‘subcultural credibility’, which refuses ‘elites and the mainstream’ (xvii) and ‘totalizing global narratives such as nationalism,’ and which is unified under the ‘malleable narrative platform and mode of participatory niche media engagement’ that enable *otaku* ‘to engage in peer-to-peer exchange of knowledge and appropriative DIY creation’ (xviii). Focusing especially on fansub activities, Ito (2012b) argues how fansubbers and their ‘ethics’ (which preclude fansubbers from making money, and require them to withdraw their fansubs after official episodes are made available in their countries for the sake of the global development of anime culture) offer ‘a window into the complex negotiation between media industries and fans as they navigate their entry into a networked and digital age’ (179) and a ‘model’ (180) of the hybridity of what Appadurai and Breckenridge (1988) calls ‘public culture’, which ‘values both amateur noncommercial and professional commercial contributions’ (Ito 2012b: 180). Ito however rarely examines such

a ‘complex negotiation between media industries and fans’ (179): she only celebrates the rebellious nature of the transnational *otaku* culture, and does not take into account the perspectives of the anime industry (for example, she does not ask what anime businesspeople think about fansubs, or whether they are as happy as anime fans about fansubs).

Other anthropological studies on anime that (at least partially) share such an orientation include the work of anthropologist Anne Allison (2006), who ethnographically examines the expansion of multiple Japanese anime and merchandise projects for children (such as *Pokémon*) into the United States, and the work of anthropologist Saya Shiraishi (2013), who tracks how certain Japanese anime works (such as *Doraemon*) expanded into Eastern and South-East Asian regions (especially Indonesia) through the transnational network of relevant players. Assuming that globalisation is now decentralised – i.e. that globalisation no longer has a single centre in the West, but now has multiple centres, including Japan (cf. Iwabuchi 2002) – Allison (2006) evaluates the huge popularity of *Pokémon*-related products and services in the United States as a ‘(r)emarkable’ case of such decentralised globalisation: ‘this fantasy fare [...] came not from Disney or Hollywood but from Japan’ (3). Allison identifies ‘polymorphous perversity’ – the ‘continual change and the stretching of desire across ever-new zones/bodies/products’ (277) – and ‘techno animism’ – ‘the forefronting of technology that is animated into spirits, creatures, and intimacies of various sorts’ (Ibid.) – as the two key qualities that can be observed in the ways in which *Pokémon* and other Japanese anime projects encode ‘intimacy, consumerism, and techno-

social interactions' (14) into their interrelated configuration of goods and services. Allison further finds the 'seeds' (31) of alternative capitalism in the consuming practices of the global youth, who immerse themselves into *Pokémon's* world and use it as a filter to interact with, connect to, and (re)imagine the world today (30). According to her, such a capacity to produce connections is the one 'that late-stage capitalism threatens to take away' (31) from youth. Shiraishi (2013), similarly, emphasises that the transnational spread of anime (and manga, i.e. Japanese comics) highlights 'the new model of globalization that is not led by large capital' but is generated by 'the proactive movements of consumers' (29; for somewhat self-serving arguments by *otaku* themselves on how such *otakus* led the globalisation of anime against the global big players and institutions, see Leonard 2005).

The anthropology of anime also follows the tendency of the anthropology of creative industries to assume that creativity and creators are vulnerable to commercial forces in the political economy of Japan. Allison (2009), for example, highlights the paradox that Japanese youths are portrayed in the country as the source of creativity for Japanese popular culture at the same time that they are seen as the source of Japan's precarious future in the context of the global cultural economy:

Youth assume a critical position, I argue, in this shift of production away from material things to the immateriality of information, communication and affect. On one hand, the flexibilization of the economy renders youth socio-economically precarious. [...] On the other hand, an interminable childishness of flexible attachments, frenetic mobility and fictional role-playing is at the very heart of J-cool. [...] So, when such a construct of youth sells commodities, it is claimed as 'gross national cool'. But when real youth fail to get steady jobs or reproduce, as did their parents, they are castigated for not assuring Japan's future – what gets

rendered as a crisis in reproduction. (90-91)

This somewhat adversarial attitudes towards the commercial sides of anime (cf. ‘corporate power,’ ‘media industries,’ and ‘large capital’) observed in many anthropological anime studies can be seen as trapped in what cultural anthropologist William Mazzarella (2004) calls ‘The Formula’ of approaching the process of globalisation ethnographically. Reviewing the anthropological literature on globalisation, Mazzarella finds a striking common tendency – The Formula – among its authors to criticise the imperialistic presence of large capital and to take the ‘neo-vitalist position’ of romanticising the ‘energies’ (348) among the players on the grass-roots level. Mazzarella warns that such an analytical attitude to separate the two sides (and make them confront each other) critically overlooks the ethnographic moment of ‘mediation’ between the two sides which inevitably occurs in the process of globalisation.

If the cultural imperialism thesis had underplayed the complexity of reception, then the active audience model was blind in the other direction. [...] by locating the site of politics and complexity at the level of the family den, it diverted critical attention away from the complex of institutions, mediations, and interests that used to be known as the culture industries. The ironic upshot was that reception studies actually helped to perpetuate the image of a monolithic, seamlessly functioning capitalist culture-machine, kept from achieving total hegemony only by the mischievous “agency” of what used to be called the masses. [...] It was out of an increasingly desperate sense of the intransigence and inertia of these binaries [...] that the programmatic Formula of globalization studies emerged. (350)

The orientation observed above for the anthropology of anime to use anime as a case to interrogate cultural globalisation ‘from above’ as represented by the Euro-American

entertainment conglomerates could, I would argue, be seen as one of the cases of such a 'Formula.' The strikingly common assertions among the anthropological studies on anime that they should not follow the money – i.e. they should not put analytical weight on 'corporate power,' 'large capital,' 'Disney' or 'Hollywood', but on the vital 'energy' of anime creators and *otaku* culture that would question the logic of 'media industries' – vividly highlight how anthropological studies on anime are 'diverting' their 'critical attentions' ever more away from the commercial side of anime, especially its interactions ('mediation' in the word of Mazzarella) with the creative side.

One of the major concerns that arises from such 'neo-vitalist' advocacies among the anthropology of anime towards anime creators/fans is that they might risk essentialising the behaviours and discourses of anime creators/fans to make them serve their goal of attacking global capitalism. Terminologies such as 'soul,' 'common set of characteristics,' 'unique cultural movement,' 'ethics,' and 'animism' that are used uncritically to explain the sociality of anime creators/fans heighten this suspicion. Condry (2013) tries to de-mystify his concept of the 'soul' of anime, but his attempt seems at most only partially successful:

I would underscore that this "soul" is not some kind of internal essence, like the problematic notions of the "soul of Japan" or the "soul of the samurai," as if there is some unchanging central, generative core that explains everything about anime. Quite the contrary: The soul I refer to here is best envisioned as a kind of energy that arises from the ways anime connects people; a connection that operates as a conduit of interest and activity; a soul, in other words, that arises out of collective action. (30)

When stated in such a way, one might wonder how can we draw an analytical line in terms of essentialism versus constructivism between the ‘soul of Japan’ as a generative core of anime, and the ‘soul’ of anime as ‘a kind of energy’ that ‘arises out of collective action.’ These essentialist tendencies might be understood in the context of ‘strategic essentialism’, i.e. ‘*strategic* use of positivist essentialism in a scrupulously visible political interest’ (Spivak 1996[1985]: 214, emphasis in the original), which refers to ‘the ways in which subordinate or marginalized social groups may temporarily put aside local differences in order to forge a sense of collective identity through which they band together in political movements’ (Dourish 2008). In the case of anime studies, they seem to understand anime creators and fans as such a subordinate group to be strategically essentialised to achieve their ‘political interest’ to deconstruct the grand narrative of global capitalism. Although this strategy contributes to visualising an otherwise invisible subordinate group of people (cf. Spivak 1996[1985]), the significant by-product of this strategy is that it inevitably excludes people from its analytical scope who do not fit into such a ‘strategic essence.’ Such excluded people include ‘more subaltern’ people like the coloured and/or lower-class and/or lesbian women excluded from a feminist movement dominated by white, middle-class, and heterosexual women (McCormick et al. 1998: 497-498), as well as ‘less subaltern’ people like adult men excluded from the transnational humanitarian framework of war-afflicted civilians, who are strongly presupposed to be women and children (Carpenter 2005). Other examples include the better-off minority people in Norway who were ignored by journalists

looking for ‘someone who had made it against all odds’ (Eide 2010: 76), and the San livestock farmers in South Africa who do not fit into their traditional image of hunter-gatherers (Robins 2001). In the case of anime studies, I would argue that anime businesspeople fall into this category of being excluded from analytical perspectives. Since they technically belong to the commercial/capital side of anime, they do not fit into the strategic essence of the non-commercial energy of anime creators and fans.

The anthropology of anime’s level of caution towards the commercial side of anime and of advocacy towards anime fans/creators might be seen as entering the cautionary zone as anthropological arguments: their caution might become ‘over-caution’, and their advocacy might become ‘over-advocacy.’ Their firm (political) position taking (see also Linnekin 1992) in approaching anime might create an analytical bias that overlooks the commercial side of anime, especially its interactions with the creative side.

Approaching anime from the perspective of the creative industries – especially in terms of the dichotomic interactions between art versus commerce from the viewpoint of anime businesspeople (specifically the entrepreneur whom the ethnography of this thesis focuses) will, I argue, contribute to counterbalance this analytical bias in mainstream anthropological studies on anime. The approach of this thesis will, moreover, suggest one possible way in which the anthropology of anime can be freed from the ‘impasse’ of the ‘Formula’ (Mazzarella 2004), and suggest when and how can it stop their strategic essentialism (cf. Spivak 1993, 1996[1985]). Very few anthropological studies approach

anime (and its relevant creative projects) in terms of the dichotomy of art versus commerce (e.g. Kinsella 2000; Morisawa 2015), although the productivity of analysing the anime sector in terms of its ‘complex duality of artistry and business characteristic’ (Daliot-Bul 2014: 87) has existed for a while. This thesis intends to fill this gap.

### ***Indo-Japanese relations (1): an overview***

The next two sections briefly overview the Indo-Japanese relationship from modern times to the present. The aim is to set the background against which the ethnography (an *Indo-Japanese* business project) of this thesis unfolds, and to establish the context against which we will explore the implications that ethnography might have on Japan’s contemporary relationship with India (and Asia). I do not intend either to cover the whole detailed history of the Indo-Japanese relationship in detail (this is beyond the scope of this thesis), or to make essentialist arguments about the differences between Japanese and Indian people. Rather, I wish to highlight epistemological aspects about how India has been recognised, situated, and approached in Japan’s vision towards Asia. In this sense, the following overview is ‘not a history in the proper sense of the term but rather an analytical account of identity politics and the factors surrounding its development in different periods of Japanese history’ (Befu 2001: 123).

The overview would be summarised as follows. While Asia as a whole has been less comprehensively approached than the West by Japan throughout its modern history,

India occupies an even more peripheral position within Japan's Asian vision. Japan's orientation towards Asia has heavily gravitated towards Eastern and South-East Asia. The interaction between Japan and India could thus be summarised as *surechigai* (two ships passing in the night): the two have failed to establish a comprehensive relationship with each other. This situation has nonetheless changed recently. India has emerged as a rising global economic superpower, and Japan has come to recognise the necessity of enhancing its politico-economic relationship with India to help reboot its stagnating economy. A paradoxical gap is thus created: there is momentum for Japan to do business with India, but Japan's contextualised/accumulated unfamiliarity with India still exists. This gap has come to be considered as the lucrative one to be arbitrated by some entrepreneurs in both countries. By doing so, many of them – from the grass-roots level to the executive level – emphasise the differences in business customs between Japan and India as a significant gap to be resolved. The discrepancies between the 'Japanese' and 'Indian' ways of doing business, and how such discrepancies can be resolved, is thus one of the significant areas of focus through which we can examine the contemporary features of Japan's relationship with India specifically and Asia in general. The case entrepreneur tracked ethnographically by this thesis found the aforementioned gap worth arbitrating, and the discrepancies in Indo-Japanese business customs were one of the biggest issues he had to resolve in keeping his business project afloat. The ethnography of this thesis – especially in terms of the case entrepreneur's business negotiations with his Indian counterparts – will thus shed light on

crucial aspects of Japan's relation-building with India (and Asia). The rest of this section, and the following section, is devoted to examining this context.

Asia as a whole has been much less comprehensively approached than the West by Japan throughout its modern history. How to approach Asia has been an 'aporia' (Matsumoto 2000: 99) for Japan throughout its pre-war modern history, starting with Japan's aspiration to join the 'West' to protect itself from being colonised by Western imperialism and thus breaking off with its neighbouring Asian countries (already colonised by Western powers).<sup>9</sup> While the 'West' has constantly been the objective for Japan to 'catch up' – the 'West' as 'the most important others' (Majima 2014: 5) for Japan – Asia has rarely been approached or understood by Japan in a comprehensive or systematic way. According to historian Hideo Kobayashi (2012), the development of Asian area studies in modern Japan was only related to the country's imperialist interests in the region: the Korean Peninsula, Taiwan, and Manchuria (Northeast China) around the Russo-Japanese war (around 1910); the whole of China around the time of the Manchurian Incident and the Sino-Japanese war in the 1930s; and South-Eastern Asia when Japan entered Pacific War to occupy the region in the 1940s (i-ii). Japanese people's recognition of Asia seems to have been diverse and inconsistent. Some Japanese viewed Asian countries and people through the lens of the West or of Western imperialism/orientalism, as prospective or actual colonies of Japan, 'lifelines' for the Japanese empire's 'self-sufficiency and self-defence,' 'uncivilised' and 'passive' people, and

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<sup>9</sup> This desire to get away from Asia is commonly known as *datsuaron* (escape from Asia), a term coined by Yukichi Fukuzawa in 1885 (for the full text, see Takeuchi 1993: 323-326).

so on (e.g. Sakai 2007: 165-183). A few activists and artists nevertheless sought to establish ‘true solidarity’ with Asian people (e.g. Miyazaki 1993[1902], Yokomitsu 2008[1931]). Such attempts were, however, eventually absorbed into the totalitarian ‘ultra-nationalistic’ (cf. Maruyama 2010[1946]) framework of the Great East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere, the collapse of which in 1945 suggested that Japan’s nearly 100-year approach to Asia since the Meiji Restoration had totally failed (for an overview of Japan’s politico-intellectual approach to Asia in its pre-war modern history, see Nakajima 2014; Takeuchi 1993).

Cultural anthropologist (and ex-Commissioner for Cultural Affairs in the Japanese government) Tamotsu Aoki (2011) suggests that one of the most significant perspectives missing from modern Japan’s approaches towards Asia is their indifference to approaching the Asian region in its contemporaneousness (i.e. to approaching the Asian region ethnographically). Reviewing the text of Yukichi Fukuzawa’s (1995[1875]) *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization* and Tenshin Okakura’s (1986[1903]) *The Ideals of the East* (according to Aoki, both influential in forming modern Japan’s vision of Asia), Aoki points out that both texts fail to grasp Asia’s diversity and multiplicity, concluding that only Japan could patronize Asia without considering the possibility of collaborating in a more egalitarian way.

While the ‘West’ has constantly been the ‘goal’ for Japan’s collective modernisation efforts, Asia (including India) seems to remind the country of its ambivalence in this regard. Is Japan an ‘Asian’ country or a ‘Western’ country (see Takeuchi 1993; Majima 2014; Matsumoto 2000)? Japan’s awkwardness when viewing Asia (and vice versa) has been

manifested in several (ethnographic) writings. These include the travel text 'What I Thought in India' (*Indo de Kangaeta Koto*) by a Japanese novelist (Hotta 1957). When he visited India in the 1950s, the author met a local old man in a farming village outside Delhi who had fought with the Indian National Congress for the country's independence. The old man embarrassed Hotta by telling him what a 'strange country' Japan was. Japan provided a 'dream for independence' for the Asian region because of its victory in the Russo-Japanese war; it had amazed the region through its 'rapid industrialisation', and 'tried hard to achieve colonial liberation by knocking down the Anglo-American imperialism' at the beginning of the WW2. Nevertheless, Japan had also disappointed (and even betrayed) Asia by allying with the western imperialist countries to make the region 'into the colonies of their own Japanese imperialism' (55-56). This resonates with what anthropologist Jennifer Robertson (1998) identified as 'the ambivalence of the modern Japanese nation', which has 'an eclectic composite of Asian and Euro-American elements' (23) manifested in the 'androgynous' (Ibid.) nature of Japanese popular culture, such as the Takarazuka Revue, the all-female musical troupe founded and developed in the interwar period. About three decades after Hotta wrote his book, Indian scholar Savitri Vishwanathan (1992) pointed to India's 'feeling of ambivalence' towards Japan's colonialism and modernisation in a way that strikingly resonated with the old man's words:

Although India never became a colony of Japan, her own colonial experience does influence her interpretation of Japan. Japan, in fact, is criticized more harshly for her imperialist and colonialist policies than the Western nations or even Britain, which had enslaved India directly. At the same time, as Japan is an Asian nation,

her successes over the West generate a sense of pride. Hence, there is a feeling of ambivalence. (288)

India nonetheless occupies an even more peripheral position within Japan's already incomprehensive Asian vision. Japan's orientation towards Asia has heavily gravitated towards Eastern and South-Eastern Asia. While these areas had a more 'direct' communication with Japan through, for example, Japan's colonisation/occupation of the region and the region's resistance to (or strategic usage of) the country's colonialism, India occupied a more peripheral position in pre-war modern Japan's imagination of the continent (cf. Takeuchi 1993: 98). India was neither colonised nor occupied by Japan (cf. Vishwanathan 1992: 288), and participated in Japan's Great East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere project only as an 'observer.'

There even seems to be a gap in the Japanese people's sense of closeness between Eastern and South-Eastern Asia (e.g. China and Korea) and Southern Asia (India). The former was considered 'closer' to Japan, while the latter was considered 'less close.' Reviewing how modern Japan was understood by Asians through their writings in that era, scholar of Chinese (and Asian) literature Yoshimi Takeuchi (1993) analogised India, China and Korea as a 'tourist,' 'transient' and 'neighbour' respectively to modern Japan (81-82).

Under such conditions, the interaction between Japan and India could be summarised as *surechigai* (two ships passing in the night). The two countries have been communicating only in a fragmental manner, and have failed to establish a comprehensive

relationship. Masatoshi Konishi (1992) reviews the brief history of the Indo-Japanese relationship:

Throughout the history, there seems to have been a sort of *surechigai*, or an unfortunate case of “two ships passing in the night,” between India and Japan [...]. When “*Tenjiku*” was admired by the Japanese, India did not know of Japan’s existence. When India needed Japan’s help, the latter showed her colonialist face. When Japan turned to India after the war, the latter was too busy with its own affairs. When the situation changed in 1960s, India was no longer an idol for Japan. (305)

The *surechigai* from Japan side resonates with India’s *surechigai* with Japan. For example, in his reminiscences on India’s modernisation, anthropologist Arjun Appadurai (1996) recalls that Subhas Chandra Bose’s attempt to achieve Indian independence with Japan’s help (such as in establishing the INA, the Indian National Army) was pushed aside by ‘Gandhi’s nonviolence and Nehru’s Fabian Anglophilia,’ which eventually made Bose and his comrades ‘unwelcome heroes, poor cousins in the story of the nationalist struggle for Indian independence’ (160). Similarly, Savitri Vishwanathan (1992) argued that it is ‘difficult to conclude’ that this experience, i.e. INA’s failure to liberate India from British imperialism with Japan’s assistance, ‘kindled Indian interest in a deeper study of Japan’ (284-285).

Such an Indo-Japanese *surechigai* (and the peripheralisation of India in Japan’s vision of Asia) continued in the post-war Indo-Japanese relationship in a different way. India had almost nothing to do with the ‘wartime responsibility,’ ‘massacre,’ or ‘wartime sexual violence’ of which Japan was accused by the Eastern and South-Eastern Asian countries.

India became one of Japan's most important Asian partners for a short time right after the Second World War, since it was relatively easy for Japan to resume its post-war relationship with India compared to the Eastern and South-Eastern Asian countries, which had been directly affected by Japan during the war (Yamazaki and Takahashi eds. 1993: 147; see also Kobayashi 2012: 84-89). Nehru's peace-oriented diplomacy and his initiatives in the Asian-African Conference inspired the Japanese people to imagine India as 'the torch-bearer of world peace' (Konishi 1992: 301).<sup>10</sup> In the 1960s, however, the two countries began to part ways, and 'the era in which India or south Asia slip out of Japan's "Asia" had begun' (Yamazaki and Takahashi eds. 1993: 165). The Sino-Indian Border Conflict and the impasse of India's socialistic five-year plan meant the country was 'no longer an idol for Japan'; Japan started to be incorporated in the 'Western Bloc' in the framework of Cold War, and this estranged the country further from India, which remained non-aligned. South-Eastern Asian and Western countries became the main destination for Japanese industries' FDI and exports that initiated the country's high-growth period (Kobayashi 2012: 90-94, 101; Yamazaki and Takahashi eds. 1993: 162-168). By the 1970s, India (south Asian region) had become the blind spot of Japan's Asian vision:

[...] the establishment of ASEAN<sup>11</sup> made Japanese political economy clearly distinguish south-east Asia and south Asia. At the same time, ironically, south Asia started to fall off from Japanese people's geographic vision of 'Asia' as well. Even serious scholars started to argue that Japanese could only culturally and emotionally understand the people living in the east of Arakan Yoma and that the

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<sup>10</sup> Nehru's visit to Japan in 1957 was enthusiastically welcomed by the Japanese people (Yamazaki and Takahashi eds. 1993: 154-162, 242-244) and was described as the 'heyday' (*zecchou*) of the Indo-Japanese relationship (243).

<sup>11</sup> ASEAN was established in 1967.

westside of Arakan is a completely different world. (Yamazaki and Takahashi eds. 1993: 166)

[...] in terms of political economy, south Asian countries including India got wedged between ASEAN countries and the oil producers in western Asia from the perspectives of Japanese. As for India, the amount of newspaper coverage was relatively small. Japanese people have neither given their constant mind to the country nor paid careful attentions to the big incidents occurred in the country. Japanese TV programs tend to broadcast only exotic Hindu rituals and landscapes of 'mysterious places' to which even Indians would rarely visit. They often do not tell us how Indian people actually live their lives and what they think. (268)

India's peripheral position in Japan seemed to function as an 'antithesis' to the Japanese mainstream in its high-growth period (mainly generated by exporting products to the Euro-American market). For example, Suzuki Motors, Japan's middle-ranking automobile company, nowadays dominates the Indian automobile market and is considered one of the most successful Japanese companies in India. However, when they entered the Indian market in the 1980s, their main motivation was to avoid the United States market – the major battleground for Japanese automobile industries – and avoid competing directly with Toyota, Nissan, and Honda, which were becoming symbols of Japan's economic success (Shimada 2011: 98-99). Osamu Suzuki, a CEO of Suzuki Motors, recollected that before deciding to enter India he had an image of the country as 'a big country, where snakes dance to music, and of elephants' (Bhargava 2006: 10). India also attracted Japanese youths who could not adapt to Japan's corporatist society (or suffered setbacks in campus activism in the 1960s and 1970s) and were thus looking for an alternative place (cf. Konishi 1992:

302). A number of backpacker-type novels, such as *Shinya Tokkyu* (Midnight Express) (Sawaki: 1994a, 1994b, 1994c, 1994d, 1994e, 1994f) and *Karukatta Paragon Hosteru* (Calcutta Paragon Hotel) (Tani 1984), and travel reports (Fujiwara 1972; Kuramae 1986; Senoo 1991; Shiina 1988) on India were published between the 1970s and late 1990s, which made India bear a distinct nuance for Japanese backpacker culture (cf. Azuma 2014: 23). This seemingly grass-roots (ethnographic?) orientation towards India nonetheless often still resulted in *surechigai* with local Indian people. Just as backpackers are often criticised as being interested less in communicating with locals and more in socialising with each other (e.g. Cohen 2003), the *Shinya-Tokkyu*-type Japanese backpackers were also often satirised as coming to India only to find themselves (e.g. Yamamatsu 2011: 86). It was also reported that Indians themselves did not always welcome Japanese backpackers and hippies (Yamazaki and Takahashi eds. 1993: 257-258; see also Yamamatsu 2008: 62).

The so-called *nihonjinron* (discourses on ‘Japaneseness’) that flourished throughout Japan’s high growth period, and the anthropologists involved in this, played an unexpected yet crucial role in this *surechigai* with India. In my understanding of *nihonjinron* literature, it could be understood as a culturist, self-serving and defensive account of the uniqueness of Japan and the Japanese people in response to criticism of Japan, mainly from Western countries (especially from the United States), as Japan rose in the world’s post-war political economy (cf. Aoki 1999; Befu 2001; Goodman 2005). While the areas in which *nihonjinron* tried to find the uniqueness of Japan and the Japanese people were unbelievably diverse –

from social structures (e.g. Nakane 1967, 1970), via psychoanalysis (e.g. Doi 1971), to bionomics/primatology (e.g. Imanishi 1951) (see also Dale 1986) – one uniform feature of *nihonjinron* literature is that it was mostly aimed at the West (especially the United States). In other words, the literature insists on the uniqueness of Japan and the Japanese people mainly in comparison with Western countries, and rarely in comparison with Asian countries, let alone India. As anthropologist Harumi Befu (2001) points out in his review of *nihonjinron* literature:

[...] in modern times, *Nihonjinron* writers have most frequently compared Japan with Western civilization or one or another Western country, particularly the United States, because Japan's political and economic fate is so heavily entangled in its relationship with the United States.

This is not to say that comparisons with non-Western countries are absent. A few books do compare Japan with China or Korea, but the West is overwhelmingly the principal 'Other' for *Nihonjinron* writers. (6)

Some *nihonjinron* writings do compare Japan with India. Some anthropologist writers on this issue, however, both expectedly and unexpectedly contribute to the alienation (i.e., the peripheralisation) of India from Japan and enhance the *surechigai* between the two countries. For example, Tadao Umesao, a well-known anthropologist and ecologist, published *Bunmei no Seitaishikan* (Ecological View on the History of Civilisation) in 1967 (Umesao 1967) on the basis of his participation in an academic expedition team to Afghanistan and India. In this best-selling book, he distinguishes India from South-East Asia as follows:

This might be difficult to verify anthropologically. However, it seems that we Japanese can be on the same wavelength (*kigokoro ga tsuujiuru*) as Southeast Asian people, but cannot do so (*taihen kimochi no tsuujinai ten ga aru*) with the people in India and to the west. I don't know why. [...] If there is chemistry among the citizens of the states, the chemistry between Japanese and Indian might not be so good. (206)

What this account seems to show is not how (in)valid this distinction is in terms of anthropology, but how strongly Umesao (and the Japanese who purchased his book) was oriented towards depicting Indians as alien and towards naturalising such alien-ness, i.e. to making such alien-ness a pre-anthropological 'truth.' Another anthropologist, Chie Nakane (1964), also considered that India was opposite to Japan in terms of social structures. In an article for the general magazine *Chūō Kōron*, which later formed the basis of her world famous book *Japanese Society* (Nakane 1970), she described Indian society as appreciating qualifications (*shikaku*) as its primal constitutive principle, and contrasted this with Japanese society, which appreciated place (*ba*) as its constitutive principle:

On this point, the biggest contrast is observed between Japanese and Indian societies. That is to say, Japanese group consciousness is very much based on *ba*, while in India it is based on *shikaku* (which is most symbolically manifested in caste – social groups basically distinguished on the basis of occupations and statuses). [...] I think that we could hardly find a pair of societies that manifest a bigger theoretical antithesis than Japan and India. (Nakane 1964: 52-53)

I have briefly reviewed the features of the Indo-Japanese *surechigai* and the peripheralisation of India in Japan's vision of Asia. While an Indo-Japanese relationship did develop, what is relevant to this thesis is that Japan's *surechigai* with India, and its peripheralisation of India, formed the basis of present-day assumptions about India (and its

people) as incomprehensible to Japan (and to the Japanese people), an assumption that would be observed in many players in my ethnography. Similarly, this is not to say that such peripheralisation and *surechigai* are unique to the Indo-Japanese relationship. I do not intend to argue that no such thing exists in Japan's relationship with, for example, South-East Asian countries, nor that such a phenomenon always occurs in the relationship between Japan and India. What I do intend to highlight, however, is how India has been articulated in Japan's overseas (especially Asian) vision in comparison with other parts of the world, which backlights the interests, self-images, and mainstream agendas of Japan itself. As Befu (2001) notes:

If some accident in history had made Japan's contrastive referent not the West but the Islamic world or India, *Nihonjinron* would probably concern itself with Japan's monogamous marriage system, which contrasts with Islamic polygamy, or with India's caste system or Hindu spiritualism. Out of such comparisons, *Nihonjinron* writers would no doubt have woven 'unique' patterns of Japanese culture, where Japan would be characterized as 'uniquely monogamous' society, one lacking a caste system and emphasizing social mobility, or one that is highly materialistic rather than spiritual. It is only because Japan and the West happen to share a similar kinship system (including monogamy), share a materialistic orientation, and lack a caste system that these phenomena are not at issue in the modern *Nihonjinron*. (6-7)

Some historical 'accidents' have made India a rising 'referent' for Japan's political economy – especially in the context of globalising anime – in the ethnographic present in which I conducted my fieldwork. In the following section, I examine how the above backgrounds provide (and develop into) the context in which the case ethnography of this thesis unfolds.

### ***Indo-Japanese relations (2): the ethnographic present***

This section overviews the key features of the Indo-Japanese relationship against which the ethnographic case studies develop. It firstly shows that Japan's peripheralisation of, and *surechigai* with, India still remain in contemporary Japan. It will next examine how this context has changed as India has risen as a global economic superpower, becoming a potential partner for Japan's political economy that cannot be ignored.

The current political economy of the Asian region could be said to have globalisation in its background. Many crucial aspects of Japan (including workers, manufacturing, service, sports, religion, and popular culture) have become globalised (e.g. Befu and Guichard-Anguis eds. 2001). The so-called 'flying geese model' – the vision of order of the East Asian political economy that sees Japan as leading the other Asian countries – is no longer valid, since a number of 'developed' metropolises (e.g. Iwabuchi 2001, 2002; Ohizumi 2011) and a new 'middle class' (Ganguly-Scrase and Scrase 2009; Heiman et al. eds. 2012) are emerging in the region. Manufacturing is now enmeshed in an Asia-wide production network: each manufacturing process for a certain product is no longer carried out within a single country, but is fragmented and allocated to the best-suited countries (e.g. JETRO 2010; Kimura 2007; METI 2012c: 178-190; Ohizumi 2011: 69-72). India itself is proactively leveraging globalisation to become a global economic giant – especially after its economic reform in 1991, through which the country transformed its protectionist/socialistic planned economy into an open, neo-liberalistic one. India's economic nationalism is

manifested through globalisation to promote a number of Indian sectors globally, such as IT software, steel, automobiles (e.g. D'Costa 2009), and Bollywood films (e.g. Ganti 2012). In 2003, the investment bank Goldman Sachs issued a report entitled 'Dreaming with BRICs: The Path to 2050' (Wilson and Purushothaman 2003) in which they optimistically predicted that India, along with other BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India, and China), could become one of the world's largest forces in the global economy in the next 50 years. This triggered the direct foreign investment of global multinational corporations in India. What is happening in the current political economy of the Asian region is, in short:

[...] the construction of the new regional order through the extinction of Japan-led 'east Asian economy zone' that is now encroached on by China from the west and by India from the south. (Kobayashi 2012: 17)

In response to this change in the international environment, and in response to domestic market shrinkage through a low birth rate and increased longevity, the Japanese government has made it a politico-economic aim to reboot its economic growth by absorbing the growing demand in the Asian market (e.g. METI 2013). In 2012, METI issued a report called *Shin Chuukansou Kakutoku Senryaku* (The Strategy to Capture a New Middle Class) and emphasised the importance for Japanese corporations to approach the new and growing middle class in the Asian region to achieve growth (METI 2012d).

However, some statistics show that Japan's politico-economic aspirations towards Asia are still strongly biased towards Eastern and South-Eastern Asia. Chart 2, extracted and translated from the chart issued by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA),

suggests how strongly Japan is associated with China, rather than with India.

**Chart 2: Comparison of the Japan-India relationship and the Japan-China relationship**

	Japan-India	Japan-China	Ratio
Japanese visitors (2014)	220,000 (approx.)	2,720,000 (approx.)	1/12
Visitors to Japan (2014)	95,000 (approx.)	2,530,000 (approx.)	1/27
Tourists to Japan (2014)	29,000 (approx.)	1,750,000 (approx.)	1/60
Students in Japan (2014)	727	94,399	1/130
Japanese expatriates (2014)	8,313	133,902	1/17
Residents in Japan (2014)	26,082	734,506	1/28
Japanese learners (2012)	20,000 (approx.)	1,050,000 (approx.)	1/53
Partnership between local governments (2014)	12	356	1/30
Flights (2014)	27 (per week)	690 (per week)	1/26

(Extracted and translated from MOFA 2016a: 3)

China strongly outnumbers India in all the above figures. The biggest gap is in the number of foreign students from China and India studying in Japan. While there are 94,399 Chinese students learning in Japan, there are only 727 Indian students in Japan; the number of Chinese students in Japan is 130 times larger than the number of Indian students in Japan. MOFA (2016a) also shows that China is a far more important trade and economic partner for Japan than India. The total Indo-Japanese trade in 2014 was about 1.6 trillion yen (9.6 billion pounds), while the China-Japan trade in the same year was about 32.5 trillion yen (195 billion pounds, about 20 times bigger than the figure for the Indo-Japanese trade). The amount of Japan's direct investment in India in 2014 was about 200 billion yen (1.3 billion pounds), while the amount of Japan's direct investment in China in the same year was about

1.1 trillion yen (6.6 billion pounds, about six times bigger than that in India). The number of Japanese company offices active in India in 2014 was about 4,500, while the number of Japanese company offices active in China in the same year was about 30,000 (about six and a half times more than in India).

Although, as mentioned above, India has been drawing global attention as a potential economic giant since 2003, Japan's business sectors were rather late in recognising India from that perspective. For example, Naho Shigeta (2015), a Delhi-based Japanese business consultant, reminisces that when she started marketing business in India in 2006, the country was 'still a minor market' for the Japanese business scene, which 'first and foremost named China as their target for their businesses' overseas expansion' at that time (3).

India's peripheral position within the Asian vision of Japan's political economy and business resonates with what we examined in the previous section. This peripheral position seems not to have changed until recently. For example, a book I found in an 'Asia business' section in a large bookstore in central Tokyo (Kawase 2014) provides a good example of this ethos. This book's title is *Kaigai Senryaku Wākubukku: Ajia, Shinkoukoku Shinshutu o Seikou Saseru* (A Workbook for Overseas Strategy: How To Be Successful in Your Business Expansion into the Asian and Emerging Markets). The book seems to target Japanese salarymen at the middle-management level, who are newly in charge of Asian businesses. The book provides basic business school textbook-type steps and tools (such as SWOT

analysis and marketing 4P) as a guide for readers to launch and develop their Asian businesses. It is worth noting that, although the book provides four fictional business cases to help readers understand by example, none of the cases targets the Indian market (the examples targeted Shanghai, South-East Asia, China, and Indonesia). The existence of such a book suggests that Japanese business is becoming more and more oriented towards the Asian market, but it also suggests that Japan's business is less interested in the Indian market and more interested in the Eastern and South-Eastern Asian market. Similarly, the Asia scholar Ohizumi Keiichirou rarely examines India in his successful book *Shouhi Suru Ajia: Shinkoukokushijou no Kanousei to Fuan* (Asia as a Consumer: the Potential and Concerns of the Markets of the Emerging Countries) (Ohizumi 2011). Although the title suggests that the book will examine the potential of Asia as an emerging consumer market, the countries and cities he looks at in his book are heavily biased towards Eastern and South-Eastern Asia. Although one of his main arguments is to see the Asian region in terms of megacities that will lead the growth of the region, two case cities he intensively examines are Bangkok and Shanghai, while the populations of Mumbai or Kolkata are larger than the former and as large as the latter. The peripheralisation of India, at least in the context of Japanese business and industry, remains significant.

India still functions as an 'antithesis' to the Japan's 'mainstream' lives. For some people, India is still an exotic destination for those who are tired of Japanese society (e.g. Sakura 2009), who are looking for alternative lives (e.g. Mohanty 2012; Sugimoto 2010), or

for scholars looking for the furthest reference point to re-discover the process leading to the establishment of the modern Japanese nation state (Oguma 2000) – or even for a nightclub hostess who finds it impossible to survive the severe competition among hostesses as she gets older (and finds it impossible to land an alternative job), and so starts her own nightclub in Gurgaon (Numazu 2014a, 2014b). ‘Surprise’ (*bikkuri*) is one of the popular words associated with India in Japanese public culture. ‘*Indojin mo bikkuri*’ (‘Even Indians would be surprised’) – the famous advertisement catchphrase used in the TV commercial for a Japanese-style curry in 1964 – is still used in contemporary Japan when one encounters a totally surprising state of affairs. One Japanese salaryman even published a book titled *Indo Bikkuri Sapuraizu* (India Surprise, and Surprise) (Takafuku 2007) to suggest how his experience working in the Indian branch of the company he worked for was filled with surprise.

India also seems peripheral (and almost alien) to the Japanese ‘tech-savvy’ youth, which widely overlaps with Japan’s community of anime fans. In his book targeted at this sector, Azuma Hiroki – a critic who is popular among such young people – referred to Kerala (one of the India’s states) to show how young Japanese Internet users are biased. After introducing basic information about Kerala, he wrote:

However, what is crucially important here is that the things I have just said could be easily found on the Internet: most of such information exists as ordinary information, written in Japanese. But I didn’t know that. I assume most of the readers of this book didn’t know that either. No matter how much information is made public on the Internet, you will not be able to find specific information if you don’t search for it using specific search words. In order to find the information

about Kerala, you have to type in 'Kerala' into the search engine. That is the characteristic of the Internet. (Azuma 2014: 29)

What seems crucial for the purpose for this thesis is less the characteristics of the Internet, and more that (as this account strongly suggests) Japanese anime fans, wired as they are into the Japanese-language Internet environment, are almost completely disconnected from (and almost completely indifferent to) information on India, despite the triumphant insistence among anime fans themselves (and their sympathiser scholars) that they have no borders and are transnationally interconnected through the Internet.

*Surechigai* between Japan and India is sometimes manifested as a mismatch among the Japanese players who are interested in India, and the Indian players who are interested in Japan. At the national government level, Japan and India are currently appealing to their honeymoon relationship: they eagerly promote the Indo-Japanese partnership as having left the phase of 'two acquaintances whose friendship is limited to an exchange of holiday greetings' (Jain 1997: 351) to enter into a more 'global strategic partnership' (Ghosh 2008; MOFA 2016a: 2). The 'global strategy' referred to here seems to be not so much economic/industrial as a diplomatic/security one aimed at China. Both (conservative) governments intend to contain the rise of China by this 'strategic partnership' to construct an Asia-wide regional security system (e.g. Sakurai ed. 2014). At the level of 'ordinary people,' however, India is the object of interest for a very limited number and type of Japanese person (as seen above). Most Indians seem not interested in Japan at all.

**Picture 1: Illustration on the contemporary Indo-Japanese relationship**



(Sekiguchi ed. 2006: 215)

Picture 1 provides a good visual representation of the *surechigai* between Japan and India. This illustration is taken from *Indo no koto ga Manga de 3 jikan de Wakaru Hon* (A Book which Makes You Understand India through Manga in 3 Hours) (Sekiguchi ed. 2006). The book seems to be intended as a simple and convenient guidebook to India for those unfamiliar with the country. The author uses this illustration to lament the mismatch of interests between Japanese and Indians. In the illustration, a man on the left, who is identified as Japanese, shows his exotic and orientalist interest in India by pitching random words related to India (on literature, yoga, Buddhism, films, Hindu, antiquities, arcanum, and contemplation) to the man in the right, who is identified as Indian. The Indian man, however, shows little interest in the ‘love of India’ shown by the Japanese man. He sits at his desk with his back to the Japanese man, replying in an uninterested way: ‘What? Japan? Well, it’s

a country of technology, isn't it? And I know their economy is big. That's all,' while looking at the PC. This illustration, which could, in a way, be interpreted as extremely stereotypical,<sup>12</sup> seems on the other hand to summarise or symbolise the current epistemological Indo-Japanese *surechigai* overviewed above. Japanese businesspeople are generally not interested in India; India is for those few Japanese who are looking for 'alternative' experiences *vis-à-vis* Japan's mainstream. It is also unclear whether 'normal' Indians are interested in Japan.

As reviewed above, Japan's peripheralisation of, and *surechigai* with, India persists in contemporary Japan. On the other hand, what seems equally significant is that India is also enthusiastically promoted by some people in Japan as the next global superpower, one which could have huge economic/industrial potential. In concert with India's rising potential for growth and as a domestic consumer market in the contemporary global economy, a number of books about India have started to occupy bookshelves in the 'economy' and 'business' sections of Japan's major bookstores in the 2010s (e.g. the India Business Center 2011; NHK Special News Crew 2009; Pandrangi and Kamo 2012; Sakakibara 2011; Sekiguchi ed. 2006; Shibasaki 2011; Shigeta 2015; Sinha 2014; Teiwa 2014). Many of these books use bold words in their titles and front covers to impress on readers the economic and industrial potential of India, describing India as having an 'impact' (*shougeki*) on Japan's political economy (NHK Special News Crew 2009), calling India a 'great' (*sugoi*) country

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<sup>12</sup> For example, the wearing of turbans is one of the most widely-shared stereotypes about Indian people in Japan. In fact, only Sikh people wear turbans in India. The proportion of Sikhs in the Indian population is about 1.7% (MOFA 2016b). The use of PCs is another rising popular stereotype about Indian people in Japan, in concert with the idea of India as a country fond of IT software (for the transition of the Japanese people's stereotypical images about Indians at the grass-roots level, see Sinha 2014: 153-155).

(Sinha 2014), referring to India as a country with a ‘nine-hundred-million middle class’ (Teiwa 2014) or as ‘a big power nation’ (*taikoku*) that is ‘about to wake up’ with ‘a new 1.2 billion market’ (Sekiguchi ed. 2006), and even referring to ‘India as Number One’ (Sakakibara 2011). The last obviously refers to Ezra Vogel’s *Japan as Number One* (Vogel 1979), and suggests that India should now be paid significant attention by Japan, just as Japan was paid significant attention by the world (especially the United States) when it was itself ‘number one’ in the global economy. The implicit and explicit message of these books is that India has changed since its economic reforms in 1991, and is now a rising superpower riding on the wave of globalisation. Japan, on the other hand, is now in decline, and needs to find a new overseas market to keep growing. Japan should thus consider how to cope with India, and especially how to cultivate the huge Indian market, no matter how unfamiliar it may appear to Japanese people.

It is not the aim of this thesis to judge whether the above epistemological and empirical peripheralisation of, and *surechigai* with, India, and the emphasis on India as the next superpower, is valid or justifiable; nor is it my purpose to explore the origin of these ideas. What I do intend to argue is that such contextualised discrepancies provide a gap for some entrepreneurs to seek their arbitrage profits. I would argue that, at least in the business context in Japan, the gap between Japan’s unfamiliarity towards Indians, constructed historically, epistemologically, and empirically through the peripheralisation of India, and India’s rising presence as an economic/industrial superpower (which has reached Japan on

the wave of globalisation), has come to be recognised by some entrepreneurial players as a lucrative discrepancy through which they could seek their arbitrage profits. Many of the books on India mentioned above were written by business consultants from both Japan and India. The way they produce their books is implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) self-serving: they emphasise the huge economic and industrial potential of India, and at the same time they suggest that only they as the writers of these books can act as a bridge between Japan and this promising country that no ordinary Japanese person could ever be able to understand or cope with appropriately. For example, Teiwa (2014) emphasises that India is a country of ‘chaos’ that ‘the Japanese cannot understand’, but also a country in which a ‘huge nine-hundred-million middle class’ is emerging, and says on the very last page of her book that she was ‘born in Bangalore,’ is now active as an ‘India business advisor,’ and has contributed to the Japanese understanding of Indian culture (260). Japan-based Indian business consultant Sanjeev Sinha (2014), who is trying to bridge Japan and India (201) by marketing India to Japan and vice versa (166, 169), emphasises in his title how ‘great’ India is and how actively Indians are contributing to the current global economy. Japanese and Indian business consultants have co-authored a book saying that an Indian business consultant (one of the book’s authors) will ‘tell’ the Japanese ‘the rules of Indian business’ (Pandurangi and Kamo 2012), insisting in the first few pages of the book that India is ‘far’ for Japanese (3) and doing business in India is ‘not a simple task at all’ (4). The author of the book celebrating India ‘as number one’ and insisting that ‘India is a key to the Japanese

economic growth’ was an ex Vice Minister of Finance for International Affairs, who represents himself as ‘Mister Yen’ (Sakakibara 2011). He discloses in his book’s foreword that he established a think tank called the Institute for Indian Economics Studies (2), and boasts that publishing this book was the result of one of his institute’s priorities to provide a ‘high-level’ introductory book on India for Japanese readers (3). In short, many entrepreneurial brokers, from grass-roots to executive level, claim to act as a bridge to ‘unfamiliar’ India for the sake of the contemporary Japanese political economy.

The difference in business customs between Japan and India – the discrepancy between the ‘Japanese’ versus the ‘Indian’ way of doing business – sits at the centre of these ‘Let’s do business in India’ discourses. Roughly speaking, they assume that there are two different ‘Japanese’ and ‘Indian’ ways of doing business, and that the central matter is how to resolve these different business customs to make Indo-Japanese cooperation mutually satisfactory.<sup>13</sup> The logical poles would thus be to carry through the ‘Japanese’ way in the Indian market (standardisation) at one end of the extreme, and to follow completely the ‘Indian’ way in Indian market (localisation) at the other end of the extreme. The argument on this issue, however, seems not to have reached a consensus, and in my view there is much confusion on whether (or how much) Japanese business projects should standardise or

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<sup>13</sup> I would emphasise again that I do not intend to argue that this dichotomy of ‘Japanese’ and ‘Indian’ business customs is essential or inherent. What I do intend to highlight here, and in the subsequent thesis, is that this dichotomy (that there exists a ‘Japanese’ and an ‘Indian’ way of doing business) is one of the significant epistemological contexts that Japanese business players construct when coping with their Indian counterparts. To emphasise this, I will henceforth bracket the words ‘Japanese’ and ‘Indian’ in quotation marks when referring to this contextualisation of Indo-Japanese business customs.

localise their way of doing businesses when carrying out their projects in/with India. For example, Osamu Suzuki, a CEO of Suzuki Motors – one of the most successful Japanese companies in India – proudly says that he introduced ‘Japanese-style management’ (*nihonteki keiei*) to the first industrial plant launched in Gurgaon in 1980s with Indian partners because he is Japanese, turfing out the caste system from the plant’s institutions by implementing a common uniform, a common dining hall, common toilets, a common office space with no private rooms, and common cleaning practices regardless of caste and job classes<sup>14</sup> (Bhargava 2006: 14, 59-61; Shimada 2011: 100-101; Suzuki 2009: 193-198). On the other hand, he also congratulates himself on the fact that it was Suzuki Motor’s swift top-down decision-making management style that enabled the partnership with Indian players. He suggests that such a style was widely different from those of other mainstream Japanese motor companies, which preferred slow, bottom-up decision-making, and how such top-down management matched the taste of Indian counterparts, who also have a business culture allowing them to appreciate the top-down approach. This helped them decide to pick Suzuki Motors as their partner out of other world-famous major Japanese motor companies (Bhargava 2006: 10; Shimada 2011: 100; Suzuki 2009: 184-185). When it comes to home electronics – the sector in which Japanese companies have much less share than Korean companies – their small presence in the Indian market is often attributed to their failure to localise their products enough to match the needs of local Indian consumers. In the context

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<sup>14</sup> For general arguments on Japanese-style management (*nihonteki keiei*) around that time, see the works by Abegglen (1958), Abegglen and Stalk (1985), Dore (1973), and Odaka (1965).

of such a sector, the ‘Japanese way,’ i.e. to blindly improve the quality of their products, is the first thing they should abandon when entering India (e.g. Park and Amano 2011; Sugai 2014). While Toyota Motors self-servingly state their universalistic views of human resource management, suggesting that there are no differences in potential between Japanese and Indian workers (e.g. Shimada and Nikkan Kougyou Shimbunsha 2007), a case study (James and Jones 2014) reveals that this ‘Toyota Way’ is inevitably ‘ethnocentric’ (2174), rooted in the sociocultural, historical, and environmental context of Japan, and that this had to be localised when transplanted to their Indian branches.

The ‘Indian’ way of doing business is often emphasised as extremely difficult for the Japanese to cope with. While *swadeshi* (roughly, the ‘buy Indian movement’) was emphasised when Western corporations, such as Coca-Cola, tried to access the Indian market (Mazzarella 2003: 4-5), it is *jugaad* (a disorganised, somewhat *bricolage* way of fixing affairs) that is emphasised as the obstacle that the Japanese need to resolve when doing business in India. The former concerns market entry, while the latter concerns business method. *Jugaad* is often contrasted with the Japanese organised and punctual working style. Many ‘Let’s do business in India’ books tell the readers not to be upset if they encounter their Indian counterparts’ *jugaad*, and encourage them to remain flexible by abandoning the Japanese business common sense (e.g. Pandrangi and Kamo 2012: 166-203; Sinha 2014: 60-61). Indian businesspeople are often described as ‘tough negotiators’ and ‘greedy’ merchants. Yoshitaka Shibasaki (2011), an ex-Sony India Senior General Manager, suggests that the

term '*In Paki Leba Syri*' (India, Pakistan, Lebanon, and Syria) was popular in the Japanese business scene to designate the countries from which 'tough merchants' come (83-84). He even categorises Indians into three types of potential business partners for the Japanese (the artist-type, the academic-type, and the merchant-type), and strongly discourages Japanese 'India beginners' from choosing the 'merchant-type' for their business partners. According to Shibasaki, their '*In Paki Leba Syri*' way of doing business is 'imprinted in their DNA' and they generally 'care about nothing but making money' (*okanemouke shika atama ni nai*). Japanese 'India beginners' will 'get ripped off' (*fundakurareru*) before they have done substantial business with them, will end up 'being used by them', and will 'suffer severe losses' (*yakedo o shiteshimau*) in their partnership (129-130). This shows less how inherently 'tough' Indian businesspeople are as merchants, and more how strongly Japanese businesspeople see them as 'tough' to get along with. Such 'toughness' is often contrasted with the 'politeness' of Japanese business customs and Japan's homogenously cosseted business environment, in which Japanese businessmen will easily be able to carry on their business in collusion with their Japanese partners.

Such a 'difficult' Indian market is sometimes translated into a 'frontier' that all entrepreneurially-minded people (especially young people) in Japan should take on as a challenge. For example, after emphasising how 'tough' the Indian market is, Shibasaki also emphasises that young businesspeople should proactively commit to partner with Indian businesses *because of* such difficulties. For him, India is no longer a destination for naïve

Japanese youth seeking themselves (Shibasaki 2011: 20-22). India is now a ‘wild land’ (*kouya*) (87) ‘filled with business opportunity’ (*bijinesu chansu ga afureteru*) (22) into which the young businessman should dive to practise ‘knight-errantry’ (*musha shugyou*) (90) and regain the ‘glory’ (*kagayaki*) (252) of the Japanese corporations. It is their entrepreneurial ‘hot heart’ (*atsui kokoro*) (51), ‘dream’ (*yume*) (81), ‘spirit’ (*kigamae*), and ‘passion’ (*netsujou*) (252) that will overcome all the obstacles in India. Here, an ‘unfamiliar’ place and people for the Japanese has been transformed into a missionary objective, a place and people which Japanese should make ‘familiar.’ The uncertainties in India to be avoided by ‘normal’ Japanese companies are represented as the risks that ‘entrepreneurial’ Japanese businesspeople should heroically take.

It is against the above background and context that this thesis’s ethnography on the entrepreneurial anime business project from Japan to India is situated. The anime industry is no exception for business processes enmeshed in globalisation (e.g. Iwabuchi 2001, 2002; Shiraishi 2013), including, for example, the outsourcing of anime cuts to Korea, China, and the Philippines (Morisawa 2013). Although the Indian market was celebrated as one of the most promising overseas market for the Japanese anime sector (METI 2012b), it is still recognised as an unfamiliar market for them compared with the US, East Asia, and South-East Asia (this will be examined in detail in Chapter 4). It is from this gap that the case entrepreneur sought to make his arbitrage profit by intermediating the Japanese anime sector and the Indian market. As will be shown in the following chapters, the discrepancies in the

'Japanese' versus 'Indian' ways of doing business were one of the biggest issues he had to resolve to keep his business project afloat. Given that the discrepancy in business customs are the one of the significant arenas in which we can examine Japan's contemporary politico-economic relationship with India specifically and with Asia in general, the ethnography of this thesis – especially in terms of the case entrepreneur's business negotiations with his Indian counterparts – will thus shed light on the crucial aspects of Japan's relation-building with India (and Asia).

The anime business project focused on in this thesis is not unique in its attempt to tap into the Indian market (i.e. to seek the above arbitrage profit). As will be explained in detail in the following chapters, there was collective momentum in the Japanese anime merchandising sector in the mid-2000s to explore the possibility of doing business in India, which resulted in a delegation to Delhi to meet with the local trade organisations: this momentum, however, petered out quickly. While I was doing the research for this thesis (from 2014 to 2015: see the methodology section of this chapter), there were around five 'competitors' for the case anime business project of this thesis. These included entrepreneurial competitors engaged in the e-commerce of anime merchandising in Delhi, and competitors spearheaded by corporations focusing on co-producing TV anime shows with Indian players with the aim of developing associated anime merchandising in the Indian market. One of the most prominent Indo-Japanese anime business projects in Japan was *Suraj the Rising Star*, which adapted a classic baseball anime into a cricket anime (by moving

the setting from Japan to India, and changing the characters from Japanese baseball players into Indian cricket players) under a co-production partnership between Japanese and Indian anime studios with the sponsorship of many Japanese national brands (cf. Koga 2013). It was unclear whether these Indo-Japanese anime projects succeeded (or were succeeding) as a business, as I heard no news of their success or failure during my research. It is against such a backdrop that this thesis's ethnography on the Indo-Japanese entrepreneurial anime business project develops.

Theoretically speaking, it has become common for anthropology to see businesspeople's everyday working practices, co-operations, conflicts, and negotiations as an object of analysis, as the concept of 'culture' has shifted from, so to speak, something for Trobrianders – i.e. a neat, holistic, and closed system remote from other parts of the world – to the constantly changing way of the life of individuals who are exposed to, and sometimes proactively participate in, multiple global and local forces, and as more and more anthropologists have come to select business scenes as their ethnographic field sites (Jordan 2010). Previous, related ethnographic studies on the globalisation of Japanese business into other countries have also revealed that the executive/worker's everyday practices are cultural as well as business-based (e.g. Ben-Ari 2000; Ben-Ari and Fong 2000; Clammer and Ben-Ari 2000; Ng and Ben-Ari 2000; Sedgwick 2001, 2007; Wong 1999, 2001). How the findings in the following ethnographic analysis fit into such arguments will also be examined in the following chapters. There are virtually no substantial studies or reports on anime in India,

and the studies on anime in non-Japanese countries and regions have been heavily biased towards anime in the United States (e.g. Allison 2000, 2006; Daliot-Bul 2014; Kusanagi 2003; Leonard 2005; Macias 2006; Mihara 2010a, 2010b; Napier 2007) and other places including France (e.g. Kiyotani 2009), East Asia (e.g. Otmazgin 2013), Eastern and South-Eastern Asia (e.g. Iwabuchi 2001, 2002), China (e.g. Aozaki and DCAJ 2007; Endo 2008), and Indonesia (Shiraishi 2013). Although JETRO issued a report on the actual conditions of the Japanese content industry in many countries, they have not issued a report on the Indian market. This ethnographic analysis will fill this gap as well.

### ***The entrepreneur as a broker***

The ethnography of this thesis also intends to propose the analytical perspectives to see an entrepreneur as a broker, or as a player who intermediates the sociocultural discrepancies (in our case, the art versus commerce and the ‘Japanese’ and ‘Indian’ way of doing business) between his stakeholders to enable his business to survive. In this section, I will review the mostly anthropological literature on entrepreneurship and brokerage to explore how such convergent vantage points might be established. The ethnography of this thesis is addressed in the intersection of the two bodies of literature. The ‘dual agency dilemma’ is highlighted as a critical feature in approaching an entrepreneur as a broker.

At the most anthropological level of argument, this thesis focuses on the process of social change generated by the case of the venture business. This thesis does not intend to

view the Japanese anime sector and host Indian market in a structural-functionalist way, but examines them ethnographically in terms of how such a structural-functional equilibrium might (or might not) be transformed through transactions between the relevant players, with a central focus on the case of the entrepreneur.

To see society not as static and self-contained whole, but as a constantly changing process as a result of individuals' transactional activities, forms one of the major perspectives in anthropology. In 1950, Evans-Pritchard (1950) criticised Radcliffe-Brown's functionalism in thinking that '(h)uman societies are natural systems in which all the parts are interdependent, each serving in a complex of necessary relations to maintain the whole' (120). Evans-Pritchard argued this aimed at 'proving that man is an automaton and at discovering the sociological laws in terms of which his actions, ideas, and beliefs can be explained and in the light of which they can be planned and controlled' (123), and proposed an alternative approach to see human societies 'as systems only because social life must have a pattern of some kind, inasmuch as man, being a reasonable creature, has to live in a world in which his relations with those around him are ordered and intelligible' (123-124). Similarly, Fredrik Barth (1966, 1967b) argued that society is a process created by rational individuals' strategic choices, actions, and allocation of resources, which are incentivised and constrained by circumstances. Opposing Radcliffe-Brown's conception of anthropology as 'the comparative theoretical study of forms of social life amongst primitive peoples' (Radcliffe-Brown 1952: 4), Barth (1966) insists that such social forms 'can be explained if we assume that they are

the cumulative result of a number of separate choices and decisions made by people acting *vis-à-vis* one another' (2):

Explanation is not achieved by a description of the patterns of regularity, no matter how meticulous and adequate, nor by replacing this description by other abstractions congruent with it, but by exhibiting what *makes* the pattern, i.e. certain processes. [...] To give an explanation of social forms, it is sufficient to describe the processes that generate the form.

[...] the patterns are generated through processes of interaction and in their form reflect the constraints and incentives under which people act. [...] the processes which effect that transformation are our main field of study as social anthropologists. (Ibid.: emphasis in the original)

He also argues in his different work:

What we see as a social form is, concretely, a pattern of distribution of behavior by different persons and on different occasions. I would argue that this is not useful to assume that this empirical pattern is a sought-for condition, which all members of the community equally value and willfully maintain. Rather, it must be regarded as an epiphenomenon of a great variety of processes in combination, and our problem as social anthropologists is to show how it is generated. (Barth 1967b: 662)

In such a 'transactionalist' line of debate, an entrepreneur is regarded as one of the prominent lenses through which anthropologists can observe such social changes (e.g. Barth 1963, 1967b). However, the interest of anthropologists in entrepreneurship has long been minor, and is waning (Rosa and Caulkins 2013: 100-101). This is in sharp contrast with the substantial contributions that other fields of social science have made to this topic, including business studies (see 98-100), economics (e.g. Baumol 1993, 2010; Casson 1982; Hayek 1980; Kirzner 1997; Knight 1921; Mises 2007; Schumpeter 1934), economic history (e.g. Casson 2013; Chandller 1990; Gerschenkron 1966; for an overview, see Mathias 1983;

Soltow 1968), psychology (e.g. Brockhaus and Horowitz 1986; Hagen 1962; McClelland 1961; for an overview, see Chell et al. 1991: 29-53), and sociology (e.g. Aldrich 2000; Biggart 1989; Burt 2000; Granovetter 1995; Kanter 1988; Merton 1968; for an overview, see Thornton 1999).<sup>15</sup>

According to classical definitions, an entrepreneur can be defined as a person who generates (or aspires to generate) innovation. Innovation consists of a 'new combination' of already existing materials and forces (Schumpeter 1934; Swedberg 2000: 15). Schumpeter (1934: 66) raised five cases covered by such a combination, which could be bulletized as follows:

- (1) The introduction of a new good – that is one with which consumers are not yet familiar – or of a new quality of a good.
- (2) The introduction of a new method of production, that is one not yet tested by experience in the branch of manufacture concerned, which need by no means be founded upon a discovery scientifically new, and can also exist in a new way of handling a commodity commercially.
- (3) The opening of a new market, that is a market into which the particular branch of manufacture of the country in question has not previously entered, whether or not this market has existed before.

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<sup>15</sup> For an overview of the contributions in each field of social science to entrepreneurship studies, see Swedberg (2000).

- (4) The conquest of a new source supply of raw materials or half-manufactured goods, again irrespective of whether this source already exists or whether it has first to be created.
- (5) The carrying out of the new organisation of any industry, like the creation of a monopoly position (for example through trustification) or the breaking up of a monopoly position.

How different is the anthropological approach to entrepreneurship from those of other social science disciplines? In my view, while practical business studies (such as the textbooks used in business school classes) tell the readers how to become entrepreneurs, and while other social sciences are interested in the conditions that make entrepreneurship possible, the anthropological studies on entrepreneurship focus on what entrepreneurs actually do. The primary contribution of anthropology to the realm of entrepreneurship studies might be a methodological one, focusing on the micro-level everyday practices of the entrepreneurs to counter, alter and nuance the grand or abstract discourses and ‘theories’ on entrepreneurship, with ethnographic complexity on site. Two reviews (Stewart 1991; Rosa and Caulkins 2013) examining the possible contributions of anthropology to the field of entrepreneurship seem to agree on this point. Alex Stewart (1991) wrote:

Ethnography [...] offers advantages for the study of social and cultural life. Social and cultural life has elementary properties that make it hard to research; it involves *systems* (e.g., multivariability, multiple contingencies, and complex and conjunctive causation), *specificity* (e.g., a firm’s unique strengths, and the contextuality of systemic properties), *subjectivity* (e.g., intentionality and meaning creation), and *time* (e.g., process). It is also possible that its study requires attention to *taxonomy* (e.g., polythetic, fuzzy taxa). Most business school research, it seems to me, pays sophisticated attention to one or two of these

properties, and blithely ignores the rest. (78, emphases in the original)

To that end, Rosa and Caulkins (2013) point out that one of the substantial contributions that ethnographic methods might make to entrepreneurship studies might be to deconstruct the ‘ethnocentrism’ of mainstream entrepreneurship research through the ‘*(r)ecognition of the power of ethnocentrism in the formulation of academic theory, and a commitment to eroding it through exploratory empirical research*’ (116, emphasis in the original). To them, appreciating positivist theory-driven research (and alienating ‘descriptive empirical research’) is at the core of such an ethnocentric sentiment:

An examination of the top journals such as the *Journal of Business Venturing* and *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice* demonstrates that articles are dominated by highly positivist theory-driven articles predominantly quantitative in approach. [...]

In this climate there have been dissidents, who implicitly or explicitly have espoused an interpretivist paradigm where the end result is enhanced understanding, not the testing of hypotheses. Entrepreneurship is especially suitable to interpretivist approaches as most of the evidence is in the form of the retrospective opinions and memories of entrepreneurs, which are contextual and socially constructed. The motivations and the performance of entrepreneurs are often grounded in philosophies that are not based on the principles of scientific management, and hence often appear irrational to western scientific researchers. The complexities of these processes are usually ignored by positivist researchers, who tend to bypass them by the use of preconceived questions, Likert scales, and statistical tests of reliability. (106-107)

Related to this point, one of the distinct characteristics of previous anthropological studies on entrepreneurship was to see entrepreneurship as a certain type of sociocultural function that could be roughly summarised as opportunistic behaviour that manipulates and is conditioned by given sociocultural conditions (cf. Stewart 1991), rather than limiting the

range of entrepreneurship within the realm of the modern 'Western' business scene, or limiting the entrepreneur to the character of a businessman motivated purely by money. Entrepreneurs in the anthropological sense include a village headman in Zambia, who sought to attain political authority (Turner 1957), Indonesian villagers in the process of economic development (Geertz 1963b), local villagers in northern Norway (Barth 1963), lineage members in northern Pakistan competing for land tenure (1959a, 1959b), an Arab merchant who resided in a village in Sudan to introduce a new trade pattern that differed completely from existing local ones (1967a), a strawberry trader active in a village in the Venezuelan Andes (Montoya 2000), and Japanese derivatives traders in Tokyo (Miyazaki 2013).

While trying to settle a rigorous anthropological definition of entrepreneurship and entrepreneur might result in a 'conceptual tower of Babel' (Rodman and Counts 1982: 17), what seems significant for the purpose of this thesis among the many aspects of entrepreneurship highlighted by anthropology is the concept of 'economic spheres', and the representation of entrepreneurs' activities as bridging these spheres. This perspective was exhibited by anthropologist Fredrik Barth through his fieldwork in the Mountain Fur economy in Sudan (Barth 1967a):

I try to show in what sense the flow of goods and services is patterned in discrete spheres, and to demonstrate the nature of the unity within, and barriers between, the spheres. I point to the discrepancies of evaluation that are made possible by the existence of barriers between spheres, and to the activities of entrepreneurs in relation to these barriers. [...] Basic to the whole analysis is the view that the demarcation of spheres must be made with respect to the total pattern of circulation of value in an economic system, and not merely with reference to criterion of direct exchangeability (149).

Barth extracts two economic spheres in the Fur economy: the cash crops sphere and the millet-beer-labour spheres. A villager can relocate his/her labour to grow either cash crops (tomatoes, wheat, and so on) or millet (subsistence crops), from which he/she can brew beer to reciprocate the labour he/she hires from fellow villagers. The two spheres 'are separated by the sanction of moral reprobation on conversions from labour to cash and from beer to cash' (156). Although millet could be sold in the market, most of the millet was consumed for their own consumption, and its market price was disproportionate for selling it in market. Although a villager could hire local labour to grow cash crops, limitations of land and of the time needed to grow millet (to make beer to hire locals to grow more cash crops) affected the amount of cash crops one could grow. Barth depicts how such separate spheres, i.e. 'the discrepancies of evaluation,' converged when an Arab merchant resided in the village and 'asked for an area of land on which to cultivate a tomato crop' (171). He bought a large amount of millet from a place far outside the village where the price was low, transported it on his donkeys and camels, made a large amount of beer to use in hiring labour, and produced a large tomato crop, which he then sold in the market, making a great amount of money. Many followers appeared to adapt this 'business model' in the next season, and thus the two spheres of cash crops and millet-beer-labour were bridged in an 'innovative' way. Barth argues that 'entrepreneurs will direct their activity pre-eminently towards those points in an economic system where the discrepancies of evaluation are greatest, and will attempt to construct bridging transactions which can exploit these discrepancies' (Ibid.). In short, Barth

(1967b) argues that entrepreneurs ‘effect new conversions between forms of goods that were previously not directly convertible’ and ‘thereby create new paths for the circulation of goods, often crossing barriers between formerly discrete spheres of circulation’ (664).

This way of seeing entrepreneurship resonates with Schumpeter’s (1934: 66) third definition of innovation, the opening of a new market, into which the case of the entrepreneurial anime business examined by this thesis could fall. The ‘economic spheres’ in our case are the Japanese anime sector and the Indian host market, and the ‘discrepancies of evaluation’ that the case entrepreneur aims to bridge are the dichotomy between art versus commerce and the ‘Japanese’ way of doing business versus the ‘Indian’ way of doing business. This ‘circular flow’ (Schumpeter 1934) of the logics of creativity and profitability, and the business customs of the Japanese and Indian, are (as Barth suggests) not only business-economic ones but are also sociocultural (‘moral’ in Barth’s words). Their businesses are ‘embedded’ in the sociality of the network of relations between relevant players in the sectors (cf. Polanyi et al. eds. 1957; Granovetter 1974, 1985), and thus the case entrepreneur’s approaches to the members in each sphere to penetrate the barriers and to re-allocate the existing combinations of resources into the new combinations provokes not only business responses but also sociocultural contradictions from the members within the spheres (for morality and its contradictions associated with entrepreneurship, see also Anderson and Smith 2007). It is thus of crucial importance for the anthropology of entrepreneurship to conduct the micro-observation of the case entrepreneur in terms of, for

example, the following points: with whom he tries to ally with the insiders in what position in the anime sector and India – which both facilitates and constrains the performance of his venture business (for anthropological inquiries on how social networks influence an individual's behaviour, see Mitchell ed. 1969); how he actually communicates with the prospective insider business partners to persuade them to collaborate with him – e.g. how he proposed and promoted his business plan to make it look 'legitimate' and 'valid' to the insiders; and what kind of rhetoric he used to make his business presentations sound 'morally correct'.

One of the main contributions of the ethnography of this thesis to anthropological studies on entrepreneurship is to reframe an entrepreneur more broadly as a 'broker.' Brokers have been examined in the realm of anthropology as another vantage point for examining societies in flux, and I argue that their social functions widely overlap with those of entrepreneurs as described above. The anthropological interest in brokers is now reigniting, in contrast with the anthropology of entrepreneurship.

Sociologically and structurally speaking, the function of brokerage can be defined as 'the process of connecting actors in systems of social, economic, or political relations in order to facilitate access to valued resources,' and the crucial characteristics of brokers can be depicted in that '(a) they bridge a gap in social structure and (b) they help goods, information, opportunities, or knowledge flow across that gap' (Stovel and Shaw 2012: 141). Reviewing the accumulation of diverse works on brokerage in the field of social science,

Stovel and Shaw extract several key themes common to brokerage and brokers. The first is that ‘informal relationships play a crucial role in connecting temporally, geographically, or socially disparate segments of a population’; the second is that ‘brokers often benefit from being in the middle of otherwise unconnected actors’; and the third is that ‘the prevalence and character of brokerage is closely connected to the macro-level structure of a time or place.’ They also explore several outstanding questions that might be worth pursuing further: there is ‘no work that seeks to theoretically connect the analytic characteristics of brokerage with particular types of gains’; ‘with the exception of anthropologically inspired work on political development, there is very little analytic work that considers the social structural conditions that stimulate demand for various types of brokerage’; and ‘far less attention has been paid to the possible risks associated with brokerage’ that could be viewed in terms of a broker’s ‘dual agency problem’, i.e. one of a broker’s crucial tasks (often pursued unsuccessfully) is to manage or maintain the trust of both parties that the broker is actually brokering so as not to be bypassed, and to continue benefitting from his/her brokerage activities. Measuring individual-level traits of brokerage in terms of psychology in conjunction with more contextual features may be ‘(a)nother area ripe for further study’; the ‘dynamics of brokerage,’ i.e. how the acts of brokerage shape subsequent relationships and how the brokerage affect macro-level structures, would also need to be studied further (153-154).

While anthropological studies on brokerage widely (yet less systematically) overlap with the accumulation of studies above, the anthropologists' main interest is in ethnographically examining the brokers' dual agency dilemma and the dynamics that they bring into societies. Reference is often made to Eric Wolf's (1956) study on political brokers 'between community-oriented and nation-oriented groups' (1075) that gained power in post-Columbian and post-Revolution Mexico by establishing 'channels of communication and mobility from the local community to the central power group at the helm of the government' (1071), and thus by standing 'guard over the crucial junctures or synapses of relationships which connect the local system to the larger whole' (1075). Wolf suggested that it would be worth examining the brokers' dual agency problem:

Special studies of such "broker" groups can also provide unusual insight into the functions of a complex system through a study of its dysfunctions. The position of these "brokers" is an "exposed" one, since, Janus-like, they face in two directions at once. They must serve some of the interests of groups operating on both the community and the national level, and they must cope with the conflicts raised by the collision of these interests. They cannot settle them, since by doing so they would abolish their own usefulness to others. Thus they often act as buffers between groups, maintaining the tensions which provide the dynamic of their actions. [...] These would have no *raison d'être* but for the tensions between community-oriented groups and nation-oriented groups. Yet they must also maintain a grip on these tensions, lest conflict get out of hand and better mediators take their place. (1076)

Drawing on Wolf's concept of the broker as a link joining local systems to a larger whole, Clifford Geertz (1960) framed the *kijaji*, a local Muslim leader in Java, Indonesia, as a 'cultural broker' whose bridging role changed during the modernisation of Indonesia from

connecting local communities with the transnational Islamic world to connecting local communities with the Indonesian nation state. Geertz ethnographically showed how the *kijaji* ‘has been progressively pushed [...] into abandoning the role of the world-travelled folk priest, the key broker role within the Islamic great tradition, for that of the politicised school teacher, the key broker role within modern nationalism’ (248), and how this shift had undermined the very brokering position from which the *kijaji* gained their prestige and power:

Under the pressures of nationalism, Islamic modernism, and the whole complex of social transformations which have taken place in Indonesia in this century, he is becoming, or attempting to become, a new kind of broker for a different sort of society and a different sort of culture, that of the nationally centered, metropolitan-based, intelligensia-led “New Indonesia.” And, as such, he has increasingly found himself occupying a new social role pregnant with possibilities both for securing and enhancing his social power and prestige, and for destroying the essential foundations of it: that of local party leader. In this effort of the *kijaji* to combine the role of traditional religious scholar with that of nationalist politician are mirrored many of the conflicts and contradictions which characterise the contemporary, rapidly changing Indonesian society in general. (230)

Anthropological interest in the broker, especially in the realm of political anthropology, has ‘waxed and waned’ (Lindquist 2015: 164) since the 1970s. The Marxist approach to the development of nation states questioned the free agency of brokers and prioritised analysing broader social structural issues that constrain such brokers’ behaviours (e.g. Alavi 1973; Asad 1972; Silverman 1974). However, in the contemporary context of the rise of globalisation, brokerage has returned as a focus in the realm of anthropology. While

the target region has come to be understood by anthropologists as the area where multiple forces intersect (rather than in terms of national borders), the broker has even been emphasised as ‘an exemplary methodological entry-point for an anthropology concerned with borders, mediation, translation, and transnationalism’ (Lindquist 2015: 162). In such a context, brokers are depicted less as mere mediators who bridge already established borders, and more as ‘active participants in the reworking of cultural boundaries’ (Bai 2012: 393; Rothman 2012) who ‘are not only products, but also producers, of the kind of society in which they re-emerge’ (James 2011: 319). After reviewing the anthropological studies on various types of brokers in this context (including Gürsel 2012; James 2011; Maurer et al. 2013; Mosse and Lewis 2006), Lindquist (2015) argues:

This is in contrast to earlier studies that focused on cultural brokers, political players, or ‘fixers’ firmly situated in a local frame, and on the relationships between rural and urban or centre and periphery. The scale of brokerage has become more complex, not only with regard to new technologies, but also with an increasing unpredictability concerning the spatial mobility of brokers themselves. Furthermore, transformations in the global economy since the collapse of Bretton Woods and ensuing neoliberal reform have increasingly problematized state-centred models of power and sovereignty and pushed for reconceptualization of the relationship between state and market. It is in this context that we can note the return of the broker in ethnographic terms as an actor positioned along these fault-lines [...]. (165)

As suggested above, I would argue that anthropological studies on entrepreneurship and brokers substantially overlap in the following ways. They emerged roughly from the transactionalist school to focus on social change rather than social structure; brokers are sometimes mentioned as entrepreneurs (e.g. Wolf 1956: 1072); and one of the biggest

focuses in both approaches is the entrepreneur/broker's 'moral ambiguity' (James 2011: 319) when trying to intermediate the 'discrepancies of evaluation' (Barth 1967a: 149) that provide a double-edged sword for an entrepreneur/broker either to be bypassed by the very groups they are bridging, or to reconfigure the new socioeconomic flow from which they could gain their mediating benefits.

It is in the context of this overlap that the case entrepreneur and his anime business from Japan to India will be examined. One of the objectives of his business project is to create a new anime business flow between Japan and India, two 'spheres' that were previously barely connected. The entrepreneur intends to create a bridge between them in a way that will change the existing 'circular flows' of anime business in Japan and India into a new combination of resources from which the entrepreneur can maximise his arbitrage profits. The case entrepreneur is here framed as a broker, and the brokerage aspects of his everyday business practices are highlighted. While some anthropologists insist that anthropological studies on brokers should shift their focus from moral issues to the (value-free) social functions that brokers play in their societies (e.g. Lindquist 2015), this ethnographic analysis instead portrays these moral/sociocultural discrepancies (i.e. art versus commerce, and the 'Japanese' versus 'Indian' way of doing business) and the case entrepreneur/broker's morally ambiguous dual agency dilemma (in terms of the two discrepancies), as crucial factors determining the fate of the case venture business. It will thus examine how successful (or unsuccessful) the entrepreneur/broker has been in

‘translating’ (Latour 2000) such conflicting orientations in carrying out his business through allying with the players in the Japanese anime sector and in India.

Several ethnographic studies have examined the creative industries and Japanese overseas business in terms of brokers (entrepreneurs) in the above sense. For example, Ruoyun Bai (2012) describes how a Chinese writer cleared his path to create and produce a new, more complex type of anticorruption drama by mediating the multiple forces and interests of the state (the Chinese Communist Party), the media (China Central Television), and the audience (educated viewers) in the post-socialist Chinese mediascape. Yomi Braester (2005) focuses on how several filmmakers in mid-1990s/post-WTO China became cultural brokers to set the trend of the country’s rising cultural economy by proactively allying with business celebrities, such as real estate developers, who had gained power in the midst of the inflow of globalism into the country. Anthropologist Oliver Thalén (2011) shows how a Ghanaian local entertainment company leveraged neoliberal globalism (such as receiving sponsorship from transnational corporations) to function as a cultural broker connecting local Ghanaian entertainment products with the African region-wide marketplace (Afro-cosmopolitanism). James and Jones (2014) suggest in their case study examining Toyota’s transfer of their production system to India that key ‘mediators’ (2187) (such as the new Japanese managing director, the newly appointed senior Indian managers, and the newly elected union shop stewards) played crucial roles in resolving severe cross-cultural conflicts and in localising the system in the Indian context. Sociologist Ikuya Sato (2005) argues that

publishers and editors function as ‘gate keepers’ who enable the creativity of authors to become a publishing business project. A group of Japanese marketing scholars have recently proposed that ‘cross-border gatekeepers’ play a key role in exporting creative products: they facilitate such export by mediating between the exporting country’s creative industry and the importing country’s local consumer, and by modifying (or localising) creative products and services to suit the taste of local consumers (Matsui, Suzuki et al. 2014; Matsui, Uehara et al. 2014). Marketing professor Yuuichi Washida (2014: 97-140) conducts a case study on a Japanese designer who won a contract with a Chinese real estate developer to design a condominium building in Beijing. The resulting product was ‘a matter of regret’ (123) for the designer: Washida argues that one of the most significant obstacles preventing the Japanese designer from collaborating smoothly with the Chinese developer was less a difference in design creativity and more the huge differences in the way the construction process is managed in Japan and in China. Washida suggests that some sort of mediating measures are necessary if the Japanese design industry is to penetrate the Chinese market.

Roughly speaking, the above studies depict how brokers function in generating (and benefiting from) social change at an abstract level. They do not closely examine such activities at the level of everyday work, let alone give detailed depictions of the discrepancies such brokers face and how they intermediate them. As for the discrepancies of art versus commerce/management, the brokerages of the two orientations depicted in some of the above works have been described in a celebratory manner as opening up new (global)

opportunities for the local products and players. Bai (2012) writes about anticorruption writers in China:

The ability to invoke ‘people’ gives anticorruption writers a feeling of mission and altruism. It provides a psychological buffer zone that is central to their ability to act comfortably as cultural brokers, because it not only creates an imagined distance between the writers and the propaganda apparatus, but also justifies market-based calculations by treating ‘people’ and the market as interchangeable terms. (399)

Such a stance makes one wonder whether there are any conflicts – especially ‘arts for art’s sake’ type accusations or hesitations from the artists’ side to be incorporated in the commerce/management side – in such brokerage processes. As for the discrepancies between the Japanese and Indian ways of doing business, James and Jones (2014) tell us very little about how such mediators actually resolve such conflicts.

Nissim Otmazgin (2011, 2014) is one of the few social scientists to approach the globalisation of Japanese popular culture (including anime) in terms of entrepreneurship. Emphasising the necessity of understanding the globalisation of Japanese popular culture in terms of entrepreneurship, he exhibits his understanding of entrepreneurship as follows:

[...] entrepreneurship in popular culture is, ultimately, the process of identifying market opportunities, converting innovations, culture, fashion and the like into commercialized products, and forming new organizational arrangements to support and manage these operations. (2011: 272)

[...] entrepreneurship is essentially the process of identifying potentially successful market opportunities, as well as products and genres, localizing them to suit local tastes and needs, and marketing them to a specific group of potential consumers. Entrepreneurship in anime also includes embedding cultural innovations into local productions and forming new organizational arrangements (like outsourcing) to support and manage these operations. Even in an era of globalization, where ideas, images and cultures are supposed to circulate freely

and easily, entrepreneurs play a pivotal role as mediators, bridging cultures and markets.

Entrepreneurs exploring and creating new initiatives in anime – motivated by the search for new producible materials – are paving new marketing routes, gauging new materials, and encouraging the establishment of transnational mechanisms for producing and delivering anime [...]. Moreover, the work of entrepreneurs may have wider social and cultural implications for consumers since they do not only generate value in the economic sense, but unintentionally also in terms of new images, feelings and messages. [...] Entrepreneurs in anime do not only construct mechanisms for commodifying and marketing cultural and artistic creativity, but also unintentionally disseminate ideas, emotions and sensibilities together with the commodities. (2014: 68-69)

Although the above understanding of entrepreneurship converges roughly around the same debate I have shown in this section, and although I do agree with him at a very general level in seeing entrepreneurship in this way in terms of anime's globalisation, the implications derived by Otmazgin from this concept widely depart from, and on some points even oppose, those of this thesis. Firstly, while Otmazgin intends to provide a general picture of what entrepreneurs do in the realm of anime's globalisation, such a depiction seems *too general* for this thesis. Although Otmazgin emphasises the bridging function of the entrepreneurs, he is unclear in what precisely such entrepreneurs are bridging. His attempt to understand entrepreneurs as people who convert *innovations, culture, fashion and the like* into commercialised products shows this lack of clarity. He pays little attention to the sociocultural and moral nuances within which such entrepreneurs are contextualised in the Japanese popular culture sector and the target overseas market. For example, although Otmazgin admires the anime production GONZO as one of these entrepreneurs, and mentions how successfully it allied with US players in developing new anime projects (61-

62), he does not refer to the fact that the production was often negatively received in the Japanese anime sector (as mentioned in Chapter 1). Casually juxtaposing a business executive such as Haim Saban (president of Saban Entertainment, one of the biggest media conglomerates in the world) and Japanese pop group Puffy as examples of entrepreneurs (65), also shows that Otmazgin is not as discriminating as this thesis in identifying the discrepancies of art versus commerce in examining the globalisation process of Japanese popular culture. Similarly, although he introduces the entrepreneurial business projects carried out by a Hong Kong entertainment company to make ‘constellation albums’ i.e. albums ‘which include collections of songs by different artists’ (which ‘was not an easy task’ because ‘they had to coordinate the interests of the different artists and agents and go through long negotiations with the various copyright holders’: Otmazgin 2011: 270), he goes no further to investigate how they actually resolved the multiple interests of the relevant players through such ‘long negotiations.’ Although Otmazgin also mentions the difference in the ‘working culture’ as one of the obstacles in the way of successful Japanese-American collaborations, he runs off into the ‘the key to success in the anime business is’ type of business prescriptive conclusions without examining such working culture discrepancies in detail (2014: 66-67). Perhaps the biggest difference between Otmazgin and this thesis is what we think entrepreneurs bring into the trans-Asian anime circulation through their bridging activities. Examining (roughly) the entrepreneurs’ activities in East Asian markets, Otmazgin argues that their ‘entrepreneurial vision’ is ‘unintentionally spurring feelings of

“Asian” sameness within the cultural geography of East Asia’ (260). As shown above, and as will be shown ethnographically in the following chapters, the entrepreneurial business project conducted in India (from Japan) *intentionally* played up the Indo-Japanese *differences* within the Asian region; manipulating or negotiating those borderlines was not the by-product of the case business project, but the very centre of its entrepreneurial activities.

The ethnography in the following chapters fills the gaps revealed in the literature above, and closely examines how successfully (or unsuccessfully) the ‘spheres’ of the socioeconomic ‘circular flows’ of the Japanese anime sector and Indian market were bridged, negotiated, manipulated, and re-fashioned into a subsequent equilibrium by the case entrepreneurial venture business.

## **Methodology**

In this section, I will explain how I conducted the fieldwork for this thesis. The group of people I observed/interviewed were mainly drawn from the Japanese anime sector and people in and outside Japan interested in doing business with it (including the case entrepreneur). As mentioned in the previous chapter, there are significant complexities involved in fieldwork in the Japanese anime sector. Moreover, as will be examined in detail in the next chapter, the Japanese anime sector is notorious for being closed towards outsiders: members describe themselves as forming a *mura shakai* (small-town community), strongly

distinguishing between ‘outsiders’ and ‘insiders’. These features make it difficult for ethnographers to penetrate into the sector, and require them to give explicit explanations of how they established rapport with its members.

### *‘Nativity’ in approaching the Japanese anime sector*

It is necessary for me to disclose my background as an ex-insider in the Japanese anime sector, which has heavily influenced the way in which I found my way into the sector. My position also interrogates the broader debate surrounding issues on ‘native anthropology,’ including the debate on who (including ethnographers) can intellectually represent a certain group of people, and how (reviewed in the below). This issue is rarely investigated in detail in studies on the Japanese anime sector.

When I started the field research for this thesis, I was *not* a completely fresh researcher (in other words, an outsider) in the anime sector. I ethnographically researched a sector of which I was once an active member. I have long been committing to this sector (focusing particularly on the topic of anime businesses’ overseas expansion), academically, professionally and personally, even before coming to Oxford in 2013 to embark on the research for this thesis. I have been an active player in this field, and many people in the anime sector have known about me since 2007. I worked for METI until 2012, and between 2007 and 2009 METI sent me to Cornell University to conduct an ethnographic investigation of the actual localisation process of a certain anime work in the US market. Holding a dual

status as a Cornell graduate student majoring in anthropology and as a METI official, I conducted fieldwork over a two month period in the Los Angeles area to interview many anime businesspeople (including expatriates from Japanese anime companies) for my master's thesis. I also conducted field research into the anime conventions held all around the United States. My master's thesis for Cornell University on anime's localisation process in the US was later translated into Japanese and published as a monograph in 2010 (Mihara 2010a). After returning to Japan from the United States in 2009, I started working as a specialist on the globalisation of anime on the basis of my experience in the US (alongside my main work at METI). I published multiple articles, and co-edited a special issue of a business journal (*Hitotsubashi Business Review*) on the globalisation of Japanese animation with a marketing professor (Matsui and Mihara 2010; Mihara 2010b, 2010c; Mihara and Yamazaki 2010). As a specialist, I also attended (and was invited to) numerous symposia and conferences on anime's globalisation.

In 2011, I was transferred to METI's newly established division, the Creative Industries Division (CID), as one of its founding members (and as its 'third ranked' deputy director). The division was tasked with promoting the exportation of Japan's creative industry, including the anime industry (the Cool Japan policy). My expertise on the globalisation of anime, which I had been cultivating since 2007, converged and synergised with this professional occupation. During my time in CID, I was in charge of making the

governmental definition of creative industries and measuring their market size.<sup>16</sup> I also compiled a report with a consulting firm to target overseas markets for the anime sector to expand its businesses, and helped implement five joint government and private overseas business projects on creative industries (including anime businesses). My personal background as a long-time, hard-core anime fan (*otaku*) from my childhood had a positive effect on working with people in the anime sector who are sceptical of (and sometimes hostile to) government officials. Using my *otaku* knowledge, I intentionally used insider terms and languages and chose effective channels when communicating with people in the anime sector.

I resigned from METI at the end of 2012, and published another book in 2014 that reviewed my experience as a CID official and argued that the government and anime sector could work together to expand the anime business overseas successfully (Mihara 2014). Throughout this time, I was also privately engaging in grass-roots activities to introduce and spread anime (and other Japanese popular culture) to the rest of the world. I am a member of an international voluntary circle (D.P.H.) to introduce Japanese popular culture overseas, which held numerous introductory panels at international Japanese pop culture conventions and brought many semi-professional creators, composers, musicians, DJs, and dancers to such events (for example conventions held in Los Angeles, Kassel, Frankfurt, Taipei, Wiesbaden, Honolulu, Mexico City, and Santiago). I was also a member of the committee to

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<sup>16</sup> The Japanese version of the definition of the creative industries (METI 2012a: 8) mentioned in the previous section was one of the outcomes of this work.

launch the world fan convention on VOCALOID, a pop music vocal synthesis software developed by the major Japanese music company Yamaha, at Kakegawa (Shizuoka prefecture, Japan) in 2013 and 2015. I am also a global promotion representative of a creative film project that created a fusion between VOCALOID and Bunraku (Japan's traditional puppet plays), using real Bunraku puppets and puppeteers alongside songs created by VOCALOID under the official authorisation of the Japan Bunraku Association. I gave an introductory presentation at the project's world premiere screening in London.

My positionality towards the anime sector has the potential to radically interrogate the broader debate on ethnography as a methodology that was famously framed by Geertz (1983), who suggested that a 'native' cannot know and represent intellectually the community he/she belongs to. He framed the task of ethnography as follows:

to produce an interpretation of the way a people lives which is neither imprisoned within their mental horizons, an ethnography of witchcraft as written by a witch, nor systematically deaf to the distinctive tonalities of their existence, an ethnography of witchcraft as written by a geometer. (57)

Following Geertz's categorisation, I (writing a thesis about a group to which I once belonged) might be contextualised, or caricatured, as another 'witch' trying to explain the 'witchcraft' of the Japanese anime sector while still 'imprisoned within their mental horizons' and thus unable to take critical distance from them. One may wonder whether I can legitimately and intellectually represent the Japanese anime sector.

This implicit assumption that ‘natives’ cannot intellectually represent their own cultures has nevertheless been intensively interrogated in the realm of anthropology (e.g. Abu-Lughod 1991; Gwaltney 1976; Jones 1970; Narayan 1993). Historical studies of anthropology/ethnography as an institution have revealed how this discipline has established its authority as an exclusive way to represent different cultures by subordinating other types of people and their writings/narratives, such as missionaries, administrators, traders, travellers, and ‘natives’ (cf. Clifford 1988: 26-32). The existence of a Japanese nativity (e.g. how Japanese ‘natives’ have been studied and represented by ‘Western’ Japanologists, the implicit power relations between the two, and how one could overcome such relationships) has been argued about by anthropologists in the Japanese academic arena for a while, following the above line of debate (Kato 2006; Kuwayama 2006, 2008; Ota 1998; Shimizu 2001; Yamamoto 2006). However, in contrast, English language studies on the anthropology of Japan have little to say on this topic. For example, an edited volume collecting reflections of scholars on their fieldwork experiences in Japan excludes those of Japanese native fieldworkers by restricting the ‘contributions from nonnative fieldworkers’ (Bestor et al. eds. 2003: 4), assuming that ‘the methodological implications of immersion in a foreign cultural setting make the conduct of fieldwork very different for natives and nonnatives’ (Ibid.). Anthropologist Jennifer Robertson (2005) touches on this topic in her writing on the relationship between Japan and anthropology, but does not go beyond the schoolbook accounts:

One of my points here is that confidence and effectiveness in exercising one's authorial "voice" ought not to lie in phenotype or genealogical claims or a childhood in Japan, but in the assiduous fieldwork and archival research necessary to generate historically resonant, thick descriptions and subtly evocative interpretations of people's lives in all their messy complexity. However, as someone who was raised in Japan, I would be the last person to dismiss the advantages to an ethnographer of the profound familiarity that long-term residence and socializing (and socialization) in a place can afford. In my experience, though, such familiarity is most effectively conveyed not by superficial claims to "insider" status and, by extension, to arcane insights, but in the thoughtful choice of an ethnographic subject and the caliber, subtlety, and resilience of research undertaken to elucidate it. (11)

Especially when it comes to studies and arguments on Japanese popular culture (including anime) conducted by the scholars and other writers from the West, sensitivity towards Japan's 'nativity' and the 'nativity' of the Japanese people in context detailed above is often casually ignored. For example, an American journalist Roland Kelts (2007) wrote in the afterword of the Japanese-translated version of his book about how Japanese popular culture has penetrated the US, claiming that the reason for the book's popularity in the US was 'because your culture, the Japanese culture has been hiding from the world (*sekai kara kakureteita*)' (316-317). The way in which he casually contextualised (and promoted) his position *vis-à-vis* his fellow Americans and his Japanese readers<sup>17</sup> as a prominent spokesperson of a Japanese popular culture that was otherwise 'hidden' from the world might remind anthropologists of the following phrase used by Said (1979) in *Orientalism* on how

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<sup>17</sup> The afterword is titled 'Afterword for the readers of the Japanese version (*Nihongoban dokusha e no atogaki*)' (Kelts 2007: 315). This suggests Kelts is intentionally aiming the argument that Japanese culture has been hiding from the world at the Japanese people.

‘the West’ represents ‘the Orient’:

The exteriority of the representation is always governed by some version of the truism that if the Orient could represent itself, it would; since it cannot, the representation does the job, for the West, and *faute de mieux*, for the poor Orient.  
(21)

In other words, Kelts’ indiscreet remark provokes the following set of contradictory questions that have long been discussed in the realm of anthropology. From whom has Japanese popular culture been hidden? Isn’t Japan a part of the ‘world’? Who, then, has ‘discovered’ Japanese culture?

I myself have some experience of being treated as a ‘native’ of Cool Japan when I worked for METI CID. During that time, I was interviewed on the Cool Japan policy as one of the ‘native’ members practicing ‘witchcraft’ by many scholars from western universities and institutions. My background as a Cornell graduate seemed to mean nothing to them, except it meant they could conduct interviews with me comfortably in English (which is not common in interviewing Japanese people). Knowing that western scholars tend to emphasise the sanitising power of the Japanese nation state when it comes to cultural policy, I (as a Cornell master’s degree holder in anthropology) once intentionally provided a western scholar with alternative points of view about the government’s commitment to the anime sector when interviewed by her in the CID office. The result was that her journal article still emphasised the Japanese government’s power in taming the country’s grass-roots culture by totally ignoring what I said in the interview.

The meta-feature of this thesis, i.e. the fact that it is about the Japanese anime sector written by an ex-insider, could thus be situated within this context of native anthropology and the relative scarcity of such perspectives, especially among English academics when anthropologically approaching the Japanese anime sector. It seems odd to me that although anime has been globalised for a while, and although many Japanese and non-Japanese scholars (including anthropologists) have approached the sector, very few have investigated – and quite a few have ignored – the above line of argument.

My experience as an ex-insider of the Japanese anime sector, when combined with the above nuance, seems to show that the line between ‘native’ and ‘non-native’ is not as clear-cut as it appears (cf. Narayan 1993), but is more situational (cf. Kondo 1990). The following vignette vividly highlights this aspect of nativity. Even after starting my fieldwork for this thesis in the Japanese anime sector, I was interviewed by another fieldworker from an English-speaking country who was interested in a similar research topic, and wanted to learn about my experience as an insider in the sector. He was interested in interviewing an anime producer I had known for a while, and I acted as a translator for the interview session because the fieldworker’s level of Japanese was not sufficient to conduct the interview comfortably. During the interview, I found the producer’s communication with the fieldworker strikingly different from his communication with me. I realised that he was in ‘official mode’, and that most of his answers were already written in the textbooks on the anime business, which were published in large quantity in Japan and are easy to access (if

you can read Japanese). Knowing that the fieldworker was having difficulty in accessing the ‘closed’ anime sector, I promised to introduce him to some people whom I knew in the sector (which I later did). After the interview session and after parting with the fieldworker, the producer and I went to a Japanese-style bar (*izakaya*) for a drinking session (*nomikai*), during which it was my turn to be the ethnographer. I then heard from him that he was about to quit his current anime production company and move to another one. He told me during the *nomikai* why he decided to do so, which was a crucial piece of information for my ethnography.

I do not intend to go further into this topic in this thesis, since this is not its main focus. I do not intend to use my positionalities towards the Japanese anime sector uncritically as ‘superficial claims to “insider” status’ (Robertson 2005: 11). I am sure the ‘Rashomon’ nature of the Japanese anime sector (as overviewed in the previous chapter) will make some people question my eligibility to represent it: they might not accept me as an ‘insider’. By the same token, however, I intend to argue that the issue of ‘nativity’ is not a dead concept, at least when approaching the anime sector, as some anthropologists insist (e.g. Morisawa 2013), but requires even more careful and explicit consideration (as I have done in this section) and is worth further investigation.

### *Overview of the fieldwork*

I conducted my fieldwork over the course of twelve months in 2014-2015 in Tokyo (Japan), and Delhi, Mumbai, and Bangalore (India), spending 11 months in Tokyo and one month in India (consisting of approximately three 10-day trips). While in the field, I conducted a participant observation at one entrepreneurial overseas anime business project aiming at the Indian market (which will be described below in detail), and interviewed more than 30 key players in the Japanese anime sector about their visions, stances, and practices on overseas businesses. As will be shown in the next chapter, Tokyo is virtually the only city in which the anime industry accumulates in Japan. Anime production studios are grouped in western Tokyo, and other related companies, such as comic (*manga*) publishers, TV stations, ad agencies and goods manufacturers, are scattered around the central, southern and eastern Tokyo areas. Delhi was the city in which the project's main prospective business partners resided, and was thus the main hub for developing their business in India.

The ethnography of this thesis tries to depict how the relevant players in the Japanese anime sector (and in the Indian market) make sense of the globalisation of their anime business in the Indian market through their everyday transactions and negotiations. This approach widely overlaps with the studies that try to capture what media scholar John Caldwell (2008) calls the 'production culture' of creative industries, in other words how the members of the creative industry community reflexively understand the sociocultural context of their work through their daily working practices: what it is to make films and TV

programmes in Hollywood (Ibid.), what it is to be ‘independent’ filmmakers in Hollywood (Ortner 2013), and what it is to make ‘Bollywood’ films in India (Ganti 2012). The ethnography of this thesis adds to this accumulation of studies by focusing on the managerial practices of the creative projects (e.g. how to sell creative products) rather than on their creative practices (e.g. how to make films). The ethnography of this thesis is therefore, so to speak, less about ‘production culture’ and more about the ‘business culture’ of creative industries.

Although I utilised the personal network I had developed before starting doctorate research at Oxford in finding the case business project, how I encountered the entrepreneur Takahiro Ikeyama<sup>18</sup> and his start-up venture company DTA – the central focuses of this thesis – was totally a product of chance. I did not know him before starting fieldwork in Japan. I was openly searching for anime business projects that were interested in doing or starting business in India. Before entering the field, I told my friends in the anime sector about my research plans and asked them to inform me when they came across projects that were considering doing business in India. Several months prior to entering the field, I ran into a company (A-company) that fitted that description. I decided to observe their project for my fieldwork and was actually permitted to affiliate with the company as a visiting researcher. Desk, PC, and other facilities were provided, and I was expected to co-work with the project members. Right after starting my fieldwork at A-company, however, it became

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<sup>18</sup> All the proper names of companies, business projects, individuals, and so on that appear in this ethnography are pseudonyms.

clear that it would take a long time for the project to start and that there would be little or no actual project work undertaken during my fieldwork term. It was at that time, when I was on the verge of losing my field site, that another friend of mine in the anime sector, the anime producer Katsuyuki Dobashi, introduced me to Ikeyama. Dobashi was one of the friends whom I had told about my research interests before starting my fieldwork. When he was approached by Ikeyama to become his business collaborator, Dobashi decided to introduce Ikeyama to me, and proposed that we should join his business together. At that time Ikeyama was already starting to negotiate with Raghav Menon, an Indian cultural entrepreneur residing in Delhi, to become his business collaborator in India. I got permission to participate in Ikeyama's project while remaining affiliated with A-company, and I started to participate in and observe Ikeyama's business.

The following is a detailed description of the main characters that appear in this thesis's ethnography.

*Takahiro Ikeyama:* The main figure on whom I focus in the ethnography of the following chapters. An entrepreneur who left his job in global finance and started his own one-man venture company called 'DTA' in Tokyo in 2014. The aim of DTA was to establish an anime business, i.e. an online distribution platform for anime goods, in India to bridge the Japanese anime industry and the Indian market. This required Ikeyama to develop a network of business alliances with Indian players. What he had to do first was find Indian local

distributors and retailers to whom DTA could supply anime goods purchased from Japanese anime goods manufacturers, and allow them to distribute and retail anime goods to Indian consumers. Ikeyama cannot sell anime goods directly to Indian consumers due to the Indian government's foreign direct investment regulations. Raghav Menon (see below) was the first player with whom he considered establishing such a partnership. Ikeyama and Menon tried to establish a joint venture company in Delhi called 'MAX'. Although their initial plan was to make MAX an Indian local receiver and distributor of anime goods provided from Japan through DTA, the plan as a whole was eventually abandoned. Being himself an 'outsider' in the Japanese anime sector (as neither an insider member nor an anime fan) Ikeyama also had to become a trustworthy middleman for the Japanese anime sector, through whom its insiders (for example the anime goods manufacturers) could reliably distribute their products for distribution or sale in India. In doing so, Ikeyama succeeded in securing Dobashi, an anime producer (see below), as a collaborator from inside the anime sector.

*Katsuyuki Dobashi:* An anime producer in a leading anime production company, NEX Pro, a middle-rank producer in the industry who has produced several anime shows. His aspiration is to make the anime industry more business/producer-oriented. His ambition is to (in his words) 'establish a reputation in the anime sector as an anime producer who has cultivated a new market for the anime industry,' and he is informally collaborating with DTA's business as a volunteer by providing his expertise and networks after the office hours

of his main job at NEX Pro. He is a 'huge fan' of my academic work (he is also the same age as me) and insists that my previous book (Mihara 2010a) was hugely useful in the real international anime business. He thus expects me to become a leading theorist to direct the global anime business.<sup>19</sup> I have been intimately acquainted with Dobashi for many years, and it was he who introduced me to Ikeyama and his business.

*Raghav Menon:* A young entrepreneur based in Delhi, India. A huge fan of Japanese popular culture from his early childhood, he is now one of the executive members of a cultural/trade event held periodically in Delhi (the NCR show). Japanese (popular) culture is one of the prominent features of the event, and one of Menon's central functions at the event is to liaise with Japan. He also has his own company, called 'BAND', which runs an e-commerce site for retailing Japanese and other Asian countries' pop and lifestyle goods to Indian consumers.

*Yōichi Okabayashi:* Another young Japanese entrepreneur, currently residing in Delhi. After graduating from a Japanese university and working for several companies in Japan, he moved to Delhi in the early 2010s and has since been acting as an independent corporate consultant. Ikeyama later formed a partnership with Okabayashi (after Ikeyama broke up with Menon) and established another joint venture company called CAP in Delhi. CAP now

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<sup>19</sup> It is extremely rare for a person in the anime sector to appreciate academic work. The anime industry is a hugely on-the-job-training-oriented sector, and thus sceptical about the applications of academic research in their business.

runs an online anime goods distribution website in India, and distributes anime goods sent by DTA.

The main focus of this thesis on Ikeyama's business is twofold. Framing Ikeyama as a 'broker,' the thesis will focus on (1) how he behaved in Japan to persuade the people in the Japanese anime sector (including Dobashi) to become his business partners, and (2) how he behaved in India to persuade the relevant Indian players (including Menon) to become his business partners. The former will be ethnographically examined in Chapter 4, and the latter will ethnographically be examined in Chapter 5. Since both activities were interrelated, the dynamism of his bridging activities – how Ikeyama's activity in India influenced his activity in Japan and vice versa, how he used his experience in India when negotiating with players in Japan, and so on – will also be evaluated.

One of the major milestones of Ikeyama's business during my fieldwork was to announce the launch of MAX during the NCR show. However, he was unable to complete his negotiations with Menon before the event. This was not only because of lack of time and manpower, but also because of the discrepancies in art versus commerce and in business customs that had gradually become evident (and found to be difficult to resolve) during the negotiation between the Japanese side and the Indian side. Ikeyama instead used the NCR show as an opportunity to 'test' Menon to see whether he was an appropriate business partner for DTA in India. Such a 'test' included inviting key players from the Japanese anime sector

(such as anime directors and animators) to the event through Dobashi's network. Ikeyama observed how Menon hosted those guests at the event. The result was not satisfactory, and Ikeyama eventually decided not to ally with Menon. Ikeyama then agreed with Okabayashi to establish an alternative local joint venture company (CAP) in Delhi. In parallel with negotiating with Menon, Ikeyama also contacted numerous anime companies (mainly anime goods manufacturers) in Japan, utilising Dobashi's network in the anime sector, to ask them to distribute their products through DTA to retailers in the Indian market.

The 'deal' I made with Ikeyama when participating in his business as a fieldworker was that, in exchange for being permitted to fully observe the business processes of DTA, I would provide them with access to my personal network in the Japanese anime sector and to my professional/academic/(ex)insider expertise on anime's globalisation to facilitate their business. After starting participant observation at DTA, I was treated by them as an active full member of their project to supplement their lack of human resource. I have performed 'executive' work for them, such as introducing Ikeyama to government officials and corporate executives, and providing consultancy advice on the general direction of DTA's business, as well as 'shop-floor' work such as drafting the company prospectus for their website, preparing documents for applying for a bank loan, carrying their products from Japan to India (and from one Indian city to another), taking photos when DTA participated in the NCR show and other events in India and Japan, and drafting the sales reports that DTA use in their meetings with Japanese anime goods manufacturers to give them feedback on

how well (or badly) goods distributed through DTA were doing on the Indian market. Through such activities, I developed a rapport with the members of DTA. Some ‘deep play’ type emergencies (cf. Geertz 1973) occurred, especially when carrying out business together in India, and our co-experience of surviving such emergencies together also functioned to reinforce the rapport between me and Ikeyama (and the other members as well).<sup>20</sup>

Since DTA was at the very beginning of its start-up phase when I started participating in their project, and thus had no reputation in either Japan and India, it seemed as though Ikeyama was intentionally using my background to legitimise his business, especially my identity as an ex-METI official and an active researcher from Oxford. Cultural anthropologist Ian Condry (2006) reports how his own background as an American researcher had an empowering effect on a Japanese hip-hop artist when he was observing that artist’s business negotiation with a producer from a record company. In that meeting, the artist told the producer ‘someone from America is even studying Crazy-A’s history. That’s how important he is to the hip-hop scene’ (188). Similarly, Ikeyama explicitly and implicitly mentioned my background when I attended meetings with business stakeholders. He once told a Japanese anime company that I was DTA’s *komon*, i.e. senior advisor, which has the nuance in Japanese business contexts that an influential person of senior age/position is patronising a company (although I am junior to Ikeyama in terms of age). Such a behaviour

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<sup>20</sup> For example, Ikeyama and I were once stopped by customs at one Indian airport, which tried to impose an unbelievably high tariff on DTA’s sample products. We jointly negotiated back and made them recognise that we would only pay a legitimate level of tariff.

of Ikeyama might also be due to the fact that the players involved in the DTA project were relatively young for the business proposal to be taken seriously by the Japanese anime sector (in which, as in other business sectors in Japan, seniority plays a key role in enhancing one's influence): Ikeyama was in his early 40s; Dobashi and I were in our mid-30s; Menon was presumably around the same age (I did not try to specify his age during my fieldwork); and Okabayashi was even younger. When Ikeyama was negotiating with Menon, whose performance was not satisfactory, Ikeyama mentioned my ex-METI background and told Menon that 'the whole of Japan is watching you' to put pressure on him to improve his performance. My background function here nevertheless seemed more complicated than that of Condry. I was not someone who had just come from Oxford and was alien to the Japanese entertainment business, but rather someone who came originally from the Japanese anime sector (with which Ikeyama was negotiating) *via* Oxford. One manager in a toy company, who I have known since I was working for METI CID, told me that the fact I was participating in DTA increased DTA's credibility when he was approached by Ikeyama.

How Ikeyama actually carried out his DTA start-up business stood in sharp contrast to the working norms with which I was familiar. The way he coped with his business seemed, at least initially to me, to be highly disorganised and contingent. Ikeyama had to deal with all the related tasks by himself, and there was often not enough time to do them comprehensively. As a result, many issues were delayed, left undecided, forgotten, or evaporated completely. This made the level of his business predictability low, and he had to

react immediately to issues. Ikeyama often did not try to consider as many options as possible when he had to decide something, because there was often not enough time and he had other things to do. Although his decision-making was quite fast, he was also fast at changing his decisions, often using widely differing reasons to justify this. For example, he did not seem to make a comprehensive search in finding Indian local business partners: he seemed to consider allying with Menon just because he ran into him. Similarly, he switched quickly to an alliance with Okabayashi after rupturing with Menon just because he ran into him. Having internalised the opposite work values during my participation in the Japanese bureaucracy at METI (against Ikeyama's disorganised and contingent way of carrying out his works), which could be conceptualised as the 'rational-comprehensive' approach (Lindblom 1959: to list and prioritise all options when trying to make a decision and to choose the best one through carefully comparing each option's risks and benefits), I initially experienced slight difficulties in adapting to Ikeyama's way of decision-making. I was often left unsure about whether the sequence of decisions he made in the business process (e.g. selecting Menon as a prospective local business partner in India) were the 'best' ones, and thus whether the results of his decisions (e.g. to break up with Menon and ally with Okabayashi instead) were also the 'best' for his business. The observed fact is that he did make some critical decisions, and these did carry his business forward. I soon learned that such a style was not unusual for entrepreneurs when carrying out their businesses, and I also found how deeply I had internalised the work values of Japanese bureaucracy.

There were no fixed or bounded ‘field sites’ for this ethnography. DTA had no physical office. Although its nominal office address is at Ikeyama’s home – where he lives with his wife, and thus where I could not stay to observe – Ikeyama mostly developed his business outside such an ‘office.’ Such business development included meetings (both off-line and online) with DTA’s collaborators (including me), business partners, customers, and so on, that took place at multiple/random places in Japan and India. Such places included company meeting rooms, cafés, co-working spaces, shop-floors, party venues, hotels, restaurants, government/customs/bank counters, on the way to (back from) meetings while riding trains(metros)/cars/(auto)rickshaws, convention venues, and so on. It seems irregular as a business ethnography that, although I was based in my own office during my fieldwork in A-company, where I was provided a desk, PC, and so on, A-company is not the central focus of this ethnography. Whenever DTA meetings were scheduled to take place, I travelled from A-company to the meeting venues to observe them. In other words, the core of this ethnography is formed by meetings held by DTA at random places in Japan and India.

Online communications (such as Skype calls and emails) were also non-negligible for the development of DTA’s business. Since all relevant players resided in different places in Japan and India and had no daily physical contact, online communications played a key role in DTA’s business: keeping players in touch, helping them share or update the latest information about DTA, facilitating discussions about the direction of DTA’s business, offering meetings and business presentations to prospective business partners, and so on. A

large number of emails were exchanged throughout DTA's business.

I participated in most of the above-mentioned meetings, unless Ikeyama decided that I should not. I also had most of the emails copied to my Oxford email address, again unless Ikeyama decided otherwise. Although Ikeyama was unimaginably open in sharing his and DTA's business emails with me, I nevertheless assume that there must have been many emails that Ikeyama decided not to copy me into, and which I of course could not consider in this ethnography.

A typical, or ideal, day in my fieldwork went as follows. In the early morning, I would show up at a café in Tokyo's business district zone to meet Ikeyama and Dobashi, and make and discuss a number of decisions on DTA business with them. We frequently held these morning café meetings because they were virtually the only chances for Ikeyama, Dobashi and I to meet in person (otherwise we communicated with each other by email). In other words, such meetings were an informal 'executive board meeting' for DTA. The meetings were held at cafés (or sometimes at co-working spaces) because DTA had no physical office of its own, and they were held in the early mornings because Dobashi had his own job at NEX Pro. The meetings sometimes took place in the late evening after Dobashi's working hours. In terms of fieldwork, these meetings were one of the most important times for me to observe how Ikeyama (and Dobashi) undertook their DTA business. In the café, I sat with them to participate in their discussions while taking fieldnotes. I not only provided my professional opinions and suggestions on how to carry out DTA's business,

but I also asked questions about the details of the business to make my fieldnotes as accurate as possible. In this regard, I assume that I myself was viewed by them as a participant in their business as well as an individual observing them both visually (I would write my field notes during the meeting) and verbally (I asked questions for the purposes of the ethnography).<sup>21</sup>

After the morning meeting, we would separate for a while: Dobashi would go to his work at NEX Pro; I would go to A-company to observe their work on Indo-Japanese anime projects; and Ikeyama would return home, or to an *ad hoc* rented space (e.g. a co-working space) where he could access his business e-mail. Later in the day, before noon, Ikeyama would meet with an anime goods maker interested in distributing their products to DTA to be sold on the Indian market. In the late afternoon he would have a Skype meeting with Menon to discuss their MAX joint venture (the time difference between Tokyo and Delhi is three and a half hours, so this would be held in Delhi around noon). For both meetings I accompanied Ikeyama to support and observe his work. Dobashi would again join us at the end of the day at another café after his office hours to follow-up on Ikeyama's meetings, and we would discuss further directions for DTA's business. In observing Ikeyama's meeting with the anime goods maker, I would take trains or the metro to move from A-company to the anime goods maker's office. Ikeyama and I would meet at the nearest station to that

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<sup>21</sup> There was even a moment during which my fieldnotes functioned as the minutes for such a meeting. Once the participants could not remember the details of decisions made in the previous meetings, and I looked at my field notes to see what had been done.

company and visit them together. After the meeting, on our way back from the company to our next appointment (i.e. while walking from the company to the station, and while riding the train or the metro), Ikeyama and I would have a follow-up discussion regarding our meeting with the company to discuss whether their response to DTA's business proposal was positive or negative, what should be our next action *vis-à-vis* the company, and so on. I would again ask Ikeyama a number of ethnographic questions: for example, how did Ikeyama reflect on that meeting and on the response of the company towards his business proposal. The Skype meeting with Menon usually took place in a co-working space in the business district of Tokyo. We would rent a table and sit in front of Ikeyama's laptop to make a call through Ikeyama's Skype account. During the online meetings, I sat right next to Ikeyama, writing my fieldnotes while participating in and observing the discussion (as at the morning meeting). After the Skype meeting, we would move to the neighbouring café to wait for Dobashi. The follow-up meeting was carried out in the same way as for the morning meeting. Afterwards, I would once again go to A-company to check the updates on their anime business project, before finally returning home where I would reflect on that day's fieldwork and add supplementary remarks to my fieldnotes.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> This portrait is, as noted, a 'typical' and 'ideal' day for my fieldwork: the actual fieldwork did not necessarily go on exactly in the way depicted. There were, of course, many days when only some (or even none) of such meetings were held: for example, there were days when Ikeyama only met with an anime company, due to the DTA's (and Dobashi's) business scheduling. I myself scheduled interviews with other players in the Japanese anime sector during the vacant time on such days. At these times, however, e-mail communications and discussions between Ikeyama, Dobashi, Menon (Okabayashi), and myself (and sometimes with other stakeholders of DTA) continued seamlessly.

The mechanics of my fieldwork on Ikeyama's business practices in India were generally the same. I usually accompanied Ikeyama throughout his business trips and attended his business meetings with DTA's stakeholders, including Menon, that took place in multiple places in India (such as office rooms, cafés, shop floors, restaurants and convention venues). I talked with Ikeyama about his business while we moved from one place to another, for example while riding in taxis. We took the same flights and reserved rooms in the same hotels during our stay in the country, and sometimes even shared the same hotel room to save the budget.

One of the most prominent ethical issues that I faced in conducting my fieldwork on DTA's business is how to maintain the anonymity of its participants. Ikeyama (and others) was unbelievably open on this point as well. Ikeyama, Dobashi, Menon, and Okayabashi all gave me their consent to anonymise their personal names (which I did), but I did not have to anonymise the company and project names of their business.<sup>23</sup> Ikeyama also told me that I could 'write about anything' that I observed in the DTA business, except for a very few financial issues, which I agreed not to mention as they were very marginal to this research.<sup>24</sup> I decided, however, *not* to rely on their generous openness but voluntarily to take some

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<sup>23</sup> The consent form, which was approved by the University of Oxford before starting my fieldwork, was signed by all the participants of the DTA project (Ikeyama, Dobashi, Menon and Okayabashi) before I started observing their business. It explicitly reminded them of the risk that my research might be presented in a manner that would permit knowledgeable readers to infer their identities.

<sup>24</sup> I explicitly checked with Ikeyama many times during the fieldwork whether I could *really* write whatever I observed, and Ikeyama said yes whenever I asked. I also explicitly reminded Ikeyama many times that my research would not promote his business (something many corporate interlocutors of business ethnography misunderstand), but would rather criticise his business from an academic point of view. He responded whenever reminded by saying that it would not be a problem, and even suggested that it would be natural for me to depict his business faithfully from the perspective of my own academic interest.

measures to minimise the possibility of their being identified. I anonymised the names of the companies, projects and events that appear in this thesis. I also cut as much background information as possible relevant to the players and projects but with little relevance to the argument of this thesis. I intentionally blurred some ethnographic details that I found crucial to their identification. This included presenting the words of Ikeyama and Dobashi that I collected through observing actual incidents in their DTA business as consolidated comments, without referring to their ethnographic contexts (see Chapter 4).

Again, I do not intend to claim by this ethnography that Ikeyama's experience as depicted in the following chapters represents a comprehensive picture of the Japanese anime business's globalisation in the Indian market. There are, of course, a number of antecessors (both SMEs and big companies) in the realm of anime business in India. This thesis will not judge which businesses are 'good' and which are 'bad,' let alone advertise DTA as the 'best' or most 'promising' business project among its competitors. One big limitation of this ethnography is that, by choosing DTA as a case, it became difficult for me to interview its competitors in the anime sector that are also aiming at the Indian market. Although I did succeed in interviewing many of them by promising that I would keep their sensitive business information confidential (trade secrets), some interviews were conducted in a highly vigilant atmosphere. One may question the significance of focusing on such a small and volatile one-person business making little impact on Indian market and on overseas anime business. The focus of this case is, however, not so much on DTA's business impact

as on the social and cultural context of its business process. The Indian market is a multi-faceted arena and will show different features if a player takes different approaches. It depends on what kind of business model you adopt, which Indian city/region you choose for your business base, which local partners you ally with, and so on. The following ethnography is thus about what moving anime's overseas business from Japan to India looked like from Ikeyama's viewpoint.

## **Chapter 3: The Japanese Anime Sector in Tokyo as a Domestically Involuting Sector**

This chapter offers a background study and ethnographic overview of the structure and features of the Japanese anime sector as it will be depicted in the following chapters. After depicting the sector's mainstream business model (the production committee model), I will describe how the sector is accumulating in the Tokyo area, and how its players interconnect in carrying out their anime businesses. I will next examine how the Japanese anime sector incentivises and constrains its individuals in terms of developing overseas business, as well as how the sector employs the enigmatic 'domestic market centrism' to prioritise the Japanese domestic market and peripheralise overseas markets in everyday business practices (even though the sector must cultivate overseas markets for survival). I argue that this 'circular flow' of domestic market centrism is becoming more and more intense, and that the dynamics behind this can be explained in terms of 'involution' – the concept developed by the anthropologist Clifford Geertz and his successors to describe how a group develops internally by sticking to their existing modes of operations, rather than adopting an outward looking attitude by adopting new modes when exposed to a fluctuating external environment. By extracting the player's entrepreneurship as a key to invert this involutory tide, I will show how such entrepreneurial interventions have faced (and will face) protectionist hostility from the Japanese anime sector: the sector turns to the dichotomies of art versus

commerce and the ‘Japanese’ versus ‘foreign’ way of doing business when it faces such interventions. An entrepreneur needs to resolve these two dichotomies if he/she is to successfully carry out their entrepreneurial project with the sector to expand their anime business overseas.

### *Anime’s business model and the Japanese anime sector’s concentration in the Tokyo area*

How is anime developed into a business project? The current mode of producing anime projects is the production committee model,<sup>25</sup> in which multiple relevant players (such as publishers, TV stations, music companies, toy companies, video companies, advertising agencies, and anime production studios) enter into a partnership agreement to create and develop anime projects as a business (cf. Taniguchi and Asou 2010: 98). This business model is not exclusive to anime business, but also applies to the film sector (cf. UNIJAPAN 2009). The trend in the production of anime shifted from a sponsorship model to a production committee model. In the sponsorship model, a sponsor provides money as advertising expenditure to TV stations. Those TV stations use the money to outsource the creation of anime works to anime production companies. The anime production companies then create

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<sup>25</sup> This and the following four paragraphs of explanation on the production committee model summarises my understanding of this business model that I developed through my six years of professional experience in the field of anime industry (see Chapter 2), the fieldwork for this thesis and my documentary research. A number of commentary books and articles on anime’s production committee system are published in Japan (e.g. JFTC 2009; Kataoka 2011: 165-166; Taniguchi and Asou 2010). For English commentary on this business model, see for example Joo et al. (2013: 11-15) and Steinberg (2012: 172).

anime episodes and deliver them to the TV stations to be aired (cf. JFTC 2009: 7-8). The production committee model became dominant in anime in the 1990s (cf. JFTC 2009: 6; Steinberg 2012: 172). Legally speaking, the production committee is a voluntary partnership (in terms of Japan's Civil Code) among stakeholders in the production of anime (cf. JFTC 2009: 4-5).

This coordination is necessary for the project participants to cope with the risk and opportunities involved in an anime business. As with other creative industry sectors (cf. Caves 2000, 2003), the level of risk in the anime business is relatively high: it is extremely difficult to predict what kind of anime will succeed, and the cost of producing anime is high mainly due to the labour-intensive nature of making the shows. However, many players are SME-sized (at least much smaller than Japan's big national brands), and each player is unable to incur the whole cost of the project by themselves. On the other hand, there are many possible secondary uses of anime (such as using its characters on products), and such opportunities are attractive for many players. Therefore, they join together in the form of a production committee, sharing costs while also aiming to maximise the benefits from the anime project (cf. Joo et al. 2013: 15; Taniguchi and Asou 2010: 98-99).

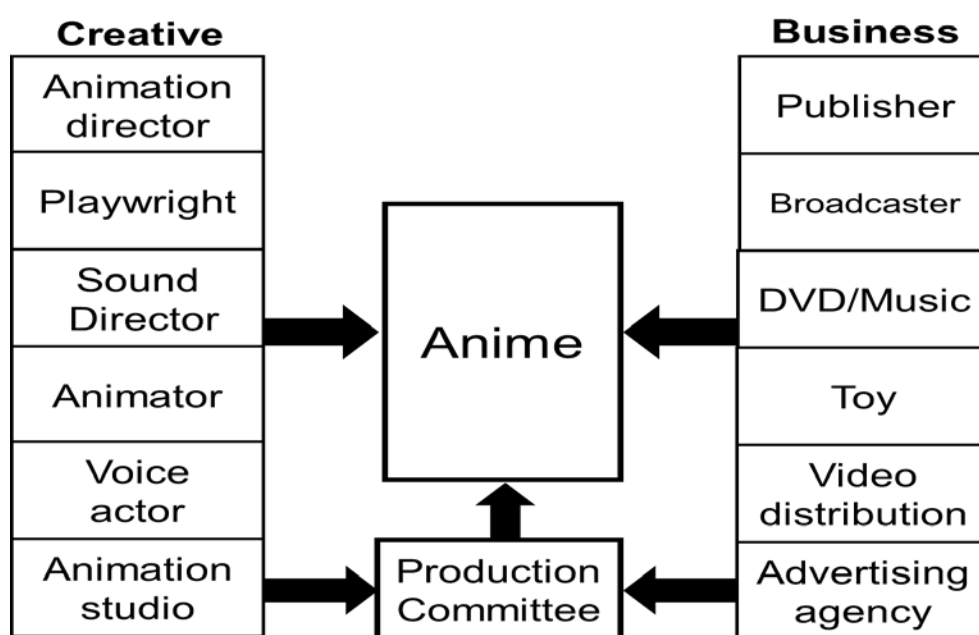
Each player invests in the committee and incurs a part of the project's cost. They share the rights generated from the project, and each player exercises a certain right related to anime as a business. For example, when a video maker invests in a certain anime project, they will get the right in return to make videograms (e.g. videotapes and DVDs) of the anime

episodes. In the same manner, a toy maker will make toys, a game maker will make games, an apparel maker will make clothing (such as character T-shirts), and a food company will make foods (such as character snacks) using the elements of the anime they invested in. In addition, advertisement agencies often become members of the committee to devise the anime's promotional strategies and facilitate communication within and outside the committee, especially with media companies. Advertisement agencies often propose and launch an anime project, involving manga publishers and other relevant players. Depending on the project, media companies (such as TV stations) and anime production studios (who actually create anime) may also become members of the production committee. Anime production studios sometimes do not become project members, and are only subcontracted by the committee to create anime episodes. Production committees are formed on an ad hoc basis. It is theoretically possible for anyone to become a member of an anime production committee as long as they can invest in the project (cf. Taniguchi and Asou 2010: 75-76, 80-85).

Borrowing the terminology of Moeran (1996) to describe the advertising business in Japan as 'tripartite' activity by clients, agencies, and media, the nature of anime businesses could be described as 'multi-party' businesses in which a single production committee partnership agreement per anime project involves multiple relevant players from the creative upper stream (e.g. manga/anime companies) to the more humdrum downstream (e.g. TV stations and toy makers) (cf. Goto 2013). This model could also be understood as the base

structure of anime's 'media-mix' (Steinberg 2009, 2012) – the creation of serial connections between and across media (serial/simultaneous development of a certain title's episodes in multiple media such as manga, anime, video game, novel, and so on) boosted by character merchandising. That is to say, 'the mediation of things and the thingification of media' (Lash and Lury 2007) in anime is carried out, for example, by the collaboration between TV stations (media) and toy companies (manufacturers) under the terms of an anime production committee partnership.

*Chart 3: Relevant players in creating and producing anime*



(Extracted and translated from Suwa et al. 2015)

Chart 3 schematically displays the typical structure of the multi-party anime business model depicted above. Anime projects are roughly divided into 'creative' work and

'business' work, and both sides contribute to the creation/production of anime. Financial resources are aggregated in the 'production committee' in which most 'business' players participate, and in which 'animation studios' participate occasionally (depending on the projects). Using this budget, a production committee outsource the creation works to an animation studio which hires, or outsources, the creative human resources (animation director, playwright, sound director, animator, and voice actor) needed to make anime shows. When they finish making anime episodes, they deliver them to the TV station (in some cases a member of the anime production committee) to be aired. After airing the anime, which makes the anime and its characters known to the public (fans), anime business players start to make and distribute relevant goods (such as DVDs and character merchandise) to monetise popularity and recoup the costs of creating the work. Committee meetings are held on a regular basis, normally in a conference room provided by one of the members: all the representatives from the production committee member companies attend the meeting, and they collectively discuss various managerial issues involved in their anime project, including reporting the sales of relevant goods, checking the quality of the merchandising, and considering new business directions.<sup>26</sup> The committee will disperse, or simply become inactive, after the dust of the anime project settles, and each member will move on to another anime project in alliance with different partners. The players on the 'business' side of anime mainly consist of relatively big companies, while the players on the 'creative' side of anime

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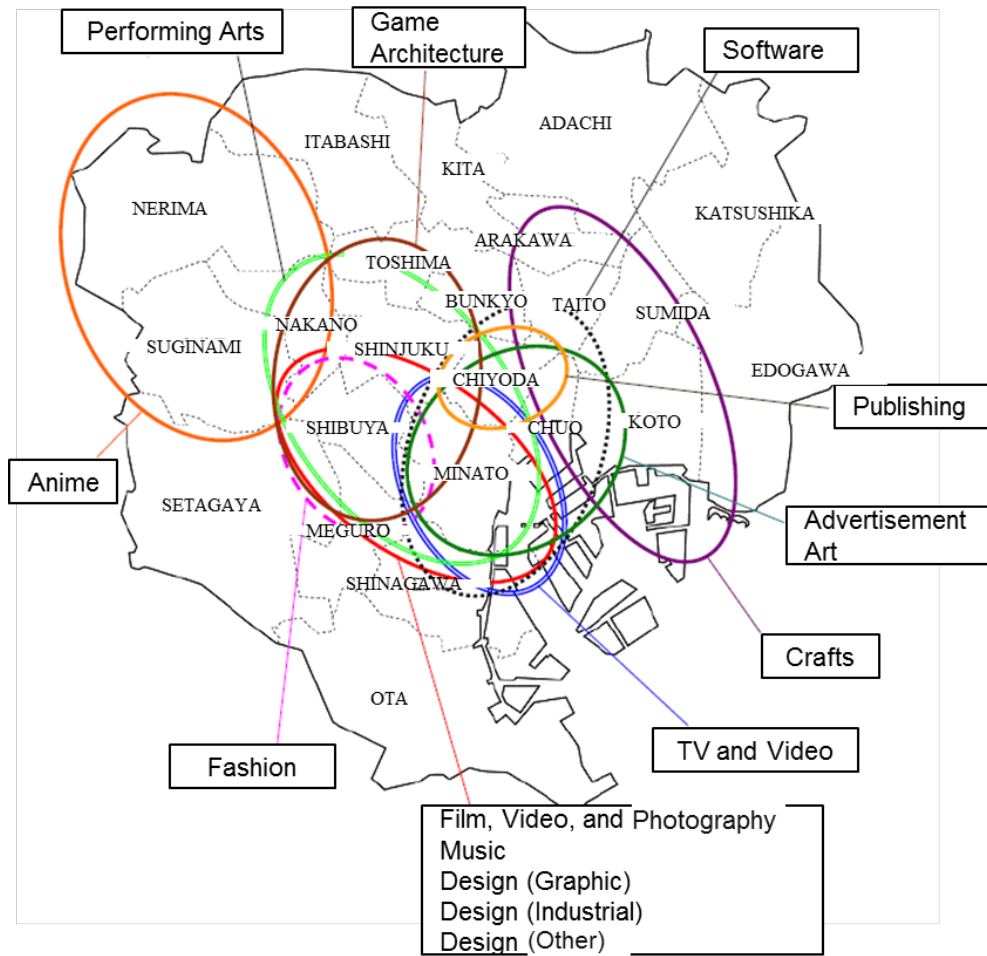
<sup>26</sup> Based on my fieldwork, including the observation of one anime production committee meeting.

are mainly SMEs or freelancers (e.g. JAniCA 2015: 33-34). Each player, especially those on the 'creative' side, collectively devotes their own specific skills to develop their anime business project, which overlaps with the 'flexible specialization' feature of creative industries (cf. Goto 2013; Scott 2000; Storper and Christopherson 1987; Tamagawa 2013: 210-211). According to Chart 3, it could be said that previous ethnographic studies of anime production studios, such as Condry (2009, 2013) and Morisawa (2013, 2015), have focused only on the left side of the diagram (the creative side), and ignored the right side (the business side).

This multi-party business is spatially enabled by the concentration of creative industry in the Tokyo area. In other words, one of the significant factors enabling the multiple relevant players to form an anime production committee is that most of them reside cohesively in central Tokyo. In terms of industrial accumulation, the Japanese anime sector could be evaluated as being over-concentrated in the Tokyo area (see AJA 2014: 73). A number of studies, mainly in the area of economic geography, have revealed that creative industries tend to concentrate in (large) city areas, for example the Hollywood film industry clustering in the Los Angeles area (Storper and Christopherson 1987), the apparel brand industry collecting in Italian cities such as Prato (Wakabayashi 2009: 97-99), and the Bollywood film industry focusing in the Mumbai area (Wada 2014). The reason for such concentrations is generally explained in terms of transaction costs. As briefly mentioned above, creative industries consist of the creative upper stream (players who perform the

creative work) and the humdrum downstream (players who undertake the business/distributive work). Since the creative players (artists, designers, producers, and so on) are mostly freelancers or SMEs, and since creative business projects are coordinated on a project basis, it is rational for them to reside close to one another (and/or gather around the major distributors) to search for/get job offers and carry out creative business projects smoothly (cf. Goto 2013, Scott 2000). The Japanese anime sector seems to share these spatial characteristics of other creative industries. In 2010, Tokyo Metropolitan Government issued a report on the concentration of the creative industries around Tokyo. It found that most creative industry sectors are heavily concentrated in the area, especially in central Tokyo (in other words, in 23 wards of Tokyo) (Tokyo Metropolitan Government 2010).

**Picture 2: Concentration of creative industries in the Tokyo area**



(Extracted and translated from Tokyo Metropolitan Government 2010: 6)<sup>2728</sup>

Picture 2 shows what sectors of the creative industry are accumulating in which areas of central Tokyo. The circled areas denote the locations in which each sector is accumulating.<sup>29</sup> In terms of the members of anime production committees, publishers, TV stations, music companies, advertising agencies, and anime production studios tend to

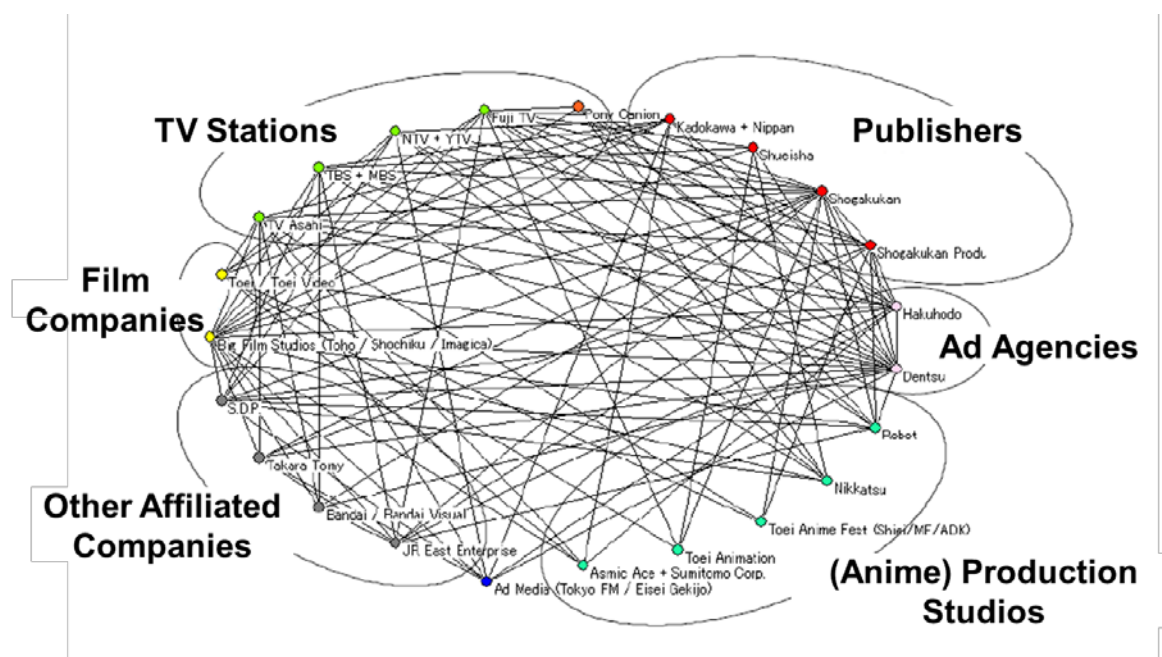
<sup>27</sup> This map was created on the basis of ‘town page’ (telephone directory) information (Tokyo Metropolitan Government 2010: 2, 6). The names in capital letters are the names of the wards.

<sup>28</sup> In this map, ‘Anime’ means anime production studios (Tokyo Metropolitan Government 2010: 1).

<sup>29</sup> The top 20% regions in terms of composition ratios of each creative industry sector (Tokyo Metropolitan Government 2010: 6).

concentrate (respectively) in Chiyoda ward, Minato ward, Minato/Shibuya wards, Chiyoda/Chuo/Minato wards, and Nakano/Suginami/Nerima wards. Currently, 365 anime production studios out of 419 are located in Tokyo (AJA 2014: 73). Another report issued by Nerima ward shows that toy companies are accumulating in the eastern areas of Tokyo, for example in Taito ward and Sumida ward (Nerima City Office 2010: 26), and the accumulation of anime production studios is extending westward beyond Nerima/Suginami wards (24). Thanks to the well-developed public transportation system (trains and metros), the rough maximum time it takes to move from side of central Tokyo to the other (for example, to move from the east end to the west) is one hour (the centre of Tokyo is roughly ten times larger than Manhattan and half the size of Greater London).

*Chart 4: Interconnection between the players in carrying out Japanese film projects*



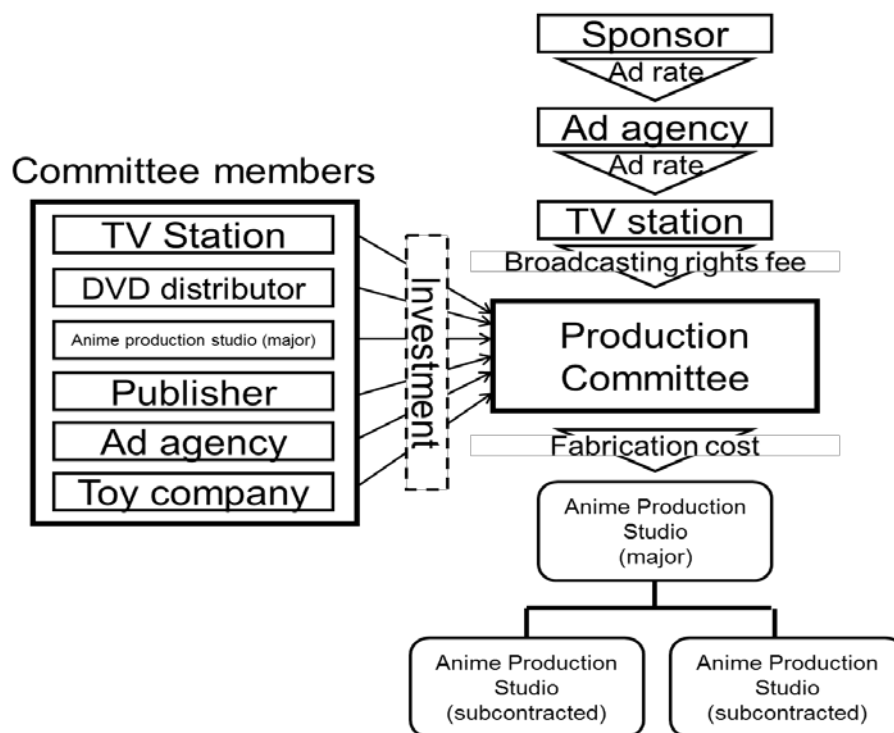
(Extracted and translated from Wakabayashi et al. 2009: 21)

Using social network analysis, one study (Wakabayashi et al. 2009) reveals how the players in the Japanese film industry – such as TV stations, publishers, ad agencies, production studios including anime, film companies, and other affiliated companies including toy companies – are densely interconnected in carrying out their cinema businesses, forming cohesively networked clusters (see Chart 4). Although this study includes both anime movies and live action films, it suggests that the network of players in the anime movie business (which widely overlaps with that of players in the anime sector) is denser and more cohesive than that in the live action film business (14-15). Geographer Seiji Hanzawa (2001) investigated the concentration of anime production studios in the Tokyo area and revealed that their orders (both in terms of placements and receipts) are mostly completed within Tokyo.

Given that the Japanese anime sector concentrates in a specific place and consists of SMEs (especially on the creative side) and big companies (especially on the business side) carrying out the anime business together, its features substantially overlap with those of Japan's small firm economy in the manufacturing sector, which is accumulating in Tokyo's Ota ward. On the basis of his research on Ota ward's machine industry SME concentration, sociologist Hugh Whittaker (1997) has argued that the interfirm relations of such an industrial community could be analysed in terms of 'vertical' relations and 'horizontal' relations. The term 'vertical' relations refers to the subcontracting system, in which an original order starts from large assemblers (at the top of the contract pyramid) and trickles

down to the subcontractors (primary, secondary, tertiary, and so on, down to the bottom of the contract pyramid), which are divided into parts. The term 'horizontal' relations refers to the relationship between the SMEs 'ranging from farming out work and trading among friends (*nakama mawashi*, *nakama torihiki*) to friendly rivalry (*sessa takuma*) and information sharing' (14). This 'horizontal' feature of the Japanese anime sector in Tokyo seems to generate 'a sense of community' among its members, who share a common residence, occupational identity, endurance of economic ups and downs, and interests, as well as a sense of friendly rivalry, i.e. 'confrerel rivalry, of competition tempered by mutual encouragement and assistance' (107). The structure of the 'horizontal' relationship in the anime sector has been depicted above. The structure of the 'vertical' relationship could be depicted as in Chart 5:

*Chart 5: The ‘vertical’ relationship between relevant players creating and producing anime*



(Extracted and translated from JFTC 2009: 7)

We clearly see from Chart 5 that, in terms of monetary flow, the business side (committee members) is in the ‘upstream’ of the anime business, while the creative side is ‘downstream’, i.e. in a position to be subcontracted by the business side of an anime project. As we have seen above, the financial resources to develop anime project are aggregated and managed by a production committee whose members are mostly from the business side of the anime sector (the ‘investment’ of ‘committee members’ in the ‘production committee’). A TV station, in cases when they do not participate in the production committee, simply purchases the broadcasting rights from the committee (the ‘broadcasting rights fee’ provided

by 'TV station' to the 'production committee') to broadcast the anime episodes. This fee is ultimately provided to the 'TV station' by the 'sponsor' via an 'ad agency' as an 'ad rate' (the advertisement expenditure of the sponsor). In cases when a TV station participates in a production committee, their acquisition of the anime's broadcasting rights is not just a purchase but their investment in the project, which makes their commitment to the anime project more substantial and leads to their sending a representative to committee meetings (cf. JFTC 2009: 6-7). The budget to actually create anime episodes is provided to a set of anime production studios forming a pyramid of subcontractors, from major anime production studios as prime subcontractors (*moto uke* or *gurosu uke* in Japanese) to smaller or specialised studios as secondary, tertiary (or more) subcontractors (*niji uke* and *sanji uke* respectively in Japanese).

In other words, creative works are (no more than) subcontracted works in the realm of anime business, a conclusion that forms a sharp contrast with many studies on creative industries that prioritise creative works and creators (see Chapter 2). Although anime creators and anime production studios do override anime businesspeople (anime companies that form production committees) in their creativity, they are in subordinate position to anime businesspeople in terms of financial power. This 'subtle relationship' (Yamashita and Yamada 2010: 121) between creators and businesspeople adds complexity to the discrepancy of art versus commerce in the Japanese anime sector. This relationship is also manifested in the 'gap' in the site location between business side players and creative side players in the

anime sector that can be seen in Picture 2. While the business side players in anime projects (publishers, TV stations, ad agencies, and so on) concentrate in the fancy offices and downtown skyscrapers of central Tokyo (for example, in Chiyoda, Chuo, and Minato wards), the creative side players in anime projects (anime production studios, directors, animators, and so on) concentrate in Tokyo's suburban areas (for example, Nakano, Suginami, and Nerima wards): they cannot afford to rent offices in central Tokyo's skyscrapers, so instead have their offices in the low-rise old buildings outside the city centre. This location 'gap' between business side players and creative side players seems to symbolise the distortion of the Japanese anime sector. While the anime creators who actually create the anime works – the source of the sector's global competitive value – are shunted off to the western end of Tokyo, the business people who do nothing but 'exploit' and capitalise on the creativity of others make a huge amount of money and stay in the centre, rarely sharing the profits with the anime studios.

Following Chart 5, previous ethnographic studies of anime production studios such as Condry (2009, 2013) and Morisawa (2013, 2015) could be seen as focusing only on the subcontractors (the downstream of the monetary flow) in the anime business project. They ignore the upper stream of the monetary flow i.e. the players who actually subcontract the anime work to the players they study. They focus only on how anime episodes are made by anime creators, and ignore the holistic process of how anime projects are produced by anime business players, such as production committee members. In other words, they pay little

attention to how and by whom an anime project is proposed, organised, managed, financed, and promoted before/during the process of the anime's being subcontracted to anime production studios.<sup>30</sup> Going back to Whittaker's (1997) demarcation of 'vertical' and 'horizontal' relationships in industrial accumulations, this thesis focuses less on the anime sector's 'vertical' relationships – especially the anime production studios at the bottom of this 'vertical' relationship pyramid – and more on the 'horizontal' relationships between the players that form the anime production committees: in particular, on their 'friendly rivalry' (14) in developing anime projects. Indeed, overseas business proposals are in most cases pitched to anime production committees (not to anime creators) and considered during the meetings of committee members (who are in 'horizontal' relationships). Ikeyama tried to contact as many anime production committees as possible to make them consider distributing their anime related products to Indian market via DTA.

### ***Dynamics of the Japanese anime sector: domestic market centrism***

Given the business model and the structure of the anime sector concentrated in Tokyo as depicted above, what are the sociocultural dynamics of the sector? In other words, in terms of 'transactionalism' (see Chapter 2), how does the Japanese anime sector incentivise and constrain its individuals, especially in terms of developing anime's overseas business?

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<sup>30</sup> During my fieldwork, some people even questioned whether the 'creative' players in making anime (especially animators) could be called 'creators' in the real sense of the term if all they do is get subcontracted by the production committees to make the pictures move according to their requirements. Some called them 'limners' instead of creators. Some called them 'blue collar' workers, in contrast to the 'white collar' business members of the production committee.

In his book *Art Worlds* (Becker 1982), sociologist Howard Becker argues that there are sets of established rules, conventions, and patterns in the relationships and combinations between the relevant players (such as artists, their support personnel, and distributors) when they carry out their art projects – despite the prevailing image that art works are the result of the artists’ creative freedom – and points out the ‘mixed blessing’ (6) of these rules for the artists who intend to generate innovation in the art world:

Of course, by using other than the conventional means of distribution or no channel of distribution at all, artists suffer some disadvantages, and their work takes a different form than it might have if regular distribution had been available. They usually see this situation as an unmixed curse, and hope to gain access to regular channels of distribution, or whatever other conventional facilities they find unavailable. But since, as we will see, the regular means of carrying on support activities substantially constrain what can be done, not to have them available, inconvenient or worse as that may be, also opens up otherwise unavailable possibilities. Access to all the regular means of doing things is a mixed blessing. (Ibid.)

Given that the Japanese anime sector’s performance in the overseas markets is precarious, and that the sector’s revenues from the overseas market are considerably smaller than in Hollywood (cf. Chapter 1), the ‘conventional’ and ‘regular’ ways of carrying out an anime business, i.e. the anime production committee model, seems to be optimised to the Japanese domestic market. Considering overseas business seems to be an ‘unconventional’ practice in the everyday anime business. Although overseas markets may open up ‘otherwise unavailable possibilities’ for the anime sector, they require the players to suffer considerable ‘disadvantages’. I will refer to this tendency to prioritise the Japanese domestic market and

peripheralise overseas ones as a ‘domestic market centrism’ in the Japanese anime sector, and unfold its sociocultural and socioeconomic dynamics in the rest of this section.

During my fieldwork, many anime business people pointed out that overseas business is marginal to their business project agenda, and admitted that their main focus is on how to compete with their rivals in the Japanese domestic market. Their common understanding was that the Japanese domestic anime market is big enough (at least so far) to support the Japanese anime sector as a whole (unlike the Korean domestic entertainment market, which is so small that the country’s entertainment industries are virtually forced to globalise). A person in charge of legal affairs of anime companies and anime production committees told me that the anime business is mostly confined to the Japanese domestic market (interview by the author, July 2014). An anime company executive also admitted that ‘it is true that some people in the anime sector think that it is enough for them to just care about the domestic market’ (interview by the author, February 2015). Some even insist that it is not economically rational for the Japanese anime sector to try and reach out to prospective consumers overseas because Japan is the world’s third biggest economy (interview by the author with a film producer, March 2015).

The anime production committee model seems to be the established ‘formula’ for the players in the Japanese anime sector to use to compete against one another domestically. The socioeconomic context against which this model works that I heard from multiple players in the Japanese anime sector during my fieldwork can be summarised as follows.

Virtually the only ‘destination’ of the anime shows they create/produce is aired by domestic TV stations that are often members of the anime’s production committee; the domestic TV stations’ primary interest is in winning the ratings race against other rival stations within the domestic market; and since their TV programmes (including anime shows) are only aired within Japan and not overseas, the ‘media mix’ businesses promoted by anime production committees are hugely gravitated and optimised towards the Japanese domestic market. Indeed, one film producer told me during my fieldwork that many anime production committees devote roughly 80% of their resources to the domestic affairs of their anime businesses.

This tendency to prefer Japanese domestic consumers/fans to overseas ones is not limited to anime business people, but can also be observed in the anime creators. Recall the fact that anime director Hosoda Mamoru ‘became grouchy all of a sudden’ when asked whether he would take into account the needs of overseas audiences when making anime (see Chapter 1). An executive of an anime company told me that since the Japanese domestic anime market is, for better or worse, big enough for anime creators to survive, they are generally not interested in overseas markets and are self-sufficient in ‘Japan’s domestic *otaku* market’ (interview by the author, February 2015). Masami Yuuki, a popular manga artist known for titles such as *Mobile Police PATLABOR*, once posted on a social networking service that ‘my primary goal is for my works to be firstly enjoyed by the readers who are raised in Japan and Japanese culture. It is in a sense a nuisance (*kyouzatsubutsu*) for my

creative thinking to consider developing my works for overseas markets.’<sup>31</sup> During my fieldwork, I even heard one anime producer sarcastically pointing out that the only thing that anime creators and production studios are interested in is to compete with other rival creators/studios in Japanese domestic *otaku* market. They do care about how their works are hailed by Japanese fans, but they pay little attention to overseas anime fans, because doing so will not directly improve their reputation in the Japanese domestic market.

In the everyday work of anime production committees, overseas businesses seem to be in many cases outsourced to overseas external agents, and relegated outside their main scope of businesses. The relationship between anime production committees and overseas agents that I detected during my fieldwork could be summarised as follows. Anime production committees routinely license out ‘overseas business rights’ (the rights to make the anime’s videograms, to stream the anime, to produce the anime’s merchandise, and so on) that are generated from their anime projects to overseas agents (in the United States and Hong Kong, for example) and let them develop the rights for them (for example by selling the rights to overseas TV stations and merchandisers). Once they are licensed out to the agents – and once they get minimum guarantees of those rights from the agents – they lose interest in the agents’ performance in further developing the rights in foreign markets. The anime production committees rarely attempt to sell their overseas business rights to the overseas markets by themselves. A TV station producer in charge of a popular anime channel

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<sup>31</sup> <https://twitter.com/masyuuki/status/323868829551837184> (accessed 28 April 2016).

in Japan said:

The target of the anime shows aired on the channel during my term was mainly Japanese domestic anime audiences. [...] they had a low affinity for overseas markets. The basic way for the production committees of each anime show to expand their businesses overseas was to license out the rights to the overseas distributors and leave the overseas business to them (*omakase*). The committees didn't peddle their anime overseas by themselves. We first got MG (minimum guarantees) from the distributors at the time we licensed out the rights to them, and the contracts said that the committees could get a certain percentage of the revenues that the distributors generated in the overseas markets after they recouped the costs of developing the overseas business rights. However, we have never had such additional revenues from them. The committees were not even informed by the distributors how much they produced in sales in which countries, or in which countries their anime shows were aired. Moreover, the committees could not spend any money to visit the distributors' office to acquire such information. (Interview by the author, February 2015)

It seems that to outsource the cultivation of the overseas market to overseas agents – and not to do it themselves – is the Japanese anime sector's 'convention' in carrying out its anime business. An executive of an anime company explained:

The overseas anime business until now has been a somewhat routine work: we have mainly sold the rights to overseas distributors. We have not been selling such rights overseas by ourselves, and have been leaving such work (*omakase*) to the overseas players. (Interview by the author, February 2015)

This seems to result in the oligopoly of the overseas business rights of Japanese anime works held by a limited number of overseas agents, which prevents such rights from being liquidated in the global market.

Many anime production committees sold their overseas business rights to a limited number of overseas agents. As a result, the rights relating to anime shows are piled up in the stock of such agents and do not enter the marketplace. Generally speaking, visual projects and pictures are exhibited and traded in the international trade shows. For anime, however, there is almost no place for such a market to be established. (Interview by the author with a person in charge of legal affairs of anime companies and anime production committees, July 2014)<sup>32</sup>

Similarly, a CEO of an anime producing company lamented that the Japanese anime sector has never faced the ‘market’ in the true sense of the word: the anime sector has always thrown overseas business tasks at the overseas agents picked up from an established pool, and never felt like conducting the overseas business themselves. According to him, an anime project is technically a financial commodity: anime production committee members invest in the project and try to gain from it. However, he suggested that the members themselves do not understand that aspect of anime, and have never tried to explain to the external (including overseas) investors how attractive anime projects are in terms of financial commodities. They have been unable to share a common logic and language with investors to persuade them that anime projects are worth investing their money in (interview by the author, July 2014).

I also found during my fieldwork that the value of the overseas business rights of anime projects are considered as extremely low by the anime production committees themselves, and are sold at low prices to overseas agents. This seems to be due to the anime

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<sup>32</sup> He however later added that this situation was partially improving as one Japanese anime convention had started to function as an international trade show for anime (interview by the author, April 2015).

production committees' indifference and inability to maximise their value and price: they neither try to pitch them into the global marketplace nor attempt to find new overseas agents. This seems to enable the existing overseas agents to hold down the price of the overseas business rights of the anime projects. Moreover, as briefly mentioned in the above interviews, it is unclear how the overseas agents are dedicated to developing the overseas business of the anime works that they are licensed from the anime production committees in Japan. It is even whispered in the Japanese anime sector that these agents might be hiding the revenues they made from overseas markets from their licensors (anime production committees), taking advantage of the fact that the committees are uninterested (and unable) to check their performances, and that the agents are underreporting their incomes to the committees to avoid paying additional royalties to the committees.<sup>33</sup>

In many cases, overseas business rights [...] are held *en bloc* by the lead manager companies of the production committees. This is because overseas business rights are considered to have little value by the committee members. They think that such 'bothersome' (*mendoukusai*) rights should be held by lead manager companies. The reason why the overseas business rights are considered as having no value is because even if you try hard to sell the overseas business rights, you will not be able to have revenues that balance such cost. It is difficult to sell anime to the overseas market.

As a result, anime production committees often sell out their overseas business rights *en bloc* to the overseas agents at low prices. [...] they will buy them anyway because they are cheap. Agents then sell the overseas business rights purchased from the committees to the overseas players such as TV stations again at low prices. (Interview by the author with a person in charge of legal affairs of anime companies and anime production committees, July 2014)

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<sup>33</sup> For example, see <http://icv2.com/articles/comics/view/19742/4kids-sued> (accessed 25 Dec 2016).

The ‘friendly rivalry’ (Whittaker 1997: 14, see the above sections) within an anime production committee between its members also prevents them from trying to raise the value of their overseas business rights together. Many players in the Japanese anime sector suggested to me during my fieldwork that an anime production committee is not monolithic in carrying out its anime business. For example, one player informally told me that the members of the same anime production committee are ‘friends but rivals’ (*nakama dakedo raibaru*): although they carry out the same anime project together, they know that each member is likely to ‘steal a march’ (*nukegake*) on the others at any time and pursue/secure their self-interest at the expense of the other committee members. He told me that this is why they frequently hold *nomikai* (drinking sessions): they ostensibly hobnob together in a friendly manner but probe – under the surface – for the true intentions of their fellow committee members.

I mentioned above that under the production committee system each member exercises a certain right related to anime in their businesses: a video maker gets the rights to make videograms, a toy maker gets the rights to make toys, a game maker gets the rights to make games, and so on. This means, according to another player in the sector, that a video maker cares *only* about making videograms, a toy maker cares *only* about making toys, a game maker cares *only* about making games, and *nobody* cares about doing business in the overseas market (which makes, in my view, the overseas business rights ‘bothersome’). Representatives who attend committee meetings are the employers of the member companies

of the anime production committee, he continues. The top priority of such a representative is not so much to maximise the profit of the committee as a whole, as to maximise the profit of the company he/she belong to – sometimes, as mentioned above, at the expense of the committee itself, or of the other committee members – and to minimise the risk of damage to his/her company (which incentivise a representative to prevent additional committee resources being directed to the tasks unrelated to his/her company’s business, including overseas business).

The reason for the marginality of overseas issues in the works of anime production committee is often attributed to the lack of established distribution platforms in the overseas markets, and the over-competition in the Japanese domestic anime market that deprives the committee members of the time to contemplate overseas business.

Why are Japanese anime industries reluctant to cultivate overseas markets? There are several reasons. One reason is because they are too busy in handling their domestic anime works at this precise moment to think about overseas markets. Indeed, from my own experience in anime-related works, it is true that it is absolutely impossible to have time to pay attention to overseas issues.

The other reason is because there are no established distribution channels for the overseas market. For the domestic anime market, the system for distributing and using their anime work commercially is established. If you toss your anime works into such a system, it will almost automatically spread them nation-wide. Such a system is not established in the overseas market. [...] The Japanese anime industry does not have the system into which they could throw their anime works and have them spread world-wide. (Interview by the author with a person in charge of legal affairs of anime companies and anime production committees, July 2014)

During my fieldwork, I heard similar accounts from several other players in the Japanese anime sector complaining the lack of time and platform to develop their business overseas.

This business ‘convention’ of the domestic market centrism, which prioritises the domestic business and marginalises the overseas business, is prevalent in the Japanese anime sector. It also seems to generate the working norms that stabilise the domestic market centrism in the anime production committees. For example, one anime producer told me that anime projects are allowed to consider developing their business overseas only after they have succeeded in the domestic Japanese market. He also lamented that ‘the level of accountability’ in overseas anime business is extremely high compared with that in the domestic anime business: although the anime sector is generally tolerant of failures in the domestic market, the sector virtually does not allow for anime projects to fail in the overseas markets (interview by the author, February 2015). Many told me that the revenues from overseas markets are considered no more than a ‘bonus’ in their anime projects.

In short, the Japanese anime sector’s domestic market centrism is supported by a logic that the sector prioritises the Japanese domestic market because the system for domestic business is already established, and that the sector marginalises the overseas business because the system for overseas business is not (yet) established. This attitude seems further justified by the fact that the Japanese domestic anime market is big enough to survive, and that trying to develop an overseas anime business by themselves is not cost-effective (i.e. it is economically rational for the sector to stay in the Japanese domestic market).

However, from the viewpoint of the players who see uncultivated potential in the overseas market, i.e. who aspire to open up ‘otherwise unavailable possibilities’ – in Becker’s term – for the Japanese anime sector, such an argument sounds not only paradoxical but also somewhat apologist. It sounds paradoxical because, throughout my fieldwork, virtually nobody in the Japanese anime sector denied that the Japanese domestic anime market will shrink in the mid- and long-term due to the low birth rate and rising longevity, and that overseas markets (especially Asian markets) are becoming an important alternative source of income for the sector.

It is true that some people in the anime sector think that it is enough for them to just care about the domestic market. But I think that direction is futureless (*shourai ga nai*). (Interview by the author with the executive of an anime company, February 2015)

Of course people in the anime industries recognise that the Japanese domestic anime market will shrink in mid- and long- term, over the coming ten or twenty years. There is almost no doubt that they all understand that cultivating the overseas market will be important for Japan’s anime industries in the mid- and long-term. (Interview by the author with a person in charge of legal affairs of anime companies and anime production committees, July 2014)

During my fieldwork, I heard similar accounts from several other players in the Japanese anime sector worrying the future of the Japanese domestic anime market and admitting that the sector should cultivate the overseas market for its future (at least in theory).

Moreover, nobody in the Japanese anime sector denied that some anime projects did succeed in cultivating the overseas market by establishing their own distribution channels. The most famous example of this is *Pokémon*, which earned roughly the same amount of money from the US, Europe and Asia (including Japan) (£6 billion each) (METI

2012b: 12-16; Humanmedia 2013: 30). If that is the case, how can they justify the Japanese anime sector's domestic market centrism? Is it really 'economically rational' for the anime sector to stick to a market that is expected to shrink in the mid- and long-term, and to pay little attention to other growing markets from which some of their peers are actually making money? The logic also sounds apologist because it seems to give up on cultivating the overseas market before actually trying to do so. How can one conclude that anime's overseas business rights have 'little value' – or measure their cost-effectiveness – without even trying to maximise their prices, while routinely selling them to established agents who always offer a low price for them, particularly when some of their peers have proved that such rights might actually generate huge amount of money?

One anime producer described this paradoxical situation as Japanese anime sector's 'enigma' (*nazo*). He wondered what makes the Japanese anime sector continue to concentrate on a domestic market its members themselves well know (at least theoretically) to be futureless, and what prevents the sector from changing its current way of doing business to optimise its business model to an overseas market in which its members know their future lies (again, at least theoretically) (interview by the author, February 2015). The players in the Japanese anime sector know what they should do, but they can't, or don't want to, actually take action.

On one hand, some producers and journalists seem sympathetic towards the inability of the players in the anime sector to take action to cultivate overseas markets. The

structure of the current domestic-market-centric business model is so strong that it is almost impossible for them to change it by individual efforts.

As for overseas market cultivation, we just can't do anything because the more we try to do something, the more we lose our money in the current situation. We know that we will not be able to stand in the mid- and long-term if this goes on, but we cannot take any specific actions right now. (Interview by the author with a person in charge of legal affairs of anime companies and anime production committees, July 2014)

Other people, on the other hand, seem more critical, considering the players as too 'conservative,' i.e. as being preoccupied with maintaining the status quo and being unwilling to take on additional tasks and risks to change the current (and familiar) established domestic-market-centric system. During my fieldwork, indeed, I heard some players in the Japanese anime sector accusing the sector's conservative attitudes of rejecting change. According to one anime producer, the reason for them to stick to the current business model is because it is just 'comfortable' for them: following the established system, for example by routinely outsourcing their overseas business rights to the established agents, will minimise the players' risk of being responsible for breaking such conventions and for trying to do 'unconventional' and potentially costly things such as trying to develop their overseas business rights by themselves. One anime producer even told me that, while it is theoretically clear what a certain industrial sector should do for the sector to grow and avoid collapsing, one should be cautious about the sector's it-is-economically-rational explanation for not pursuing such a course: 'it is economically rational for us not to do A' is often no more than

a paraphrase of ‘we just do not want to do A.’ He also lamented the paradox that the more dominant and mainstream the players in the anime sector become, the less they are incentivised to change the existing system. Although such mainstream players (who make more money from the Japanese domestic anime market than anybody else in the sector) can afford to take on additional risk and cost to cultivate the overseas markets, they have no reason to do so because they can survive in the domestic market.

This enigmatic domestic market centrism that makes the Japanese anime sector gravitate towards its ‘conventional means of distribution’ is indeed a ‘mixed blessing’. Although everybody in the sector knows that the current situation is killing them slowly, and although they know that there are some ways to escape it by opening up ‘otherwise unavailable possibilities,’ they stay in the current structure, whether willingly or unwillingly, because it keeps them comfortably alive, for now at least.

### ***Economic sphere, circular flow and involution***

Here we can frame the Japanese anime sector as an ‘economic sphere’ (Barth 1967a) that is separated from overseas markets by its domestic market centrism, in other words through its own sense of pattern in ‘the flow of goods and services’ and through ‘the total pattern of circulation of value in an economic system’ (149). It is difficult to determine whether the anime sector’s logic and practice of domestic market centrism – its dominant sense of what is the proper way (and what is not) to conduct its anime businesses – is purely business-

economic (e.g. it is economically rational to concentrate on domestic anime market) or sociocultural/moral (e.g. players in the anime sector just don't want to go overseas and just want to stay in their familiar domestic market). The logic and practice of domestic market centrism that separates the Japanese anime sector from the overseas market is a mixture of business-economic and sociocultural factors that is 'embedded' in its members' everyday activities.

We can also observe here the tautological 'circular flow' (Schumpeter 1934) of the logic and practice of domestic market centrism for the Japanese anime sector in its concentration on the domestic anime market, ignoring overseas markets. Does the existence of the established system make the sector busier and busier in carrying out its domestic anime business, or is it because the sector is only interested in the Japanese domestic market that the system has been optimised to it? Does the lack of the established system to develop overseas anime business make the sector indifferent to overseas business, or is it because the sector is indifferent to overseas business that the system for it has never been established? This chicken-or-the-egg controversy overlaps with what Christensen (1997) called the 'innovator's dilemma' in the business studies, i.e. the fact that the established business gravitates so much towards the existing market and customers (in our case: Japanese domestic anime market and fans) that it often falls behind in cultivating new markets and customers (in our case overseas markets). It also overlaps with what Barth (1966) called the 'skipper's dilemma' (10) in anthropology. Barth ethnographically depicted the strong

tendency for herring-catching vessels off the coast of Norway to follow other vessels rather than the herring itself in deciding where they will fish:

The pattern of movement of vessels on the fishing banks is so extreme that it cannot fail to strike an observer immediately: the several hundred vessels of the fleet constantly tend to congregate in small areas of the immense, and potentially bountiful, expanse of sea; most attention is concentrated on discovering the movements of *other vessels*, and most time is spent chasing other vessels to such unplanned and fruitless rendezvous.

[...] It is for the skipper to take the decision of choosing the vessel's course [...]. There can be no doubt that a vessel's chance of finding herring is greater if it strikes out on its own than if it follows other vessels. [...] But if a skipper, without special information to justify the move, decides to go elsewhere than where other vessels go, he demands more trust in his transaction with the crew. [...] The skipper also risks more by not joining the cluster: if a few vessels among many make a catch, the crew and the netboss can claim that it might have been them, had the skipper only given them the chance. If the vessel on the other hand follows the rest, they are no worse off than most, and the onus of failure does not fall on the skipper. (Ibid., emphasis in the original)

The way a vessel chronically loses the chance to 'strike out on its own' to profit from the 'immense, and potentially bountiful, expanse of sea' by focusing too much on competing with its rival vessels, thus leading to all the vessels congregating 'in small areas' of the ocean, forms a striking parallel with the way the anime sector is prevented (or prevents itself) from cultivating the overseas market.

Similarly, Whittaker (1997) points out that the manufacturing SME community accumulating in Tokyo's Ota ward lacks 'strategic planning or consistency' in its businesses: it is so 'committed to production, and how to raise precision, reduce defects and tackle new technical challenges' that it is 'failing to step back and take a detached look at where they are heading' (136). The anime sector accumulating in Tokyo seems, I would argue, similarly

so concentrated on its domestic ‘friendly rivalry,’ i.e. paying so much attention to domestic peers to override them in the domestic market, that it is failing to get itself out of its circular flow of logic and practice of domestic market centrism.

I would also argue here that this ‘circular flow’ of domestic market centrism in the economic sphere of the Japanese anime sector is ‘involuting’, as the sector is exposed to globalisation. In other words, the Japanese anime sector is becoming more and more inward-looking by sticking more than ever to its way of carrying out the anime business by concentrating on the Japanese domestic market (regarding it in a somewhat essentialist way as the ‘proper’ one), and through refusing or ignoring the external players urging them to globalise, including the Japanese government, entrepreneurs, emerging foreign markets (especially Asian markets) and emerging rival players in neighbouring countries such as China and Korea. This ‘involution’ of the Japanese anime sector seems to be leading the sector, not to the position that enables it to proactively distribute its works and products globally, but to a position that passively allows global distributors to take over. The Japanese anime sector as a whole seems to be becoming subordinate to globalisation: no more than one of the subcontractors of the global entertainment conglomerates that are seeking entertainment content all around the world in order to make money out of them (see also Martel 2012[2010]).

The term ‘involution’ seems to be a common noun to ‘refer to a changing process in which an organism facing external impingement for change turns inward and increasingly

elaborates existing modes of operation and internal relationships rather than turning outward and adopting new modes' (Lü 2000: 263).<sup>34</sup> The concept was famously employed by the anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1963a) as 'agricultural involution' to explain (in cultural ecological terms) the development or survival pattern observed in the Javanese farming villages in colonial and post-colonial Indonesia (1950-60s), having 'a static economy and a burgeoning population' (70) and facing transnational Dutch agro-export corporations capitalising on Indonesian agriculture. Defining involution – borrowing the concept from another anthropologist Alexander Goldenweiser (1936), who used it to explain the features of Maori art – as 'the overdriving of an established form in such a way that it becomes rigid through an inward overelaboration of detail' (Geertz 1963a: 82), Geertz depicted how the basic system of the Javanese agricultural system had failed 'either to stabilize or transform themselves into a new pattern but rather' continued 'to develop by becoming internally more complicated' (81) to absorb the growing surplus labour that could not be absorbed by the country's tiny industrial sector, and to cope with the pressure of globalisation led by Dutch colonial corporation (the Dutch East India Company). As Burawoy et al. (2000) summarise:

Agricultural involution has three features. First, as indigenous peasants are forced into wage labor or have their land expropriated, they survive by *intensifying* their own rice production. Second, faced with increased poverty, they *redistribute* what they have in an egalitarian fashion as a collective defense against agro-capitalism. Third, rather than introduce new techniques, peasants tend to *elaborate old forms of production*. (61, emphases in the original)

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<sup>34</sup> See also <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/involution> (accessed 26 December 2016).

Geertz (1963a: 82) argues that these features in the development/survival pattern of Javanese agriculture overlap with those of the decorative art of the Maori, which have a pattern that ‘precludes the use of another unit or units, but’ that ‘is not inimical to play within the unit or units’ which results in ‘progressive complication, variety within uniformity, virtuosity within monotony’ (Goldenweiser 1936: 103). Indeed, the epitome of Javanese agriculture was ‘*plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose*’ (Geertz 1963a: 133, emphasis in the original):

Perhaps the most trenchant phrase which has been coined to summarize what seems to have been the career of the Inner Indonesian village over the past century and a half is “the advance toward vagueness.” The peculiarly passive social-change experience which [...] rural society has been obliged to endure seems to have induced in it an indeterminateness which did not so much transform traditional patterns as elasticize them. Such flaccid indeterminateness is highly functional to a society which is allowed to evade, adjust, absorb, and adapt but not really allowed to change [...]. Pulled this way and that, hammered by forces over which it had no control and denied the means for actively reconstructing itself, the village both clung to the husks of selected established institutions and limbered them internally in such a way as to permit a greater flexibility, a freer play of social relationships within a generally stereotyped framework. The result was an arabesque pattern of life, both reduced and elaborated, both enormously complicated and marvelously simple: complicated in the diversity, variability, fragility, fluidity, shallowness, and unreliability of interpersonal ties: simple in the meager institutional resources by which such ties were organized. (102-103)

Geertz’s concept of involution was heavily criticised by economists in terms of its validity in quantitatively explaining the Javanese agrarian economy.<sup>35</sup> A number of social scientists (including anthropologists), however, inherited the concept of involution to

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<sup>35</sup> Geertz himself substantially reviewed how his concept of involution had been attacked by economists (Geertz 1984).

highlight features of organisational/social change that do not lead an organisation/society to evolve outwardly to commit to their outer environment, but rather to develop inwardly, to retreat to (and embrace) their internal essentialist logics and practices, to refuse their uncertain outer environment, and thus to become subordinate to it rather than participating in it. Interestingly, the concept was applied to analyse the socioeconomic changes in Russia and China that took place in the countries' transition terms during which their socialist political economies were taken over by capitalism. Burawoy et al. (2000) ethnographically depicted the 'survival strategies' of the workers in the post-Soviet Russian economy that would 'reconcile an unprecedented decline in the national economy [...] with both the survival of its population and the absence of major social disturbances' (44). Market forces had 'their own involutory effects' (60) on the Russian economy, and this 'consequence was not the *revolutionary* break-through anticipated by the prophets of neoliberalism, nor the *evolutionary* advance found in other countries such as China but an economic primitivization we call *involution*' (46, emphases in the original). In other words, the market 'has driven the vast majority of the population back on to their own resources, intensifying household production' (Ibid.) in which 'networks of friends, relatives, and colleagues' (60) (and not the formal planning system) played a key role. This involutory trend in the Russian economy was further facilitated by the workers' defensive strategies:

They take the low road, seeking to hold destitution at bay by building and rebuilding a defensive moat around themselves. These families spontaneously knit together routines of the Soviet period into coping strategies for the new era of uncertainty. (47)

Some workers did adopt different strategies, i.e. entrepreneurial strategies, to ‘take the high road, wading out against the incoming involutory tide, expanding into new forms of trade, service and petty commodity production’ (Ibid.), but they were generally unsuccessful, which facilitated even more the involution process of the Russian economy. The main reason for their failures seems to be because the entrepreneurship that worked and generated profits on the inflowing wave of capitalism was confined to already privileged elite players in Russia who were members of their own exclusivist network (*blat*) (Hsu 2005).

Analogously, the political scientist Xiaobo Lü (2000) examined the trajectory of the organisational development of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), and argued that the widespread corruption in the CCP is due to the ‘organizational involution’ of the party itself rather than to the market reform China has been exposed to. According to Lü, the organisational involution refers to

a process whereby a revolutionary party, while adopting and expanding many “modern” (i.e., rational, empirical, impersonal) structures, refuses and fails to adapt itself to, and be transformed by, the routinization and bureaucratization that characterize modern bureaucracy; at the same time, it is unable to maintain its original distinctive competence and identity. Its members make adjustments and adaptations neither through revolutionary ideologies nor modern institutions and practices, but through reinforced and elaborated traditional modes of operation. Rather than evolving toward regularization and rationalization, the regime becomes indefinitely patrimonial. (22)

In other words, the CCP’s organisational involution precluded the party’s taking other possible directions of change, such as ‘*evolutionary* development, which maintains revolutionary integrity, and *devolutionary* development, which results in bureaucratization and abandonment of the revolutionary ideology and its goals’ (23, emphases in the original):

It produces neither modern bureaucrats who are rational, role-conscious, and rule-oriented, as a *devolutionary* development of revolutionary organization would, nor well-maintained, disciplined, and committed revolutionary cadres, as an *evolutionary* process of continuous revolution ideally should; instead, it produces disillusioned, status-conscious, and undisciplined cadres, who, in the manner of pre-revolutionary (i.e., traditional) local officials, put the interests of the regime above those of more intimate secondary and primary groups. (23, emphases in the original)

Examining ethnographically how the prefectural newspapers and anticorruption films are produced by and distributed within the CCP to educate the party cadres, Rachel Murphy (2007) builds on Lü's argument and points out further that 'the pedagogic media is a neglected but hugely important mechanism for sustaining organizational involution' (64).

There are other social scientists who, although not substantially quoting Geertz (1963a), use the concept of involution casually to explain the features that partially (not fully) overlap with those exhibited above. For example, Meagher (2007) utilises the term to depict how 'the challenges of liberalization and globalization' provoked the sociocultural fragmentations within the small manufacturing firm clusters in Nigeria – i.e. involution, such as 'a breakdown of trust and co-operation within and between firms, undermining credit, supply and distribution networks' (496)<sup>36</sup> – that led the clusters to the 'reversal of trends toward technical innovation and quality improvements' and to 'become nodes in a growing system of parallel global commodity chains operating under the radar of the global trading system' rather than making them link proactively into global export markets (497). In

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<sup>36</sup> This feature of involution opposes the ones I have overviewed. While I have reviewed that involution refers to the process that the players recur to their own 'existing,' 'established,' 'indigenous,' 'primitive,' 'household,' 'traditional,' and 'patrimonial' modes of operations in response to environmental pressures, Meagher seems to assume that involution designates the process by which the globalisation/liberalism destroy such modes of operations.

examining the decline of the Business Council of Australia (BCA) in the Australian economy, Bell (2006) argues that BCA is experiencing ‘organizational involution’, which he understands as an organisation’s ‘weakening of some of its original strengths’ (545). Davis (2004) argues – summarising (partially) Geertz’s concept of involution as ‘spiralling labour self-exploitation (other factors fixed) which continues, despite rapidly diminishing returns, as long as any return or increment is produced’ – that the urban involution of slums is now replacing the rural involution of agriculture as ‘a sink for surplus labour which can only keep pace with subsistence by ever more heroic feats of self-exploitation and the further competitive subdivision of already densely filled survival niches’ (27). At a more abstract level, Glenn (2008) uses the term to designate the ‘intensification of economic relations between the core industrialized countries and a relative decline in the levels of trade and investment between this core and the less developed periphery’ (81).

Going back to the economic sphere of the Japanese anime sector, its circular flow of domestic market centrism indeed seems to overlap broadly with the ‘involution’ depicted in the above. Statistically speaking, for example, in Chapter 1, Chart 1, we can observe that a kind of sea change took place around 2006 in terms of the anime sector’s overseas business. The amount and the percentage of the revenue from the overseas markets drastically went down after that year. Among the players in the anime sector this is called the ‘burst’ of the ‘bubble economy’ of anime’s overseas market. Before 2006 is the term in which the global popularity of anime, represented by *Pokémon*, had started to be trumpeted and the price of

the anime shows went sky-high in response to a gold rush of overseas (mainly American) entertainment companies into the Japanese anime sector searching for the second *Pokémon*. The Japanese anime sector during that term did try to establish their own overseas business infrastructure to distribute their works and products in the overseas market. They established their overseas branches and made contracts with local distributors to sell their anime DVDs and related products in the foreign markets. However, some crucial environment changes popped the 'bubble' of anime exportation. These changes include the rise of the Internet (which made DVDs outdated media for watching anime), the global economic downturn in 2008 which smashed up many of their local business partners, and the awareness among the foreign buyers that not all anime shows are as successful/high-quality as *Pokémon*, causing a price drop of their work and products. Many players in the Japanese anime sector closed their foreign branches, and their attempts to establish a system for developing an overseas anime business ended up failing miserably (for an overview of the history of the anime business in the North America, see Mihara and Yamazaki 2010). This experience of failure seems to make the Japanese anime sector more unwilling than ever to do overseas business. Although Chart 1 shows that the market size of anime as a whole revived after 2009, the nature of this growth seems to be domestic-market-driven rather than overseas-market-driven. For example, although the market size as a whole in 2013 surpassed that of 2008 (the year in which the anime market size in the broad definition was biggest prior to 2012), the amount and percentage of the revenue from the overseas market in 2013 are lower than in

2008 (while in 2013 the amount and percentage of the revenue from the overseas market are about ¥2,823 hundred million and 19% in the broad definition and ¥169 hundred million and 9% in the narrow definition, they were ¥4,137 hundred million and 29% in the broad definition and ¥248 hundred million and 13% in the narrow definition in 2008).

The interviews I conducted with the major players in the Japanese anime sector during my fieldwork also seem to suggest the involuting tendency of the sector in terms of overseas business. Many of them say that the sector's current top priority in the overseas anime business is to do it while staying in Japan. One player told me that the peak of the 'overseas fever' in the Japanese anime sector was around 2006, and that the 'basic stance' of most anime production committees nowadays towards expanding their anime businesses overseas is not to peddle their works and products around the world themselves (*kaigai de uriaruku*) but to employ the methods that makes it possible for them to sell their products abroad without leaving Japan at all (*nihon ni inagara ni shite*) (interview by the author with a person in charge of legal affairs of anime companies and anime production committees, July 2014 and April 2015). One executive of an anime company suggested that the Japanese anime sector will never re-enter the DVD distribution business in the overseas market, from which the sector was driven around 2006:

We have to aim at the overseas market. However, the DVD package business in the overseas market is an extremely severe environment. Japanese anime industries experienced this in 2005-2006: when we distribute our anime DVDs to North American major retailers, we have to allow them to return us the dead stock (we do not want to do this, but virtually have no choice, because retailers would not purchase our anime DVDs if we did not admit them the right to return). What

happens two years after we distribute our DVDs to them is that they will return 95 percent of the DVDs. Most players in the Japanese anime industries have no management vitality to get along with this kind of practice. (Interview by the author, February 2015)

The trend of the Japanese anime sector's growing indifference towards the overseas market seems to be accompanied by the 'overdriving of an established form' of doing their business in the Japanese domestic market 'in such a way that it becomes rigid through an inward overelaboration of detail.' Indeed, many people in the Japanese anime sector told me during my fieldwork that the member companies of most anime production committees are just constituted from the 'combinations and permutations' of the established pool of players in the sector. Although it is theoretically possible for anyone to become a member of an anime production committee, it is impossible for a complete outsider to join it unless the player already has connections with the players inside the sector.

As briefly mentioned above, players in the anime sector are already too busy handling their domestic anime work to think about overseas markets. Moreover, some data suggest that they – especially anime creators – might be becoming poorer and poorer while becoming busier and busier. For example, statistics issued by the AJA (2014: 22-23) show that the number of anime titles aired on TV peaked in 2006 (279 titles, including 195 new titles) but declined after that until 2010 (200 titles, including 139 new titles). It however achieved a 'V-shaped recovery' since 2011 and came back to 2006 levels in 2013 (271 titles, including 193 new titles). Since the market size of anime in its narrow definition in 2013

(¥1,834 hundred million) is considerably smaller than it was in 2006 (¥2,124 hundred million) (see Chart 1), it could be strongly presumed that the competition in the domestic anime sector has become more fierce, scrambling for a smaller market.

The association for anime creators, JAniCA (Japan Animation Creators Association), issues annual reports on the working environment of anime creators. Its report in 2015 (JAniCA 2015) introduces the voices of the anime creators complaining that the amount of payment for the same work is declining, while the due date for work is becoming shorter and shorter and the level of quality required is becoming higher and higher (e.g. 54-55, 82). This situation in which anime creators work indeed seems to overlap with the feature of the involution depicted above, i.e. it might be the ‘spiralling labour self-exploitation’ of anime creators ‘which continues, despite rapidly diminishing returns, as long as any return or increment is produced.’ The difficult working conditions claimed by the anime creators themselves (e.g. JAniCA 2009) and some scholars (e.g. Morisawa 2013) could be situated in this context of involution. That is to say, Japanese anime sector might be functioning as ‘a sink for surplus labour which can only keep pace with subsistence by ever more heroic feats of self-exploitation and the further competitive subdivision of already densely filled survival niches’ (Davis 2004: 27).

Geertz, in the last chapter of his *Agricultural Involution* (1963a), contrasted Japan’s modernisation and Javanese involution, and argued that involution did not take place in Japan’s modernisation process because the surplus labour in the agricultural sector was

absorbed into the country's industrial sector (and that since Indonesia did not have such a strong industrial sector, Javanese farming villages had to involute to absorb their surplus labour). This argument seems interesting when we see Japan after its prolonged recession, low birth rate, and longevity, through which the country's industrial sector (especially manufacturing sector) has dismantled to become no longer the secure 'sink' in which the workers (especially young workers) seek employment. The nation now widely trumpets the individual 'creativity' among the youth as the next source of the country's growth. Many youths – excluded from the full-time employment in an industrial sector occupied by the older generation – do aim at entering the 'creative' industries, such as anime sector, and dream of joining the 'creative class' (cf. Florida 2002). However, the reality might be that the anime sector is literally 'sinking' (overdriving) the youths – already a scarce labour force for the country – into the irregular self-employment/exploitation of the 'creative' works (for the ambivalence of the creativity and exploitation that is depleting the youths in Japan, see Allison 2009).

Some argue that Internet streaming will increase the revenue from the overseas markets. Countering the criticism that the Japanese anime sector is unwilling to develop their business in the overseas market, they justify the sector's tendency to do overseas business by not leaving Japan at all because the global Internet streaming platforms do come to Japan to purchase their works and products to stream/distribute all over the world. If the overseas players are coming to Japan to stream and distribute anime for the Japanese anime sector,

why should the sector leave Japan to cultivate the overseas market? The sector was in a buoyant mood when I was doing my fieldwork in the Japanese anime sector because one of the world's biggest Internet streaming platforms, Netflix, had then entered the Japanese market to purchase numerous anime works at unbelievably high prices (compared with the rate of the domestic anime market). This seems to fit perfectly into the sector's aspiration to earn more money from overseas markets without leaving Japan. During my fieldwork, many players proudly told me that Internet streaming was now the 'mainstream' method of doing overseas business:

The 'overseas fever' has currently been reignited in the realm of Internet streaming. As for the major cases, Netflix is accelerating their activity to purchase Japanese anime. I have the experience to be in charge of the deal for Netflix to buy a certain anime work. I heard that in another deal, in which I did not participate, Netflix paid as much as \$100-150,000 per episode. Netflix seem to prefer to deal directly with anime production studios, and in many cases they only purchase their streaming rights. As the case of Netflix shows, it could be said that Internet streaming is the current mainstream trend in expanding anime business overseas. (Interview by the author with a person in charge of legal affairs of anime companies and anime production committees, April 2015)

It is realistic for the Japanese anime industries to approach the overseas market initially by Internet streaming. [...] Current Japanese anime industries are bubble-inflating by the purchasing of anime by the overseas players such as Netflix and Hulu.<sup>37</sup> (Interview by the author with an executive of an anime company, February 2015)

Some players even argued that although the revenues from the Internet streaming is currently not big enough to surpass the 'overseas fever' that took place around 2006, the big purchasing/distributing power of the global Internet platformers will surely keep on boosting

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<sup>37</sup> Another global Internet streaming platform.

the Japanese anime sector's overseas revenues.

However, when we recall Meagher's (2007) argument about Nigerian SME firms exposed to globalisation becoming 'nodes in a growing system of parallel global commodity chains operating under the radar of the global trading system' rather than linking themselves proactively to global export markets, we would be able to see that the matter is not simply whether the sector's overseas revenue will numerically increase, but *how* it will increase. For the Japanese anime sector to follow the orders of global big players who come to Japan with a wad of money does not mean that it is 'turning outward and adopting new modes'; on the contrary, it seems to show the feature of the sector's involution. There seems to be little difference between the anime production committees' licensing out their overseas business rights to overseas agents and the anime production studios selling their streaming rights to global Internet platformers: the anime sector stays in Japan and sticks to its domestic market centrism. The latter case could be even evaluated as worse than the former in terms of the sector's autonomy in the global market. While in the former case the anime sector is outsourcing its overseas works to overseas agents, in the latter case the Japanese anime sector as a whole *is outsourced* to the global Internet platforms to provide them with entertainment content for the platforms to sell and distribute world-wide. The Japanese anime sector seems to have been captured on the radar of the global Internet platforms, and has become just one of their subcontractors who are contributing to fattening their list of titles.

Moreover, it is not only the global Internet platforms that are ‘locking on’ the Japanese anime sector as a subcontractor. An executive of an anime company whom I interviewed was aware of (and worried about) the rise of China, not only as a competitor but also as the sector’s contractee:

Neighbour countries such as China are rapidly rising in the field of the entertainment business, including anime. I thus have a sense of trepidation that if we do nothing, China will take over the Japanese market itself. I think Japanese anime industries are in the danger of becoming China’s ‘premium subcontractor’ if we sit around and do nothing.

The country that we feel is the biggest threat for anime is China. The corporate values of the Chinese Internet streaming companies such as Youku and Tudou are becoming very big. The companies in the field of social networking service and electronic commerce such as Tencent and Alibaba are rising rapidly as well. I even think that Japan is currently only slightly surpassing them in terms of the planning ability (*kikakuryoku*) of anime works.

The possible scenario of our relationship with China in the near future is that Chinese anime companies will place orders for their own anime projects with Japanese anime creators by offering them compensations that are higher than those offered by Japanese anime companies. Since Japanese anime creators are generally not interested in going overseas, I think that most of them would not migrate to China. But if the Japanese anime creators are allowed to do work ordered from Chinese anime companies by staying in Japan and following the same procedure as they do when working with Japanese anime companies, I think many creators would be attracted to the Chinese companies. If that happens, the Japanese anime industries would be caught up by China in terms of planning ability (*kikakuryoku*). (Interview by the author, February 2015)

He was one of the few players in the Japanese anime sector who pointed out the rising presence of Chinese players in the Japanese anime sector during my fieldwork: it seems that their presence keeps on growing (see Chapter 6).

### ***Entrepreneurship as a solution?***

How, then, can the Japanese anime sector invert its involuting circular flow of domestic market centrism and ‘evolve outwardly to commit to its outer environment’ by ‘transforming itself into a new pattern’ of doing overseas anime business? Although the previous studies on involution depicted above tell us little about this point, some suggest that ‘entrepreneurship’ might be the key factor. The above cases of post-Soviet Russia show that the workers’ entrepreneurial attempts to ‘take the high road, wading out against the incoming involutionary tide, expanding into new forms of trade, service and petty commodity production’ were generally unsuccessful due to the Russian elites’ exclusivist *blat* network that prevented the workers from entering the realm of entrepreneurship and breaking out of their domestic household networks of friends, relatives, and colleagues. In the case of the Japanese anime sector, on the contrary, it seems that the sector itself is refusing to transform itself to encourage its members to capture the entrepreneurial opportunities existing outside the sector to wade out against the incoming involutionary tide.

The key to making a breakthrough in the sector’s involuting circular flow of domestic market centrism (i.e. the key to unravelling the ‘enigma’) seems to lie in the logic that its members call upon to protect themselves from external pressure to globalise their business, or the logic by which they contextualise the ‘discrepancies of evaluation’ (Barth 1967a: 149) to separate themselves from the pressures that come from outside their economic sphere. I would argue that two of the most prominent logics that are constantly utilised under

such conditions are the dichotomy of art versus commerce and the ‘Japanese’ versus ‘foreign’ way of doing business. Sector members often put themselves on the creative/‘Japanese’ side and insist that the gap between their side and the commerce/‘foreign’ side is unresolvable. In other words, when approached by outsiders (e.g. entrepreneurs) who propose unconventional overseas anime business, the members of the Japanese anime sector often turn to the major dichotomy of creative industries (i.e. arts versus commerce), contextualising their domestic market-centrist mode of operations as nurturing creativity that should not be disrupted by the money-oriented outsiders. They also seem to identify such a mode of operation as a ‘Japanese’ way of doing business that should be distinguished from and protected against that of outsiders, who only know the ‘foreign’ way of doing business. The primary task of the entrepreneur would thus be to resolve these dichotomies.

Here I do not intend to say that the Japanese anime sector is intrinsically on the creative side or inherently ‘Japanese.’ What I intend to highlight is how the members of the sector contextualise themselves in response to interventions from their external environment. In this sense, the two dichotomies of art versus commerce and the ‘Japanese’ and ‘foreign’ way of doing business could be understood as instrumental logic for coping with others, rather than an essentialist logic to explain their identity. Although it is unclear whether they use these two dichotomies strategically, it does remind me of sociologist Ann Swidler’s argument about culture as a ‘tool kit’ (Swidler 1986), which assumes that a person will summon a specific set of norms and behaviours out of the infinite set of norms/behaviours

when he/she tries to make sense of his/her own way of life. It could be said that these two dichotomies are sociocultural ‘tools’ for the members of the Japanese anime sector to protect and distinguish themselves from the interventions from their outer environment.

We can see how the two dichotomies actually appear in the arguments of the relevant players in the Japanese anime sector. For example, in his explanation on how the Japanese media and advertisement sector (*gyokai*, including the anime sector) operates, Tomoaki Ide (2015), a chief research officer of Dentsu Communication Institute (the think tank of Dentsu, Japan’s biggest advertisement agency), overtly showed his hostility towards the inflow of globalisation into the sector, as this would require the reconstruction of its business rules. Embracing the business customs, methodology and manner developed domestically in the Japanese media and advertisement sector as its unique ‘culture,’ ‘identity’ and ‘soul’ (269), Ide lamented that they were being denied as foreign corporations started entering the sector (185). In response, he insisted that he ‘would never accept the argument that the global standard as a KING is allowed to expel all the local standards’ (298). He criticised the companies in the Japanese media and advertisement sector which employed the Euro-American management style, and said they should not think that they represented the sector (287). He also suggested that local business customs, methodology and manners preserved the sector’s creativity, and that overriding them with ‘business-like relationships’ would undermine the creativity of the Japanese media and advertisement sector (290-291). Here we see how the two dichotomies actually appear in Ide’s argument: he contrasted the

‘Euro-American management style’ with the domestic business customs with which he was familiar (reflecting the dichotomy of the ‘Japanese’ versus ‘foreign’ way of doing business), and also insisted that the ‘business-like relationships’ that were prevalent outside the Japanese media and contents sector would undermine its creativity (reflecting the dichotomy of art versus commerce).

It might be worth investigating the comments of an anime company executive on the rise of China quoted above in analysing how the members of the Japanese anime sector utilise the dichotomies of the art versus commerce and the ‘Japanese’ versus ‘foreign’ way of doing business in response to the pressures from their external environments. In this case, the emphasis seems to be on the term ‘planning ability’ (*kikakuryoku*), which he pointed out as the capacity of the Japanese anime sector that surpasses the Chinese anime sector. He seemed to think that the Japanese anime sector is able to protect itself from becoming subordinate to the Chinese anime sector, insofar as it maintains its superiority in terms of *kikakuryoku* over China. Although he did not clearly define this *kikakuryoku*, it could be deduced that it might consist of the sector’s creativity and its capacity to develop such creativity into business in an established organisational and systematic manner.

In other words, *kikakuryoku* is the point at which the two dichotomies of art versus commerce and the ‘Japanese’ versus ‘foreign’ way of doing business intersect. It seems clear that *kikakuryoku* includes the sector’s creativity when we recall the executive saying that China would catch up to Japan up in terms of *kikakuryoku* if China started to absorb Japanese

anime creators into their businesses. As for the way of doing business, the executive suggested that the Chinese anime business system had not yet reached the level of that of Japan, which makes the Japanese anime sector's *kikakuryoku* still superior to the sector in China:

On the other hand, Chinese anime industries are in a sense still chaotic. The Chinese national government is injecting a huge amount in subsidies as part of their anime industries promotion policy. The condition for the recipient to get such subsidies is, however, that you should just make anime, without caring anything about their content and quality. As a result, it is said that many players who have no passion for anime but who just want money are making a huge number of low-quality anime works with such subsidies. This is one of the reasons why the Japanese anime industry surpasses China's in terms of their planning ability (*kikakuryoku*). (Interview by the author, February 2015)

Here we can observe how the two dichotomies are applied to the Chinese anime industries at the same time as the Japanese anime sector expresses its sense of threat and superiority towards it. China, in his reading, lacks creativity – talented anime creators, high quality anime works, and 'passion' for anime – and is dominated by players 'who just want money' (i.e. China is on the commerce side). In contrast, Japan is suggested to be the opposite (i.e. Japan is on the creative side). The organisational settings for anime business in China are 'chaos' – with a malfunctioning public incentive system attracting the wrong players to develop the business. In Japan, however, the anime business system is portrayed as stable.

The dichotomy of art versus commerce/management is also used by the Japanese anime sector when they face the Japanese government. Perhaps the Japanese government might be the most significant 'alien' to which the Japanese anime sector directs its greatest hostility, and to which it applies the dichotomy of art versus commerce most rigorously to

keep its distance. Since it became clear at the beginning of the 2000s (mainly due to the world-wide success of *Pokémon*) that the anime industry was one of the most promising sources of national economic growth and could become an alternative to the country's declining manufacturing sector (McGray 2002), the Japanese government (especially METI) has been trying to intervene in the sector through their industrial policy. This industrial policy itself has a long history in Japan's post-war political economy. It has mainly been applied to the heavy manufacturing industry to boost Japan's rapid economic growth in the country's high-growth period (the 1960s and 1970s). Its main purpose is to 'rationalize' the 'backward' features of the target sector to enhance its competitiveness in the global market (Johnson 1982). Since the anime sector has long been out of the scope of METI's industrial policy, METI decided to use their familiar industrial policy to intervene in the sector and allow it to contribute to Japan's economic growth (see Hatakeyama 2005: 86-112). Following the trajectory of the industrial policy in the country's high growth period, the central aim of the industrial policy aimed at the anime industry – now called the 'Cool Japan policy'<sup>38</sup> – is to 'organise' the sector to communicate efficiently with the government in establishing the industry organisation for anime (102-103) and to encourage the sector to expand its business into the overseas markets by offering financial support for promoting the export of anime. One of the most significant measures for promoting the overseas expansion of anime was

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<sup>38</sup> In a precise sense, the target of the 'Cool Japan' policy is Japan's creative industries, including the anime industry (see Chapter 2 for METI's definition of creative industries). The policy's name, 'Cool Japan', seems to have been borrowed from journalist Douglas McGray's (2002) heavily influential article, 'Japan's Gross National Cool', which opened many policymakers' eyes towards the anime sector as the next promising industrial sector for the country's future economic growth (cf. Matsui 2010).

the establishment of METI's public-private 'Cool Japan Fund' in the winter of 2013 (which now contains more than 30 billion yen, or £170 million, from the government and 7.5 billion yen, or £40 million, from the private sector) to enable players in creative industries (including the anime sector) to monetise the overseas markets (for further details of the 'Cool Japan' policy, see Mihara 2014).<sup>39</sup> This indeed seems, at least formally, to be the solution proposed by METI to resolve the lack of an established system to develop an overseas anime business as depicted above. METI seems to intend to provide the clues for the anime sector to invert its involuting circular flow of domestic market centrism and to evolve outwardly to transform itself into a new pattern of business coordination.

However, with very few exceptions, such governmental interventions have been furiously resisted by players in the Japanese anime sector (and the scholars who advocate for them) as a negative institutionalisation of anime's creativity (i.e. the dichotomy of art versus commerce/management). There seem to be a strong tendency among scholars on this issue to utilise the dichotomy of art versus commerce/management to criticise the institutionalisation of anime's creativity through the intervention of the government in the field of anime, for example the packaging of Japanese culture reducing its diversity (Iwabuchi 2007) and the sanitising of the bawdy side of anime, which is one of the critical sources of its creativity (Daliot-Bul 2009). In parallel to these arguments, many players in the anime sector develop similar points of view. Former manga editor and cultural critic Eiji

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<sup>39</sup> [http://www.meti.go.jp/policy/mono\\_info\\_service/mono/creative/20160513CJFundApril.pdf](http://www.meti.go.jp/policy/mono_info_service/mono/creative/20160513CJFundApril.pdf) (accessed 21 May 2016).

Ōtsuka (2005) criticised the government's policy of 'promoting' anime industries because it means making anime a part of state policy (*kokusakuka*). Critically reviewing the policy documents and measures issued or implemented by the Japanese government and aimed at the marketisation of the anime sector, Ōtsuka forecast (about a decade before the establishment of the Cool Japan Fund) that trying to develop anime projects with establishing funds would be incompatible with the nature of the sector:

You need to corroborate your fund with the well-documented figures in order to persuade its sponsor. However, it is generally unclear in the soft industry whether the director who has a good track record would be able to make the same level of achievement in his next work. Moreover, the *otaku* market is much more unpredictable than that. It is true that if you are in the midst of such market you can forecast to a certain degree what will 'come' next and what will make a hit. But you cannot reduce such a prediction into figures. This means that when you try to finance anime projects through funds, you will increasingly have to file the names of the creators who have 'the good track records in the past' for your investors, and as a result it will become difficult to appoint the new and unknown talents. (233)

Noting ironically that nothing good will happen when the state tries to understand the creative activities of the anime sector (254), Ōtsuka fiercely insisted that the state should withdraw from the anime sector and leave it alone (190). Similarly, Kaichiro Morikawa (2012) – one of the leading researchers on *otaku* culture in Japan – criticised the upward mobility observed in some players in the anime sector to seek official reputation in concert with the governmental intervention in the sector, suggesting that such behaviour would make the creativity of the *otaku* culture obsolete. All the arguments depicted above seem to put the anime sector on the 'creative' side and the government on the 'commerce/management' side, and to assume that both sides would/should not be compatible.

As mentioned above, entrepreneurship may play a key role in inverting the involuting circular flow of domestic market centrism in the Japanese anime sector – or at least, it seems to be more workable than governmental intervention. The preceding cases show, however, that such an entrepreneurial attempt will also face the dichotomy of art versus commerce and the ‘Japanese’ versus ‘foreign’ way of doing business. The most prominent case would be that of Takashi Murakami, a contemporary artist who succeeded in transplanting the creative concept of Japanese anime into the Euro-American contemporary art world context and made a large amount of money through such artistic activities. The concept was exhibited as ‘super flat’ (Murakami 2000) and also influenced the argument of postmodernism. The evaluation of Murakami by the anime sector, and vice versa, is nevertheless heavily caught up with the above dichotomies. In his book *Geijutsu Kigyouron* (Entrepreneurship in the Art World) (2006), Murakami depicts how his artistic activities have been criticised by the Japanese people (including people in the anime sector) as ‘strictly about money for an artist’ (27), as ‘indecent’ (*harenchi*) (107) in its collaboration with corporations, and as selling the ‘spirit’ (*tamashii*) of the anime sector to outsiders (125). Murakami himself also bluntly insists that ‘the aim of the artists is to convert their work into money’ (29). According to him, for an artist to succeed and survive in the global (Euro-American) art world, he or she should understand the rules and context of that world and strategically create/exhibit his/her artwork. From such a perspective, the Japanese art scene, which embraces the naïve creativity of the artists (the assumption that you can freely create

whatever you want, e.g. 25)<sup>40</sup> is a lukewarm world in which all the members can long-windedly (*daradarato*) survive without being exposed to worldwide assessment (29). Murakami's entrepreneurial attempts seem to be a breakthrough indeed: he did make money from his creative projects on the basis of Japan's anime culture, and his concept of super flat was quoted by many scholars outside Japan to explain the creativity of Japanese anime. However, it seems that the dichotomies of art versus commerce and the 'Japanese' versus 'foreign' way of doing business make Murakami and the Japanese anime sector repel each other, hindering their further constructive synergy.

To add to how the members of the Japanese anime sector utilise the two dichotomies *vis-à-vis* outsiders, I would also mention their essentialist use of domestically 'premodern' terms to distinguish insiders and outsiders. For example, when describing the nature of the sociality inside the sector, they tend to use terms like *mura shakai* (small town society), *houkensei* (feudalism), *monka* (apprentice), *shishou* (teacher), and so on. Indeed, Ide (2015) argues that the business customs, methodology, and manner in the Japanese media and advertisement sector include the small-townisation (*mura shakaika*) of the sector by introducing the 'feudalism by the length in the company' (*shareki houkenseido*) (269-272). *Shareki houkenseido* is, according to Ide, the 'traditional' system of management that forces the worker to follow their seniors (i.e. the workers who enter their company earlier than

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<sup>40</sup> This assumption is in striking parallel with the assertion of the anime film director Mamoru Hosoda (depicted in Chapter 1) that anime creators should just care about what they want to make (*tsukuritai mono o tsukureba iindayo*).

them) absolutely to maximise the organisation's performance (270): this hierarchical relationship between the seniors and juniors in the sector is compared by its members to the master-servant relationship between the lords and their retainers and villains in the feudal era (297). Similarly, I encountered numerous players during my fieldwork in the Japanese anime sector who portrayed the sector as a *mura shakai* (small town society). Yamamoto (2007) also found that the human relationship of animators residing in a concentrated fashion in the Tokyo area is contextualised by them in terms of Japanese traditional apprenticeship terminologies. One animator who responded to Yamamoto's interview told him that he is one of the '*monka*' (apprentices) of a certain senior animator, that he is from a '*juku*' (school) of a certain senior animator, and that the animator is his '*shishou*' (teacher) (456). These are examples of the use of domestically premodern terms to describe the insiders of the Japanese anime sector (the use of such terms towards their outsiders will be mentioned in the next chapter). These terminologies seem to be the crucial signals for an ethnographer to detect whether a person is regarded by the Japanese anime sector as an insider or not, although I do not intend to say that there is any essence of such 'pre-modernity' in (or out of) the Japanese anime sector for the same reasons depicted above regarding the reactional use of the two dichotomies by the sector's members.

In sum, it could be said that the discrepancies of the positions between the Japanese anime sector and the entrepreneurs is the *de facto* starting point for their entrepreneurial attempts to invert the involution of the sector's domestic market centrism and to try to

establish its distribution platforms in the overseas markets. This also seems to resonate with Schumpeter's (1934) argument that entrepreneurship is a confrontational activity towards the existing socioeconomic system – such as 'detaching productive means (already employed somewhere) from the circular flow and allotting them to new combinations' (71). As depicted above, two of such most significant sociocultural/moral discrepancies are the dichotomies of art versus commerce and the 'Japanese' versus 'foreign' way of doing business. An entrepreneur's primal sociocultural task is thus to resolve these two discrepancies with his prospective business partners in the Japanese anime sector. In the following chapter, I will depict ethnographically how an actual entrepreneur (Ikeyama) tried to resolve these two discrepancies through his entrepreneurial anime business project to establish the distribution platform of the anime related goods in the Indian market for the Japanese anime sector.

## Chapter 4: Ikeyama in Japan: From Outsider to Business

### Partner

This chapter ethnographically depicts how Ikeyama behaved in Japan *vis-à-vis* the Japanese anime sector to involve its insiders (especially Dobashi) in his business. The chapter will first examine the peripheral position of the Indian market in the Japanese anime sector, i.e. how India occupies an extremely minor place in the sector's already small overseas market (which we overviewed in the previous chapter). It will then depict how the two dichotomies – art versus commerce, and the 'Japanese' versus 'Indian' way of doing business – emerge as critical sociocultural discrepancies to be resolved before Ikeyama could establish a sound business alliance with Dobashi. In other words, Ikeyama had to move from being a dubious outsider (*yamashi*) in the Japanese anime sector to becoming a trustable business partner. It will also examine how Ikeyama's ambiguous dual agency as a broker played a key role in resolving the dichotomies.

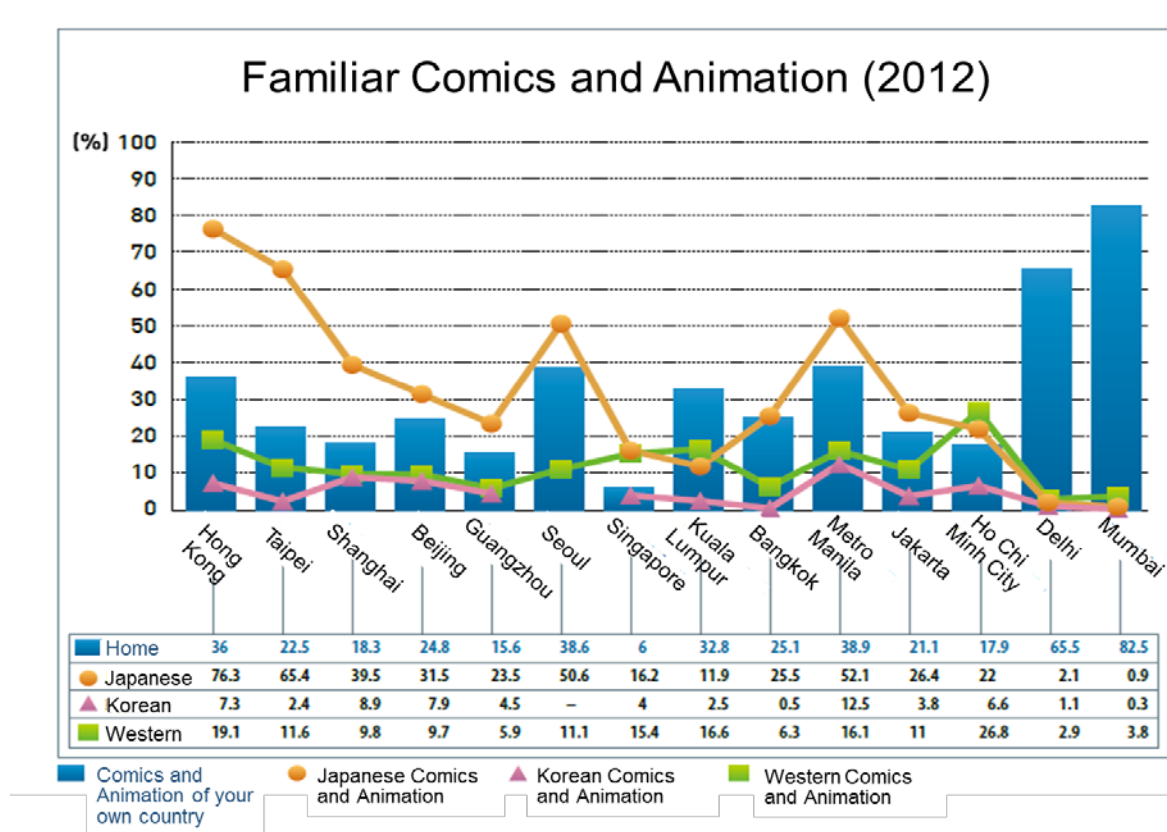
#### *India's place in the overseas vision of the Japanese anime sector*

In the context of the Japanese anime sector, India shares many of the features of the Indo-Japanese relationship I depicted in Chapter 2. As we have seen in the previous chapter, overseas markets (including the Indian market) are currently not central to the Japanese anime sector. When it comes to Asian countries, the Japanese anime sector seems to be

gravitating more towards Eastern and South-Eastern Asia than towards South Asia. For example, the AJA (the Association of Japanese Animations) (2014) estimated the number of anime titles licensed out to each foreign country in 2013. According to this list, the top three countries to which such titles were licensed out were Korea (90 titles), Taiwan (81 titles), and the United States (73 titles) (58). This ranking has remained stable for the past few years (71). India ranked 23rd in this ranking, and was licensed six titles from Japan in 2013 (58). The top 20 countries in this list (which did not include India) received 93.4% of the total overseas contracts with Japan in 2013 (Ibid.). Although the number of licence contracts between the sector and Asia (446 contracts, 56% of the whole contracts) was larger than the number of contracts with any other region, most licences seem to go to Eastern and South-East Asian countries. India seems to belong to the 'long tail' part of this Asian ranking: the country is far below the all other East Asian countries (excluding North Korea), such as South Korea, Taiwan, China (50 titles), Hong Kong (44 titles), and Macau (16 titles). It is also below many of the South-East Asian countries such as Thailand (54 titles), Malaysia (17 titles), Philippines (15 titles), Singapore (14 titles), Brunei (8 titles), and Indonesia (7 titles). Countries that come below India in the rankings are Vietnam (1 title) and other countries that have no licence contract with the Japanese anime sector, such as all the West Asian countries, North Korea, Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives, and Pakistan (58, 71).

Similarly, the survey report issued in 2013 by Hakuhodo (2013), one of the major advertising agencies in Japan, questioning consumers in major Asian cities about which countries' contents (Korean, Japanese, Western, or their own country) they prefer, supports the assumption that Japanese anime gravitates more towards the Eastern and South-Eastern Asian countries and has less affinity with India.

**Chart 6: Familiar comics and animation in the Asian cities**



(Extracted and translated from Hakuhodo 2013: 2)

Chart 6 shows graphically the familiarities of the consumers in Asian cities with the comics and animation made in Japan, Korea, West, and their own country. The 'unfamiliarity' of the

consumers in Delhi and Mumbai with Japanese comics and animation is obvious compared with consumers in Eastern and South-Eastern Asian cities. While Japanese comics and animation seem to be more popular than local productions in almost all cities in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia (the only exception is Kuala Lumpur), they are far more unpopular than local Indian comics and animations in Delhi and Mumbai: only 2.1% of consumers in Delhi and 0.9% of consumers in Mumbai said they were familiar with Japanese comics and animation, while 65.5% of consumers in Delhi and 82.5% of consumers in Mumbai answered that they were accustomed to the local ones. It seems that the *surechigai* between Japan and India that we have seen in Chapter 2 can also be observed in the realm of anime: in other words, in the main, people in the Japanese anime sector are not interested in Indian market, and Indian consumers are not interested in Japanese anime.

During my fieldwork, I constantly noticed people in the anime sector suggesting that India is an almost completely unfamiliar market for them. The Japanese anime sector simply does not know enough about India, having no market data for the country. Proposing to them to do anime businesses in or with India is thus somewhat unconventional. I heard comments from many anime companies, regarding Ikeyama's business, suggesting that considering starting anime business in India is 'premature' (*jiki shousou*).

The players in the Japanese anime sector also seem more 'familiar' with doing business in or with Eastern and South-Eastern Asian countries than India. For example, the CEO of an anime planning company suggested in one interview that character

merchandising in terms of Japanese anime business would be more acceptable to Chinese and Malaysian consumers than to Indian consumers.<sup>41</sup> When I interviewed him, the representative of the overseas sales division of a certain anime goods manufacturing company suggested that most anime goods companies might be uncertain about how to make and maintain a business relationship with Indian business partners (if they have any) because there are few pioneers in the Japanese anime sector who are already doing anime business in or with India that they could rely on as precedents. As for China, on the other hand, the length of the sector's relationship with the country is much longer than with India. There are thus many companies doing anime business in or with China, which makes it easier for the sector to consider starting business in or with China than India (interview by the author, February 2015).

Some overseas anime-related business projects have recently been launched in Eastern and South-Eastern Asian countries. Animate, a major anime goods retailer in Japan, opened their branch shop in Bangkok in February 2016.<sup>42</sup> Kadokawa, a major publisher in Japan, was establishing schools for local creators in Taiwan, Bangkok, and Singapore from September 2014 'as a new platform for learning to transmit the Japanese know-how of content creation to the world.'<sup>43</sup> The Cool Japan Fund invested in a business project to establish the 'Japan Channel' broadcasting organisations located in Indonesia and

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<sup>41</sup> <https://newspicks.com/news/761572/body> (accessed 17 June 2016).

<sup>42</sup> <http://animeanime.jp/article/2016/02/11/26939.html> (accessed 17 June 2016).

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.kadokawa-ca.co.jp/academy/> (accessed 18 June 2016).

Myanmar.<sup>44</sup> I also heard from many people in the Japanese anime sector that they were becoming able to make profits through running booths at anime conventions in Eastern and South-Eastern Asian cities, mainly due to the rising purchasing power of the local young anime fans in such cities.

In contrast, the Indo-Japanese anime business relationship seems to be precarious. The representatives of one anime goods manufacturer told me that the Japanese toy sector formed a delegation to visit Delhi to meet with the local trade organisations in the mid-2000s to explore the possibility of doing business in India. They were mainly attracted by the huge potential of the Indian market. However, their attempt did not develop into continuous business in India as a whole. Although the company that the representatives belonged to started their character merchandising business in the Indian market, they could only continue such a business for about a year. The ‘tide’ of the momentum to develop their business in India had ‘gone out’ (*shio ga hiita*), mainly due to the local Indian consumer’s weak purchasing power. They also told me that there were very few precedents (*senrei*) that they could follow when doing business in India (interview by the author, March 2015). The Japanese anime events held in India seemed to be – as far as I observed during my fieldwork – more fan-based, smaller in size, and less professionally organised than anime conventions held in Eastern and South-Eastern Asian countries. Very few Japanese anime-related companies come to such conventions in India. There seem to be no franchised anime retail

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<sup>44</sup> [https://www.cj-fund.co.jp/files/press\\_150304-1.pdf](https://www.cj-fund.co.jp/files/press_150304-1.pdf) (accessed 20 June 2016).

shops in India, like the Bangkok branch of Animate mentioned above.<sup>45</sup> One player in the Japanese anime sector even said, half-jokingly, that the Japanese anime sector might not be able to expand its business from South-Eastern Asia to South Asia by crossing the Ganges River (interview by the author, March 2015). This comment seems to show how the sector feel more familiar with South-Eastern Asia and less familiar with South Asia in doing anime business.

The involuting circular flow of enigmatic domestic market centrism in the Japanese anime sector that we have seen in the previous chapter increasingly drives India into a minor position in its overseas vision. I heard comments from many players in the Japanese anime sector, regarding Ikeyama's business, suggesting that most anime companies might not be able to spend their money on cultivating Indian market with him, because such a market is unlikely to become a profitable source of income for their business. The implication of these comments seems to be that if they have time and money for this, they would use it to carry on their already busy everyday business in the Japanese domestic market.

The material basis for such everyday practices of anime merchandising business in the Japanese domestic market seems also to deflect the attention of players in the Japanese anime sector away from the Indian market. When the anime goods manufacturing companies want to make and sell goods associated with certain anime characters, for example, they first

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<sup>45</sup> On the other hand, the Japanese video game sector – similar to, but different from, the anime sector in that it is much wealthier – seems to have started taking action to cultivate the Indian market. The Bandai Namco group, one of the major corporate groups in the Japanese video game sector, launched the 'Namco Family Entertainment Centre' (a play area for children and their families to play the group's games) in Mumbai's luxurious shopping mall in late 2015 (<http://www.oberoimall.com/fun.html>, accessed 20 June 2016).

have to submit a request form to the characters' rights holders for their permission. The forms are often prepared by the rights holders, and in many cases they have a section asking about the geographical areas in which the applicants would like to sell their goods. In many cases, such a section consists of a list of country check-boxes for the applicants to tick. What interested me is that, according to one representative of a certain anime goods maker, not all countries appear in such a list of check-boxes (interview by the author, February 2015).<sup>46</sup>

This seems to suggest that some countries are left off the list from the beginning because they are considered unconventional areas for the rights holders' anime businesses. India seems often to fall into such a 'left-off countries' category, and its name rarely appears on these request forms. This seems to mean that many rights holders of anime works do not anticipate doing business in India by default, and that there are thus no official/routinised routes for the relevant players to propose distributing their products in the Indian market. It could be said that the 'circular flow' of this form submission routine of the anime merchandising business implicitly but systematically excludes India from the Japanese anime sector's scope of overseas business, or at least that such a 'circular flow' is making the anime business in or with India costlier than business in or with countries that appear on the check-box list.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> According to the representative, this incomplete check-box list of countries used in the Japanese anime business forms a sharp contrast with the incredibly detailed check-box lists used in the American comics merchandising business. In most cases, such lists cover almost all countries in the world.

<sup>47</sup> The section is sometimes prepared as a free description space. In such cases it is possible for one to write 'India' to propose distributing anime goods in the Indian market. In many cases of free description, however, they just abstractly write 'Asia' in that area to maximise the number of the countries in which they could have formal permission to distribute their anime goods, and actually distribute them only in Eastern and South-Eastern Asian countries. The anime goods manufacturers may secure the rights to distribute their goods in India, but such rights would in fact be theoretical and rarely implemented.

Ikeyama once told me that in some business meetings in which Ikeyama succeeded to persuade the anime goods merchandising companies to distribute a certain set of anime goods to DTA, the companies started to wonder how they could ask their rights holders to give them the permissions to do so because there were no check-boxes for India on the request forms. Since they could not place such a request on the routine communication track with their rights holders (i.e. by submitting the request forms), they had to arrange unconventional communications with their rights holders to ask them to agree to distribute their anime goods in the Indian market.<sup>48</sup> I assume that at least some anime goods makers that declined Ikeyama's proposal to do business in India did so because they balanced the cost/risk of this unconventional communication with the rights holders against the profit they could gain from the Indian market (which is highly uncertain), and concluded that the former was bigger.

The 'enigma' of domestic market centrism that we have seen in Chapter 3 can also be observed in terms of the Indian market. Indeed, the above peripheral position of the Indian market for the Japanese anime sector does not mean that Japanese anime has no presence in India. Several anime programs have long been aired on Indian TV, such as *Ninja Hattori-kun* (Mr. Hattori, the *Ninja*) and *Crayon Shin-chan*, are said to be very popular among Indian consumers. The players in the Japanese anime sector seem to agree that the Indian market has huge potential for their overseas anime business. Virtually nobody in the sector who had

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<sup>48</sup> This is generally the case for the forms with free description space. It is unclear whether the term 'Asia' includes India or not, and they will have to clarify this with the rights holders, which is unconventional practice.

business meetings with Ikeyama denied that the Indian market was an important overseas market for their business, at least in the mid- and long-term. As seen above, the Japanese toy sector did once send a delegation to India to explore the possibility of doing business there. Despite such potential, however, most players in the Japanese anime sector are unwilling to deal with the Indian market proactively. This seems to be due to their unfamiliarity with India and the unconventional measures they have to take when trying to cultivate the market. As Dobashi criticises, they seem to be afraid of becoming the first one to break their convention of avoiding India. If one starts business in or with India by breaking such a convention and fails, such a failure will be 100% attributed to the one who broke that convention. The players in the Japanese anime sector therefore do not want to be the first in the Japanese anime sector to deal with India. Dobashi claims the Japanese anime sector's attitude towards the Indian market is a typical example of the sector's strong tendency to avoid short-term risk (the Indian market) that may result in accumulating long-term risk (never becoming able to profit from the Indian market: interview by the author, February 2015).

The Japanese anime sector's domestic market centrism could be further highlighted by the observed fact that the dominant mainstream players in the sector rarely show interest in the Indian market, while the players in a more marginal position sometimes show enthusiastic interest in doing business in or with India. Indeed, many anime-related companies in dominant positions in the Japanese anime sector virtually declined Ikeyama's

business proposal to distribute their products to DTA for distribution in the Indian market. Some even refused to meet him from the very first. I heard one anime producer say that they (the companies that refused Ikeyama) are the companies that have the smallest incentive to take risk in Japan (*nihon de ichiban charenji shinakute ii kaisha*) because they have already secured a dominant position in the Japanese anime sector. The contrast between the mainstream players' indifference to the Indian market and the more peripheral players' (extreme) interest in Ikeyama's proposal was sometimes surprisingly sharp. The brutal fact seemed to be that in some cases the peripheral players were facing a bigger risk than the risk of taking on the Indian market; in other words, they felt forced to jump at the unconventional risk of expanding their business in India to avoid the much bigger risk of losing their position in the Japanese anime sector.

### ***From outsider to business partner: introduction***

In Chapter 2, we saw how the gap between the unfamiliarity of India in Japan and India's rising status as an economic superpower has come to be recognised by some entrepreneurs/brokers as a lucrative one to be arbitrated. This also seems to be the case in the realm of the Japanese anime business. We have already seen in the previous section how the Japanese anime sector considers the Indian market as an unconventional place to do business. The huge potential of the Indian market for the Japanese anime sector has not only been recognised by the players in the sector, but it has also been championed by some players

outside the sector, including the Japanese government. Some (although not many) entrepreneurs/brokers in and around the Japanese anime sector are trying to arbitrage this gap by bridging the Japanese anime sector and the Indian market. Ikeyama and his business of DTA/CAP fall into this category.

The government is one of the most significant players in Japan trying to secure an intermediary position in the Indo-Japanese anime business, which they are pursuing through their Cool Japan policy. The CID of METI issued a 2012 report claiming that India, along with China and Indonesia, was one of the most lucrative foreign markets to cultivate for Japanese content industries (including anime industries; METI 2012b). Also in 2012, Japan's Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry (Yukio Edano) visited Delhi and issued a joint press statement with the Indian Minister of Commerce and Industry (Anand Sharma) announcing enhanced bilateral cooperation in promoting both countries' creative industries. It explicitly cited 'collaboration between Japanese and Indian content industries including co-production of animations and films and on-location shoots' as one of the main areas of collaboration.<sup>49</sup> METI also provided a subsidy to the anime test marketing project proposed by the consortium of anime-related companies in Japan trying to establish their platform for broadcasting and merchandising in India.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> [http://www.meti.go.jp/policy/mono\\_info\\_service/mono/creative/JointStatement\\_Japan-India\\_e.pdf](http://www.meti.go.jp/policy/mono_info_service/mono/creative/JointStatement_Japan-India_e.pdf) (accessed 22 June 2016).

<sup>50</sup> [http://www.meti.go.jp/policy/mono\\_info\\_service/mono/creative/07japacon.pdf](http://www.meti.go.jp/policy/mono_info_service/mono/creative/07japacon.pdf) (accessed 23 June 2016).

In my interview, one ex-official at CID emphasised the importance for the division to become a hub of the business network in the field of creative industries in Japan, including the overseas anime business in India. He was in charge of another policy project to put up a ‘Cool Japan booth’ in one of India’s biggest trade shows, held in Delhi. One of his missions in this project was to encourage the players in the realm of creative industries to participate and explore the possibility of doing business in the Indian market, i.e. to facilitate matching opportunities between players in the Japanese anime sector and prospective business partners in India. Although he admitted that the Japanese anime sector was not necessarily interested in such a project, he told me that CID would not give up on the Indian market, because they highly appreciated its potential (interview by the author, March 2015).<sup>51</sup>

Chapter 3 suggested that the involuting circular flow of the domestic market centricism of the Japanese anime sector could be inverted by entrepreneurship. In the case of anime business in or with India, there are some (although not many) entrepreneurs, including Ikeyama, trying to bridge/arbitrage the gap between the huge market potential of the Indian market and the unwillingness of the Japanese anime sector to expand its business (for the comparison of Ikeyama’s project with other overseas anime business projects involving India, see Chapter 6).

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<sup>51</sup> METI’s aspiration to become a broker (not a leader) in the political economy of the exportation of Japanese anime seems to represent a substantial shift from the ministry’s expectation of fulfilling the function of a ‘pilot agency’ (Johnson 1982) in Japan’s high-growth period to spearhead the country’s economic/industrial growth through exportation. This topic is, however, beyond the scope of this thesis.

Chapters 2 and 3 also suggested that such entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial attempts face both business-economic and sociocultural/moral hostility from the Japanese anime sector as outsiders in terms of the two dichotomies of art versus commerce and the 'Japanese' versus 'Indian' way of doing business. This also seems to be the case with proposing new overseas businesses in or with India. The sociocultural task of the entrepreneurs who want to involve the members in the Japanese anime sector into their Indian business is thus to resolve the two dichotomies.

How is this possible? I will examine this through the ethnography of Ikeyama's business activities in Japan (mainly in the Tokyo area), which tried to involve players in the Japanese anime sector in DTA and actually succeeded in establishing a sound business relationship with Dobashi. A special focus will thus be placed on his relationship with Dobashi, showing how Ikeyama managed his relationship with Dobashi and why Dobashi thought Ikeyama would be a trustworthy business partner for him specifically and for the Japanese anime sector in general. According to Dobashi, Ikeyama was strikingly different from the other outsiders in his behaviour and attitude towards the Japanese anime sector. What made Ikeyama different from other outsiders? What kind of attitude and behaviour (in terms of the dichotomy of art versus commerce and the 'Japanese' versus 'Indian' way of doing business) separated him from other outsiders? Ikeyama's behaviour in Japan thus seems worth investigating ethnographically.

### ***From outsider to business partner: the ethnography***

As we have seen in Chapter 3, the players in the Japanese anime sector almost always put themselves on the ‘arts’ and ‘Japanese’ side when approached by their outsiders in overseas business. This was also the case with the following ethnography. It further suggests that they seem convinced to do overseas (Indian) business with outsiders entrepreneurs/brokers (who are contextualised as on the ‘commerce’ and ‘Indian’ side) when they simultaneously exhibit themselves to the sector as being more on the ‘arts’ side than the ‘commerce’ side and more on the ‘Indian’ side than the ‘Japanese’ side. In other words, entrepreneurs/brokers are required to show the Japanese anime sector that they are the *same as* but also *different from* its members if they are to do business in or with India together. It is this dually ambiguous agency of the brokers/entrepreneurs that carries forward the overseas anime business.

It would be worth ethnographically contrasting Dobashi’s relationship with Ikeyama and his attitude towards other outsider entrepreneurs to examine how the two dichotomies worked in Ikeyama’s establishment and development of the relationship with Dobashi. I conducted one intensive interview with Dobashi, without Ikeyama, in the final phase of my fieldwork. After observing most of the meetings and communications between Ikeyama and Dobashi in the course of DTA business, I asked Dobashi in the interview why he decided in the first place that he should or could ally with Ikeyama, and how he evaluated Ikeyama’s attitude and behaviour as a business partner, at an individual level and at the level of the Japanese anime sector in general. In addition, during my fieldwork, Dobashi (and

Ikeyama) also provided me with many comments on the features of the undesirable outsider entrepreneurs with whom the Japanese anime sector do not want to do overseas business. These included general comments and his own experience of being approached by them. There were even many such entrepreneurs who approached DTA and sought to do overseas business with Ikeyama and Dobashi. In most cases, Dobashi (and Ikeyama) dismissed their approaches because the ‘cultural differences’ were ‘too big to compromise.’ I will first depict the interview with Dobashi, followed by the compiled comments made by Dobashi and Ikeyama on such undesirable outsider entrepreneurs.<sup>52</sup>

[Interview with Dobashi: February 2015 in Tokyo]

Dobashi and I met up at the ticket gate of a train station during a night in February. The station is located to the west of the central Tokyo (about 15-20 minutes’ train ride from Shinjuku, at the west end of the central Tokyo area). The station is included in the area of Tokyo where anime production studios and other anime creators (the players on the ‘creative’ side of the Japanese anime sector) concentrate (see Chapter 3). NEX Pro., the anime production studio to which Dobashi belongs, is also located in this area.

Since Dobashi was so busy in handling his normal work at NEX Pro. (producing several anime projects he was in charge of), we decided it would be convenient for Dobashi to meet me near his workplace rather than holding the interview session in central Tokyo.

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<sup>52</sup> I will consolidate the comments of Dobashi and Ikeyama, and will not depict each ethnographic context in individual detail for reasons of confidentiality.

We also avoided his core working time. We met at the station after 9pm, which is not only late for a fieldworker to hold a meeting with a Japanese businessperson, but also late to start drinking (it was an informal interview). The place and time I met with Dobashi seemed to manifest the ‘involuting’ feature of the Japanese anime sector, including its exploitative work environment of long working hours (see Chapter 3).

Dobashi took me to a small but cosy Japanese-style bar in a small multi-tenant building a few minutes’ walk from the station. We sat at the bar next to each other, and ordered alcohol. The interview began.

Dobashi’s somewhat ‘peripheral’ position in the Japanese anime sector explains the structural reason why he was inclined to ally with Ikeyama. During my fieldwork, indeed, Dobashi repeatedly explained that he was not in the mainstream of the Japanese anime sector. According to him, the career path he took to become an anime producer was ‘unorthodox,’ and this unorthodoxy requires him to prove the value he adds to the sector which an ‘orthodox’ producer cannot provide, so as not to be buried alive. Coping with overseas markets (i.e. practices in which mainstream players in the sector are generally not willing to engage) is one of the business activities in which Dobashi can engage to differentiate himself from mainstream anime producers. In one meeting at café in which Ikeyama, Dobashi and I participated, I intentionally asked Dobashi why he had decided to cooperate with Ikeyama in Ikeyama’s presence. He answered because he wanted to establish his reputation in the Japanese anime sector as an anime producer who cultivates new markets. He also told us

that he would be able to survive in the Japanese anime sector if he succeeded in creating the idea among its players (including anime creators) that they should contact him to seek new business opportunities. Allying with Ikeyama to cultivate the Indian market thus perfectly fit with this ambition.

Dobashi's 'peripheral' position in the Japanese anime sector also seemed to make him view the sector's working norms with a critical eye. In the interview, he showed dissatisfaction with the conventional ways in which creative players and commercial players interacted when carrying out anime projects. This seemed to be one of the crucial points he wanted to change by allying with Ikeyama. According to him, one of the most significant norms controlling the (domestic market centrist) mode of operations in the Japanese anime sector is that the commercial players try their best not to irritate anime creators.<sup>53</sup> He argued that the excessive emphasis on the creators was preventing the Japanese anime sector from developing its commercial aspects thoroughly, let alone its overseas anime business. 'The anime sector is a gathering of freelancers, you know,' Dobashi said, while poking the dishes with his chopsticks, 'so you need *kireigoto* (pretty words) to motivate the creators to participate in anime projects. That is different from the logic of business that is used in managing a single, clearly-bounded corporate organisation. We need different logic when

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<sup>53</sup> This seems to include the norm that anime businesspeople should comply with all requests and requirements from the anime creators for them to perform their work well, no matter how unreasonable they would be. During my fieldwork, Dobashi repeatedly told Ikeyama and me how anime businesspeople have been negatively affected by the behaviour of anime creators, which is always justified by the motto of 'art for art's sake'. He told us how one young female entry-level producer was once reduced to tears by an old male animator who tenaciously scolded her for many hours because she did not appreciate the animator's creativity when she failed to make arrangements for that animator to carry out his work. Dobashi suggested this was nothing but power harassment and had nothing to do with art.

trying to put together a number of freelance anime creators to carry out a single anime project.’

Anime creators love uniqueness (*yuiitsusei o aisuru*), and they want their creative works to be embraced as such by the project members. They do not want to be quantified or be made fungible – they are allergic to such a way of thinking. If you work in a corporate organisation, you can boldly say that we should make money from our project. But you cannot say that kind of thing straightforwardly if you are to manage anime projects, which always have to involve a bunch of freelance anime creators to outsource creative works. You have to treat every single creator as if he or she is the indispensable part of the anime project. Anime creators want to be told that they are necessary. Of course this is not always true. I know there are many bad animators out there who are skilful only at doing shoddy works and at laying their own faults at the door of somebody else. But this *kireigoto*, to assume every creative member of the anime project to be indispensable, is necessary if you are to carry out the anime project smoothly.

Imagine that you, a CEO of an anime production studio, set an animator to work on drawing a certain cut of a certain anime work, and he or she returns it in terrible quality, which cannot be included in the film to be delivered to your clients at the TV station. If that animator is an employee of your company, your subordinate, you can just scold that animator and tell him or her to do it again right away. But if that animator is a freelancer and you are just outsourcing the work to him or her, you cannot behave in that way. You need to communicate with that animator in a more nuanced way to let him or her redo the work. That is what I am talking about.

This *kireigoto*, however, leads the Japanese anime sector to a false egalitarianism.

If each anime creator is unique or indispensable to the anime project, one becomes unable to grade the contributions of the players, or tell who contributed *more* to the project and who contributed *less* to it. The sector is thus unable to reward the project members accordingly, and ends up in imposing the same low wages on all members. Dobashi told me in the interview that he was informed by his ex-boss (the boss in the anime company to which he

belonged before joining NEX Pro.) that he should tolerate his low salary because all other members were paid at the same level (*minna tsuraindakara gaman shiro*).

That is why I think the Japanese anime sector is unwilling to cultivate foreign markets. Whenever you consider doing business with a certain foreign country, you cannot avoid the fact that certain anime works are more popular than others in that country. You have to tell the anime creators that their work is less popular than that of another anime creator's work in the country. You have to tell the anime creators that their work will not sell well in the country. Not a single anime creator wants to hear that kind of thing, and nobody in the Japanese anime sector wants to say that kind of thing to the anime creators. Rather than facing such a reality, anime creators are comfortable staying in the position of subcontractors of production committees. That position will insulate them from the market competition of the anime business (which is the job of the production committees) and allow them to take their eyes off issues such as which anime will be a hit and which anime will not. Even if the anime shows that the anime creators made in the current season failed in terms of businesses, they can keep on being subcontracted the creative works by the newly established anime production committees in the next season; you will not lose your job if you remain a subcontractor.

I shifted the topic onto the DTA business. How, then, has Dobashi come to ally with Ikeyama to cultivate the Indian market? How does he evaluate Ikeyama's performance after doing business with him for about a year? Throughout the fieldwork of DTA and of the cooperation between Ikeyama and Dobashi, I was amazed by Dobashi's highly cooperative attitude towards Ikeyama, which was a rarity in my experience. Such attitudes include his willingness to advise Ikeyama on how to get along with the players in the Japanese anime sector throughout Ikeyama's DTA business in Japan, providing Ikeyama with 'insider' information about the Japanese anime sector in deciding who/how to approach DTA's prospective business partners, and using his own business network in inviting guests from

the sector to the NCR show (see Chapter 5). Dobashi is, to my understanding, not the kind of person who will show this high level of willingness easily to ‘outsiders’ of the Japanese anime sector. Knowing Dobashi for a long time, I knew that although he is generally highly critical of the Japanese anime sector to which he belongs (as we have seen above), he at the same time does not hesitate to show his hostility towards people who misbehave in dealing with the players in the sector (as we will see below). He is, to my understanding, an ‘insider’ of the Japanese anime sector, who has both a critical edge in the sector *and* a strong sense of community as a member of it. Observing Dobashi communicating with a third person, I could easily distinguish whether he was considering that person to be on ‘this side’ or ‘that side’ of the Japanese anime sector. Once he concluded that the person is not appropriate to get along with the anime sector, he would not hesitate to block all communication channels with that person, and to warn other members in the sector to keep away from him/her. This time, on the contrary, Dobashi’s willingness to cooperate with Ikeyama seemed to show (at least to me) that he assumed Ikeyama to be on ‘this side’ of the Japanese anime sector, i.e. Ikeyama was an ‘appropriate’ player with whom the sector should consider doing business. I was curious what factors had made him understand Ikeyama to be such.

There are several reasons for me to ally with Ikeyama-san. First is contrarian behaviour (*gyakubari*). I decided to ally with Ikeyama-san *because* I thought most people in the anime sector would not be willing to expand their business into the Indian market. Second, Ikeyama-san, an ex-investment banker, is the type of person whom the players in the anime sector (including me) rarely encounter in their everyday works. I thought we could establish a good complementary relationship. Third, Ikeyama-san is outstandingly decent (*hin ga yokatta*) among the players who consider anime content as their means of moneymaking. He does

not look down on anime creators on the grounds that they are not good at making money. He himself nonetheless knows how to manage a large amount of money and is not nervous when dealing with one or two million yen. He is different from most *yamashi* out there.

I was particularly interested in Dobashi's use of an old-fashioned term, *yamashi* (a speculator). I asked Dobashi to elaborate on Ikeyama's behaviour in comparison with that of the *yamashi*.

Well, there is a know-how for determining whether a person who approaches the Japanese anime sector is *yamashi* or not. You can tell that by that person's attitudes and behaviour towards the sector. *Yamashi* always try to get money by charging us commissions, like kickbacks. The 'business model' of the *yamashi* is, so to say, to get ten million yen as a commission for moving one hundred million yen from right to left. Ikeyama-san did not do that kind of thing. He always made a dent in his own pocketbook when doing business with the Japanese anime sector. *Yamashi* also always try to force us to do other unrelated tasks, which is very annoying for the players in the Japanese anime sector who have their own daily work to manage. Ikeyama-san did not do that either. All I did for Ikeyama-san was just to provide my knowledge and my network for his DTA business whenever asked to do so. It is rare for *yamashi* to ask only those things. That made my work with Ikeyama-san much easier than with *yamashi*: my regular work in NEX Pro. was never distracted by Ikeyama-san's DTA business. A *Yamashi* will first ask someone that he or she knows in the Japanese anime sector to introduce him or her in the sector to gauge business chances, but always tries to bypass that person as soon as he or she succeeds in finding the right players in the sector. Ikeyama-san never did that. He always tried to do business with the Japanese anime sector through me. Perhaps one of the most significant criteria for detecting whether a person is *yamashi* or not is the timing of when that person tries to withdraw from collaborating with the Japanese anime sector. The players in the Japanese anime sector, including me, tend to judge whether a stranger is trustworthy or not by the number of times they see that stranger's face. The more they see it, the more likely they are to assume that stranger is trustworthy. *Yamashi* disappear fast when he or she finds that he or she cannot make much money by collaborating with the sector. So we don't see *yamashi* faces many times. It is rare for us to maintain a long-term relationships with *yamashi*. On the contrary, Ikeyama-san was willing to endure the beginning phase of cultivating the Indian market, which will not make money. He seems ready to cope with the Indian

market in the long-term, and tries to meet with his prospective business partners in the Japanese anime sector as many times as possible.

Dobashi also raised the fact that Ikeyama has very effective local staff (such as Okabayashi) in India as another crucial factor. At the time I interviewed Dobashi, Ikeyama had already been working with Okabayashi. Both Ikeyama and Dobashi were amazed by Okabayashi's high 'performance' in the Indian market. After allying with Ikeyama, Okabayashi proactively expanded his network with the local players and local anime fans. He frequently provided detailed reports/updates/requests on his activities in the Indian market by email.

And look at that dynamo Okabayashi-san being so active in Delhi! He is functioning as a kind of an anchor for DTA's business. The presence of Okabayashi-san in the Indian market enables Ikeyama-san to show the Japanese anime sector that his business is substantial in India. Most anime companies in Japan could not have that kind of high-performing local partners, especially in emerging markets.

In Dobashi's view, the fact that Okayabashi was Japanese seemed to be part of the 'effectiveness' and 'performance' of a local business partner which was most highly appreciated by the Japanese anime sector:

It is still difficult for players in the Japanese anime sector to manage their overseas business confidently unless the communication language between Tokyo headquarters and the local branches is Japanese. The ideal overseas business partner for them is a Japanese person with whom they can communicate comfortably, and who can have heart-to-heart talks (*hara o watte hanaseru*) with the locals. Okabayashi-san seems to fit perfectly into this ideal.

The ‘time limit’ of the interview was approaching. Since the time of the last train was around 11-12pm, I had to wrap up the interview, which had started from around 9pm, and so lasted about 2-3 hours. Dobashi and I left the bar and said goodbye at the station. Dobashi seemed to be returning to his office to resume his work.

[Rejecting outsiders: comments by Dobashi and Ikeyama]

The below are the compiled comments that Dobashi and Ikeyama made regarding outsider entrepreneurs with whom the Japanese anime sector does not want to work overseas. These include the comments made when they decided to dismiss overseas anime business proposals made from outside the Japanese anime sector. The comments were made in various places and on various occasions, including meetings at cafés and email communications. The outsiders include those residing in foreign countries. Many outsiders who actually proposed overseas anime business projects to the Japanese anime sector seemed to adopt a similar business strategy to that of Ikeyama: they tried to arbitrage the gap between the market potential of the countries and the current indifference of the Japanese anime sector towards them by becoming intermediaries between the sector and the countries. Despite this similar strategy, their approach to Dobashi did not work out, while Ikeyama’s approach did. Ikeyama was considered by Dobashi as a trustworthy business partner, while the other outsiders remained dubious outsiders. The failures of the other outsiders seemed mostly attributable to their fatal misbehaviour when dealing with Dobashi, which led him to conclude that the

‘cultural differences’ between them were ‘too big to compromise’, and sometimes made him extremely angry.

### *Dobashi’s comments*

(General comments on the outsider entrepreneurs with whom the Japanese anime sector does not want to do overseas business) They are people with whom we cannot share victory (*shouri o wakachiaenai*), even if we succeed in the business project with them.

(When he was contacted directly by the outsider entrepreneurs after being introduced by Ikeyama) I really don’t like that they contacted me to propose the international anime co-production project over Ikeyama-san’s head. That kind of behaviour is called ‘bypassing’ (*tobashi*) in our sector and is disliked very much. They just tried to freeride on Ikeyama-san’s business network in the Japanese anime sector, which he has built by his own effort and at his own risk. It was not *their* achievement to make the connection with me and with their prospective business partners in the Japanese anime sector through me. It is *Ikeyama-san’s* achievement. They were able to talk with me because Ikeyama-san paved the route for them to talk with me. The reason I decided to talk with them was because the introducer was Ikeyama-san, who already has the track record in taking key players in the Japanese anime sector to the NCR show in India. How can they think that they are able to handle this proposed project all by themselves without Ikeyama-san while extensively relying on him? I am sure if they do not understand that kind of duty and sentiment relationship (*giri ninjou*) between the members in the Japanese anime sector, they will not be taken seriously by them. If they think Ikeyama-san is in their way, they should walk around the Japanese anime sector on their own legs and using their own names without mentioning Ikeyama-san’s name. They are not taking any risks!

(Comments on certain people from the financial sector trying to do overseas anime business) Do they really think that the people in the Japanese anime sector will be impressed when approached directly, out of the blue, by people with no track record of doing business with us, but who only have money and savvy business skills? They shouldn’t think that Japanese anime companies will take such people seriously. They do not understand what happens when a person who has nothing but money approaches people in the Japanese anime sector without knowing how to cope with them. Let’s say that they succeed in launching an international anime co-production project with players in the Japanese anime

sector. Do they know what to do when the anime production studio charges them an unbelievably large amount of money as production costs? Do they know what to do when the director of that anime work suddenly claims he or she wants to resign in the middle of their project? A project managed by a player who does not have that kind of problem-solving repertoire, but who just has money, will surely not work out. I am sure that such an intermediary will be bled dry (*hone no zui made shaburareru*) by the people in the Japanese anime sector! The reputation of that broker will quickly spread among the members in the Japanese anime sector, and they will never be able to enter it again.

(Comments on the attitudes of outsider entrepreneurs) I can see through their contemplation that they can just go back to their original business whenever they find that they will not be able to make money from this proposed project. They should understand that the people in the Japanese anime sector are very acute observers in that respect. They will not be able to hide such evasiveness towards the sector from its members, and whenever the members find out that they are not ready to take substantive risks in doing business together, but are just seeking a little extra spending money with minimum risk, the sector will not hesitate to discard them.

(Comments on the advantage of outsider entrepreneurs who are residing in foreign countries) Do they really have any competitive advantages over me in terms of anime business in overseas countries? Do they know any English staff? Do they know any creators? Do they know any designers? Well, I can reach them all, but they do not know anybody! All of them are on my side! The only possible 'advantage' they have over me is that they are physically living in foreign countries! How can they manage the project under such circumstances?

Some outsiders approached DTA to seek a joint overseas anime business. In such cases, Ikeyama also made comments in the discussion (with Dobashi and me) on whether DTA should ally with them.

#### *Ikeyama's comments*

(When he found that an outsider entrepreneur whom he had introduced to Dobashi had contacted Dobashi directly) I think it is extremely rude for them to make the proposal about international anime co-production to Dobashi-san while they are

still in the early days of acquaintance with him. And they did that over my head!  
Who do they think introduced them to Dobashi-san?

(When he found that outsiders purchased anime goods from retailing shops in Japan, and not from the goods makers, to be sold in the foreign countries) They do not understand the importance of maintaining continuous trade relationships with players in the Japanese anime sector. They are too fast and sloppy to purchase anime goods in Japan without checking whether they could be sold at foreign events. If they really wanted to establish an anime business in foreign countries, they should have purchased from the anime goods manufacturer and not from the retailing shops. Such shops are supposed to sell goods to consumers and not to the people who want to do business with them. It might not be illegal to do so, but the entrepreneurs who do that kind of thing would not be regarded as serious business partners by the players in the Japanese anime sector. I don't want to be regarded by the sector as being the same kind of entrepreneur.

(When he found outsider entrepreneurs from the financial sector and found their behaviour too business-like) I would say that they are 'American MBA' in a bad sense: they only care about their own business, and they act in boldly utilitarian ways. I am ashamed that they have the same professional background as I did as a banker. A knowledgeable banker would not act in that way. Bankers should understand at some point in their career that doing business with others is more than just following 'MBA-ish' methodologies. I learned while coping with people in the Japanese anime sector that such an MBA-ish approach will not work in the Japanese anime sector. Entrepreneurs at that level are found in every corner of the market, and anime goods manufacturers will not take them seriously. What really matters is going beyond that level.

It was, for me, amazing to observe how substantially the outsider entrepreneurs met the criteria of *yamashi* that Dobashi raised in the above interview with me, although Dobashi did not use the term *yamashi* to describe them. Some did not try to 'make a dent in their own pocketbook' (i.e. walk around the Japanese anime sector on their own legs), but tried to freeride on the business network of Ikeyama. Although some used Ikeyama to make connections with people in the Japanese anime sector, they tried to bypass Ikeyama as soon

as they succeeded in making a connection with Dobashi (proposing an international anime co-production project to Dobashi over Ikeyama's head). Dobashi even saw through some of their 'contemplation' and found them 'fast to disappear' 'whenever they find that they will not be able to make money' from their business projects.

### ***From outsider to business partner: discussion***

In jointly carrying out the overseas anime business, Dobashi explicitly concluded that the 'cultural differences' between him and most outsider entrepreneurs were unresolvable, although he seemed implicitly to assume that such differences between him and Ikeyama were resolvable. This 'cultural difference' is, I would argue, a reference to the discrepancies of art versus commerce and the 'Japanese' versus 'Indian' way of doing business. We could observe in the above ethnography how the two dichotomies are repeatedly utilised by insiders in the Japanese anime sector (in this case Dobashi) when approached by outsider entrepreneurs/brokers proposing overseas anime business projects (in this case Ikeyama and other outsiders). This will be examined in detail in the rest of this section. In the previous chapter, we briefly overviewed how difficult it is to converge these dichotomies. The above ethnography could be understood as case studies of relevant players trying to resolve the two dichotomies. Ikeyama's case was successful; and the other cases are examples of failure.

From Dobashi's perspective, both Ikeyama and some of the other entrepreneurs/brokers seem equally to be players who emphasise their connections in

countries beyond the familiarity of the Japanese anime sector (a reference to the dichotomy of the 'Japanese' versus 'foreign' way of doing business), and 'players who consider anime content as their means of moneymaking' (a reference to the dichotomy of art versus commerce). In other words, their *de facto* starting point *vis-à-vis* the Japanese anime sector is the same: they are both categorised as its outsiders in a 'commercial' and 'foreign' dimension (as opposed to the 'art' and 'Japanese' side, in which the sector is placed). What nonetheless separates Ikeyama from them in the success of their proposed business project seems to be their behaviour in terms of the two dichotomies when working together with the sector.

As for the dichotomy of art versus commerce, it seems crucial for the entrepreneurs/brokers to show (at least superficial) respect towards the logic and practices of creativity that is insisted upon in the Japanese anime sector. That is to say, they should exhibit themselves to the sector as being more on the 'art' side than the 'business' side if they are to be regarded as trustworthy business partners. This point was highlighted by Dobashi's comment that he had decided to ally with Ikeyama because 'he did not look down on the anime creators on the grounds that they are not good at making money.' Behaviour regarded by the sector as 'looking down on the anime creators' seems to describe the behaviour of some of the other outsider entrepreneurs. Such behaviour includes hurrying to make money from a project in the short term; withdrawing quickly from a project as soon as they find it cannot generate a large amount of money; freeriding on others' networks to

minimise risk; and trying to ‘bypass’ the person who introduced them to the Japanese anime sector to monopolise on the project’s benefit to them (i.e. a refusal to ‘share victory’ with their collaborators). These attitudes seemed to be understood by Dobashi as being unresolvably on the ‘commerce’ side.

To successfully ally with the players in the Japanese anime sector in an overseas anime business project, it seems that one has to ‘go beyond’ being homogenously on the commerce side to compromise with the logic and practices on the creative side. Only after demonstrating such an attitude will one appear ‘decently’ as a trustworthy business partner in the eyes of the sector’s members. Only then will the entrepreneurs’/brokers’ business skills in the commerce realm appear attractive (for example, an entrepreneur will be appreciated as knowing ‘how to manage a large amount of money’ and not becoming ‘nervous when dealing with one or two million yen’). Otherwise, such skills will not appear more desirable to them than ‘savvy’ ‘MBA-ish’ ones ‘found in every corner of the market’ (which are not worth taking seriously). Indeed, the behaviour of Ikeyama on this point of ‘going beyond being commercial’ forms a sharp contrast with those of other outsider entrepreneurs. He showed his readiness to cope with the Indian market in the long-term; he emphasised ‘the importance of maintaining the continuous trade relationships with the players in the Japanese anime sector’; he ‘always made a dent in his own pocketbook’ and walked around the Japanese anime sector in his own name; he never tried to bypass Dobashi but always tried to do business with the Japanese anime sector through him. Such behaviour seems to be

regarded by the Japanese anime sector as being appreciative of its logic and practices of creativity. Such behaviour made Ikeyama ‘outstandingly decent’ in the eyes of Dobashi, in contrast with the other money-oriented entrepreneurs/brokers.

Such behaviour was observed not only in the above ethnography but also throughout the DTA business. Ikeyama repeatedly told me that outsiders like him should emphasise that they are willing to remain with the Japanese anime sector for ten years. He sometimes contrasted this with the attitudes of non-Japanese (foreign capital) corporations that often quickly withdraw from Japan when they cannot make money from the Japanese market over a two-year period. He also told me that he thinks India ‘is the market in which you have to knuckle down and have a very long-term vision’, and in which you should not think you can make money ‘immediately and easily’ (see Chapter 5). A considerable amount of DTA business time was devoted to Ikeyama walking around the Japanese anime sector in Tokyo ‘on his own legs’ to meet ‘as many times as possible’ with his prospective business partners to impress ‘his own name’ on the sector. Ikeyama was very dedicated in staying in close touch with his business partners in the sector when carrying out his business. He was particularly careful in asking the anime goods manufacturers about the ways of distributing their goods in the Indian market, and was even told by one manufacturer that he was *too* careful in doing so. He regularly made sales reports on the goods distributed by such manufacturers to be submitted to them. He preferred undertaking such inquiries and reports face-to-face at their offices. One anime-related manufacturer that distributed their goods to

DTA told me that Ikeyama's frequent feedback matched their business 'taste' (*konomi*) (interview by the author, February 2015). Ikeyama also emphasised during my fieldwork that he was betting his own life in this DTA business. He occasionally said that he had quit his job at the global investment bank because he wanted to close off his own escape route. He also occasionally said that he found his DTA business much more worthy than his global finance work, however risky the overseas anime business in India might be. Ikeyama never bypassed Dobashi when communicating with the Japanese anime sector. When contacting the sector directly himself, he always sought Dobashi's advice well in advance. He even clearly stated in an email to Dobashi that he 'will consult Dobashi-san first' on issues about how to make and manage the contact with people in the Japanese anime sector. Ikeyama completely followed Dobashi's directions when inviting the sector's key players to the NCR show as guests (see Chapter 5). When holding meetings with Dobashi, Ikeyama always avoided his core working time and selected the place that would be most convenient for him to carry out his daily work.

Regarding the dichotomy of the 'Japanese' versus 'foreign/Indian' way of doing business, it is crucial for the entrepreneurs/brokers to show their mastery of the logic and practices on the 'foreign/Indian' side (which the Japanese anime sector lacks). They should exhibit themselves to the sector as being more on the 'Indian' side than on the 'Japanese' side if they are to be regarded as trustworthy business partners. In the above ethnography, this point was manifested in the contrast that Dobashi made between Ikeyama and other

outsider entrepreneurs: he regarded Ikeyama's business as having 'high-performing' local staff in India, which would make it appear in the eyes of the Japanese anime sector that his business was 'substantial' in the target country. In contrast, the business of some outsider entrepreneurs was viewed as not having such assets but just 'physically living in foreign countries.' The 'performance' here seems to mean that the entrepreneurs/brokers are able to negotiate with the players in the Indian market at the request of the Japanese anime sector because the sector does not know how to cope with such unfamiliar players. Recall the fact that Dobashi pointed out it is still difficult for players in the sector to communicate with local business partners in non-Japanese languages, so the 'ideal' partner for them in carrying out overseas business is a player who 'can have heart-to-heart talks with the local people' for them.

One of the most significant concerns that DTA's prospective business partners raised to Ikeyama was the discrepancy in the business customs between Japan and India. I heard many anime companies commenting, regarding Ikeyama's business, that they simply did not know what it was like to do anime business in/with India; that they had an idea that Indian businesspeople steamroll their demands in business negotiations; that the Indian market is tricky; and that the Indian market is not for all Japanese businesspeople, but only for those with a special affinity with India.

One significant example comes from an anime-related goods maker that decided to switch local business partners in India to Ikeyama from an individual retailer running a small

anime shop in a city in southern India. When I interviewed a representative of that maker, he told me how incomprehensible that Indian retailer's reaction was when he told him that they had decided to distribute their goods through Ikeyama's DTA instead. He also told me how overwhelming the subsequent process was to persuade the retailer to accept this. Dissatisfied with their decision, the retailer requested a meeting in Tokyo when the retailer visited Japan to participate in a trade show. To the representative's surprise, the retailer showed up at their office with his wife and children. The representative thus had to explain their decision while being stared at by the retailer's family, whose lives would surely be affected by it. The retailer tried his hardest to argue against the decision, but this simply overwhelmed the representative rather than impressing him. He nevertheless proposed, as a compromise, to submit the approximation and road map of his business in India in terms of their anime goods. The representative asked the retailer to show his mid-term plan on how he would sell their anime goods in his shop for the maker to reconsider withdrawing their rights. The retailer promised that he would do so, but he never sent such documents after returning to India. 'Such behaviour seemed very Indian,' the representative told me. It seemed that the representative considered bringing one's family to business meetings as an 'Indian' way of doing business (which 'surprised' him), and making the business project's 'approximation' and 'road map' for its 'mid-term plan' as a 'Japanese' way of doing business (which the retailer did not do: interview by the author, February 2015). These assumptions about the way in which Indian people do business substantially overlaps with the

assumptions held by the Japanese business scene in general, as depicted in Chapter 2. It also seems that most players in the Japanese anime sector do not want to cope directly with such ‘tough’ Indian players – they do not want to be exposed directly to unfamiliar India, even when undertaking anime business in/with the country. They seem to want someone else to undertake such a ‘tough’ task for them.

It is this ability to take over direct negotiations with Indian business players that allowed Ikeyama to appeal to the Japanese anime sector. This is to represent Ikeyama as ‘different’ (i.e. ‘non-Japanese’) from the sector’s members. This could be symbolised by the advice Dobashi once provided to Ikeyama, that he should show his ‘Indian face’ (*indojin no kao*) to the sector. This ‘face’ seemed to include not only having a branch organisation physically in India, but also having the capacity to manage interpersonal relations with the Indian business players. Such interpersonal skills include the capacity to be a ‘tough negotiator’, as well as to have ‘heart-to-heart’ talks with them (see Chapter 5 for how Ikeyama actually coped with his prospective business partner, Menon, in India). In fact, Dobashi continuously advised Ikeyama that he should project the atmosphere to the players in the Japanese anime sector that he was actually and substantially pursuing business on the ground of the Indian market. I myself supported Ikeyama’s appeal to his ‘Indian face’ in his dealings with prospective anime-related goods suppliers. When I was attending a business negotiation meeting between Ikeyama and Menon, I observed Menon give a long sigh as though overwhelmed by Ikeyama’s aggressive demands. I intentionally mentioned this scene

many times when I attended the meetings between Ikeyama and the players in the Japanese anime sector, and commented that Ikeyama was such a ‘tough negotiator’ that he could even overwhelm Indian businessmen. This comment seemed to make the players in the Japanese anime sector more confident in deciding to ally with Ikeyama.

The dual agency issue of Ikeyama as a broker (cf. Chapter 2) in terms of the two dichotomies of art versus commerce and the ‘Japanese’ versus ‘Indian’ way of doing business could also be observed in the above ethnography. I would argue that it is the ambiguous nature of Ikeyama’s dual agency that played a crucial role in resolving these dichotomies, and thus was one of the significant driving forces in carrying forward his Indian business with the Japanese anime sector. In fact, his position towards the Japanese anime sector (and the players in the Indian market: see next chapter) did not remain stable but constantly fluctuated across the intersection between the two dichotomies, blurring their boundaries. We can observe in the above ethnography the positionalities of Ikeyama in terms of the two dichotomies that contradicts those which we have just examined. Ikeyama’s behaviour in terms of the two dichotomies were never consistent but contingent. It seems that he was constantly contradicting and undermining his positionalities himself while trying to carry out his anime business with the Japanese anime sector. Ikeyama’s Janus-like positionalities towards the Japanese anime sector (and the players in the Indian market) put him into a permanently ambiguous position. It is in the midst of such ambiguity that the establishment

of the business alliance between Ikeyama and the Japanese anime sector, and the overseas anime business in/with India, was carried forward.

First of all, the above examination shows that Ikeyama tried to project himself to the Japanese anime sector as more on the arts side than the commerce side (i.e. he appreciated the sector's logic and practices of creativity), and as being more on the 'Indian' side than the 'Japanese' side (i.e. he showed his mastery of 'Indian' business, something the sector does not have). This already meant that he put himself in an ambiguously liminal position *vis-à-vis* the sector, i.e. he exhibited himself simultaneously as *the same as* and *different from* the Japanese anime sector. From the perspective of the players in the Japanese anime sector – who always put themselves on the art and the 'Japanese' side – Ikeyama can never be a completely comfortable counterpart for them in jointly carrying out the overseas anime business in/with India: he has characteristics they cannot understand (e.g. his 'Indian face'), although they do find commonalities with him (i.e. his appreciation of their creativity). Dobashi's comment that he and Ikeyama could establish 'a good complementary relationship' seems to designate this same-as-and-different-from relationship in terms of the two dichotomies.

We could also find Ikeyama's ambiguous positionality within each dichotomy of art versus commerce and the 'Japanese' versus 'Indian' way of doing business. It is hugely contradictory in the first place for Ikeyama to show his appreciation of the logic and practices of the creativity of the Japanese anime sector while aiming to move the sector in a more

business-oriented direction (the very reason why Ikeyama and Dobashi allied in pursuing the business of DTA). If he had been completely satisfied with the Japanese anime sector's current mode of operation, he would not have begun a business to change its current circular business flow. The ultimate goal of his business is nonetheless to make money out of anime: he is one of the 'players who consider anime content as their means of moneymaking.' There were several scenes in which I sensed Ikeyama's implicit concern about the Japanese anime sector's naivety towards money, although he himself never blatantly showed it to the sector.

On one occasion Ikeyama seemed to go too far in imposing the logic of commerce on Dobashi. In a meeting which Ikeyama, Dobashi and I attended, Dobashi lamented that very few people in the Japanese anime sector were excited by his aspirations for the overseas market, because most people in the sector are interested only in anime's creative aspects. In response to this lament, Ikeyama asked Dobashi, 'Why don't you start your own anime company then?' Ikeyama continued, 'I am willing to give you a hand to gather the investment for your company, if you don't mind.' Ikeyama went further: 'How long are you going to be loyal (*giri date suru*) to your current employer?' Although this conversation was very frank, I sensed that Ikeyama was making a crucial crossing-the-line proposal to Dobashi to change the way in which the two had been cooperating in the overseas anime business until that time. The friendly atmosphere of the meeting became tense for a brief second. I intuited that this was an ethnographically crucial moment, but I tried not to show that I was paying attention to the conversation. I kept on writing my field notes, pretending that this scene was nothing

more than a humdrum one, but my ears were open so as not to miss Dobashi's response to Ikeyama's question.

After a brief silence, Dobashi politely declined Ikeyama's proposal, suggesting that he was still a junior anime producer. The discussion moved onto another item of DTA business and resumed a friendly atmosphere. This proposal by Ikeyama was, in a sense, his invitation for Dobashi to come *more* on the commerce side and to become *less* affiliated with the arts side. Ikeyama seemed to take a risk with this, and found it was a premature suggestion. Indeed, Ikeyama referred negatively to the logic and practices of the sector's creativity by questioning Dobashi's readiness to abandon such working norms if he was really to change the Japanese anime sector into a more business-oriented one. This 'too business-like' proposal was nevertheless not rejected by Dobashi with anger – as he did to other outsider entrepreneurs – but seemed to be regarded by him as one to be considered for his mid- and long-term career path. The track record of Ikeyama's 'decent' behaviour in the past in appreciating the arts side of the Japanese anime sector seemed to make a difference. It was through such a continuous intersection of (and a blurring of the borders between) art versus commerce that the establishment of the business alliance between Ikeyama and Dobashi, and thus the business of DTA, was carried forward.

This ambivalent dual agency of Ikeyama could also be observed in terms of the dichotomy of the 'Japanese' versus 'Indian' way of doing business. Recall the fact that Dobashi appreciated and recommended Ikeyama to have an 'Indian face' (*indojin no kao*)

when coping with the Japanese anime sector effectively, while simultaneously expecting Ikeyama (and Okabayashi) to ‘communicate comfortably in Japanese’ with the sector. In other words, Ikeyama was required to have both ‘Indian’ and ‘Japanese’ faces in carrying out overseas anime business in/with India, i.e. the Janus-like capacity to translate the ‘Indian’ way of doing business into the ‘Japanese’ one, and vice versa. This feature of an ‘effective’ entrepreneur/broker for the Japanese anime sector was further highlighted when Dobashi once told us about the biggest risk the players in the sector were afraid of when allying with entrepreneurs to do business in an unknown country like India. According to Dobashi, what the sector feared the most when carrying out overseas anime business was being unable to communicate with the foreign local site when a problem occurred there. In such a case, they need to know in detail what is going on, but they themselves are unable (and unwilling) to gather such information directly from the site, because they cannot communicate confidently in non-Japanese languages with the local business partners. What relieves them is thus having an intermediary who is able to communicate directly with local players and translate information into Japanese to help the players solve problems. This ‘translation’ function of the entrepreneur/broker seems not to be limited to the literal linguistic translation, but also includes the translation of the business context, i.e. making the ‘Indian’ business context understandable to the players in the Japanese anime sector who can only understand the ‘Japanese’ business context.

Furthermore, the players in the Japanese anime sector seem to expect the entrepreneur/broker to shield them from incomprehensible ‘Indian’ issues. Dobashi explained that, when carrying out an overseas anime business, the players in the Japanese anime sector generally do not care who their overseas partners are so long as they can do overseas work via people who are familiar to them – i.e. ‘the people whose faces they know’ (*kao no mieru yatsu*), in Dobashi’s words – and so long as such ‘familiar’ people manage all ‘foreign’ issues with their overseas partners. ‘Such a situation makes the people in the Japanese anime sector confident that such intermediary players can surely protect them from the troubles that might arise between foreign business partners. It is under such conditions that they do not care whether overseas partners be people in India or elsewhere. It is under such conditions that they can confidently say they are undertaking a global anime business,’ Dobashi said. This *kao no mieru yatsu* (familiar face) clearly resonates, and contrasts, with the other analogy of *indojin no kao* (Indian face) that Dobashi himself made above. This ‘familiar face’ seems to be equivalent to the ‘Japanese face’, i.e. the capacity to communicate with the players in the Japanese anime sector by following the ‘Japanese’ way of doing business. In this manner, as in the dichotomy of art versus commerce, Ikeyama’s task of having both an ‘Indian’ and a ‘Japanese’ face in his DTA business is logically a self-contradiction. His positionality towards the Japanese anime sector was a continuous intersection of – and a blurring of the border between – the ‘Japanese’ versus the ‘Indian’ way of doing business. The business alliance between Ikeyama and Dobashi (and the

Japanese anime sector), and thus his DTA business, was carried forward in the midst of such ambiguity.

In the above ethnography, we could observe the ambivalently dual agency not only in Ikeyama (as seen in the above) but also in Dobashi. This is particularly manifested in terms of the dichotomy of art versus commerce. On one hand, Dobashi was very critical towards the Japanese anime sector's working norms to embrace its creativity: he criticised this as no more than 'pretty words' (*kireigoto*) leading the sector to 'false egalitarianism.' This dissatisfaction led Dobashi to seek business alliance with Ikeyama to make the Japanese anime sector more business-oriented. On the other hand, however, we could observe how he relied on the logic and practices of creativity in the Japanese anime sector in an essentialist way when deciding whether he could ally with the sector's outsiders. One of the biggest concerns of Dobashi *vis-à-vis* such outsiders was whether they would appreciate such logic and practices (e.g., whether they 'look down on the anime creators on the grounds that they are not good at making money'). He particularly required outsiders to follow the egalitarianism prevalent in the Japanese anime sector; in other words, they should be able to 'share victory' with their collaborators in the sector after the success of business projects (at the same time that he criticised such egalitarianism as 'false'). He even accused some outsiders of having nothing but money, without knowing how to cope with the anime creators. In this way, Dobashi was both a critic of the logic and practices of creativity and their

spokesperson. His positionality on the dichotomy of art versus commerce thus seemed to be in continuous contradiction.

We could also observe in the above ethnography the use of Japanese ‘premodern’ terms by the relevant players to distinguish the insiders as well as the outsiders of the Japanese anime sector (cf. Chapter 3). In particular, Dobashi’s intensive use of the term *yamashi* (an old-fashioned way to designate a wildcatter engaging in speculative business projects) in contrasting dubious outsiders with Ikeyama’s trustworthiness was a critical clue I could use to investigate the ethnographic nuance of the relationship between Dobashi and Ikeyama in depth. Moreover, the sociality inside the Japanese anime sector, including its logic and practices of creativity, was described as a nexus of *giri* (the sense of indebtedness). This *giri* has long been investigated by Japanologists as an outstanding factor regulating the social relationship in Japanese society throughout its history (e.g. Benedict 1946). This *giri* relationship between members inside the Japanese anime sector was referred to both positively and negatively in the above ethnography. Dobashi insisted that those who did not understand it (*giri ninjou*) could not be taken seriously by the sector as business partners. Ikeyama, on the other hand, questioned Dobashi on how long he would hold onto his *giri* to his employer (*giri date suru*).

I do not intend to judge whether the behaviour Ikeyama demonstrated in terms of these two dichotomies in the course of his DTA business was right or wrong. What I do intend to highlight here is that the business of DTA was evidently *carried forward*, and is

the process how such progress emerged from the positionality of Ikeyama as an entrepreneur/broker where the two dichotomies of art versus commerce and the 'Japanese' versus 'Indian' way of doing business intersect. I argued in Chapter 2 that brokers could anthropologically be understood as the intersection of multiple global forces who produce social changes by the mediation, translation and reworking of boundaries. The above ethnography shows how such dynamics actually work at the level of everyday practices in the development of a certain transnational anime business in terms of the two dichotomic forces of art versus commerce and the 'Japanese' versus 'Indian' way of doing business. This ethnography also seems to show that the ambiguous positionalities of an entrepreneur/broker are not only a dilemma, but also a somewhat chaotic driver to break and bridge the existing 'circular flows' and configure new socioeconomic flows.

## **Chapter 5: Ikeyama in India: How to *Kokoro ga Tsujiru* with an Indian Business Partner**

This chapter ethnographically depicts how Ikeyama behaved in India to involve the players in the country (especially Menon) in his business. The special focus is based on his communications and negotiations with Menon, and how Ikeyama *failed* to ally with him. The dichotomies of art versus commerce and the ‘Japanese’ versus ‘Indian’ way of doing business are extracted as the critical sociocultural discrepancies that led to their rupture. The chapter also depicts how Ikeyama’s ambiguous dual agency as a broker in terms of the two dichotomies played a key role in his negotiation with Menon. I will first present several ethnographic vignettes regarding their rupture, and then examine them in the following section.

### ***Ethnography***

[Before the NCR show (1) in Tokyo]

Ikeyama returned to Japan from a 10-day business trip to India. He went to India to have preliminary meetings with Menon to establish a joint venture (JV) in Delhi. On his return Ikeyama held a meeting to share the detailed results of this trip with Dobashi and me. In the meeting, he emphasised how promising Menon would be as a business partner.

Ikeyama, however, not only admired Menon but also contextualised him in a different way. His analysis was that Menon was doing business only among his friends and acquaintances: he just circulated his money and jobs within the closed and small community of his friends without getting out of it and without scaling up his business by reaching out to the wider world and the global market. ‘That is one of the big differences between Indian entrepreneurs in the United States,’ he said. ‘Indian entrepreneurs in the United States actively approach global venture capital funds and are thus able of enlarging their business strategically, while domestic Indian entrepreneurs in India only do bid-rigging (*dangou*) business among themselves.’ Ikeyama seemed to see himself as capable of taking Menon out of his local inner circle (just as the US global venture capital funds had done for Indian entrepreneurs in the United States) by offering him an anime business from Japan. Ikeyama kept this stance and often explicitly expressed it to Menon while communicating and negotiating with him.

[Before the NCR show (2) in Tokyo]

On this day, Ikeyama and I had a Skype meeting with Menon. This was when I ‘met’ him for the first time. The venue was designated by Ikeyama as a co-working space in central Tokyo.

The time for the Skype meeting arrived. Ikeyama started the Skype application on his laptop computer and called Menon. We had to use earphones because we were in an open

space. Since Ikeyama had only brought one set of earphones, we had to share them. Menon responded to his call and the Skype meeting began.

The meeting was held in English. From the beginning of the conversation with Menon, however, I found his Indian English accent quite difficult to catch. It was different from any other English accent I had heard when living in the United States and the UK (and in Japan). It also reminded me that this was the first time I had had an intensive conversation with an Indian person in English. In addition, the sound quality of Skype was bad (and it often disconnected), and I shared a small earplug with Ikeyama, which meant that I could only use one ear to listen to Menon's voice. Consequently, I often missed his words and had to ask Menon many times to repeat what he said.

During the meeting, there was a slight argument between Ikeyama and Menon when the agenda proceeded to whom to invite from Japan to the NCR show and how to cover their travel costs. The initial plan was to announce the launch of MAX at the NCR show, and at the same time invite several key players from the Japanese anime sector to show them that Ikeyama and Menon would be trustworthy middlemen whom they could rely upon for conducting anime business in India. Although Menon suggested that the event could provide economy class airline tickets and hotel rooms near the venue for guests, he also said that payment would be deferred, and that guests should pay for the costs themselves first then charge them to the India side afterwards. Ikeyama suggested that such an arrangement was unusual for an anime convention: many anime conventions hosted in other countries covered

such costs from the beginning and just provided tickets and hotel rooms to the guests without asking them to do anything. Ikeyama proposed that the NCR show should do the same. Menon insisted NCR show was not willing to bear that cost before and during the event. This point was not settled and they agreed to discuss it further.

The Skype meeting finished. After disconnecting, Ikeyama and I talked about Menon. 'I think what he really wants is to design and manufacture his own products and establish his own brand,' Ikeyama said. 'He wants to push up the value of MAX as a major distribution platform for his brand by leveraging the popularity of Japanese anime.'

Dobashi joined us after we had finished the Skype meeting with Menon, and we discussed who to invite to the NCR show. Ikeyama had two aims. First, he wanted to show Menon that he had the 'power' and 'capability' to bring leading anime creators to India. We sensed that previous guests invited from Japan to India had not always been from the 'mainstream' Japanese anime sector. If Menon was to do anime business with Japan seriously and intensively, he had to get closer to the 'core' of the anime industry, which was currently impossible for him. Ikeyama would fill this gap, and if he succeeded in doing so, he could make Menon more 'dependent' on him when conducting business in MAX, so that Menon could only access those 'core' players through Ikeyama. The second aim was to show the Japanese anime sector that Ikeyama was a credible middleman for the Indian market, an intermediary who knew about the Indian market in terms of anime and who could connect them to the right people. Although many players in the anime sector understand, at least

theoretically, that the Indian market might become important for them in the medium and long term, most of them do not know what they should do to cultivate it. It is an almost completely unknown market for them; they do not know who to approach and how to get along with them; they do not want to grope blindly in the dark and fail (see Chapter 4). If Ikeyama could successfully act as an intermediary for the guests from the Japanese anime sector at the NCR show, he could become the *de facto* standard middleman for the Japanese anime sector to do business with India. If Ikeyama satisfied the guests at the event, they would spread the word about him among the players in the Japanese anime sector after returning to Japan.

It was Dobashi's task to propose who we should (and could) invite to the NCR show to achieve these aims effectively. This was because Ikeyama, as an 'outsider' of the Japanese anime sector, did not know anything about the 'relationship map' within the sector, i.e. who is influential, who is interested in the Indian market, who is compatible/incompatible with whom, etc. It was also Dobashi's task to contact prospective guests and ask whether they would be interested in attending the show. Since Ikeyama is an 'outsider' of the sector and almost unknown among them, they would never consider the invitation seriously if Ikeyama approached them directly. An invitation from Dobashi, their fellow 'insider,' would have a completely different nuance and they would consider it seriously.

Dobashi named several people as candidates. Ikeyama emphasised that since some of the people Dobashi suggested might often have been invited to the conventions in

‘developed’ countries, we should make sure that they should not expect a comparably high quality of hospitality from the NCR show. Paradoxically, the key for Ikeyama to satisfy them as a guest was to lower their expectations from the beginning.

How we should manage the relationship with the Menon side was also discussed. Ikeyama worried that Menon might be a little bit too ‘greedy’ (*gametsui*); for example, although Menon insisted that the MAX business was not about money, he was often reluctant to pay necessary costs (such as travel costs for guests) and tried to get the Japan side to pay as much as possible. Indeed, Menon sent us the approximation of the operation costs of MAX in India before the meeting, and Ikeyama evaluated it as an ‘unnecessarily high figure’ (*kanari hoshuteki na suuji*) which had to be ‘cut down:’

I am afraid that Menon-san might think he is entitled to ask for as much money as possible from us because Japan is a rich country and the Japanese are rich people, and because India is a poor country. If he is thinking in that way, and assuming that he can rip off Japan, this partnership will not succeed. That is a really popular pattern for the failure of JVs between Japan and India. I saw many Indians like that when doing business with Japan, and those businesses ended up failing. We should tell Menon-san not to behave like that.

Whether the Indian players were ‘greedy’ (*gametsui*) or not was one of the main criteria which Ikeyama used when evaluating prospective Indian business partners. He negotiated with many domestic Indian retailers to persuade them to sell anime goods that DTA purchased from Japan. When the negotiations were unsuccessful, Ikeyama’s explanation for the failure was often that the retailers ‘were too greedy.’

It was also agreed in the meeting that DTA should remain the ‘gate-keeper’ of the Japanese anime sector towards Menon. In other words, DTA would not let Menon contact the Japanese anime sector directly over Ikeyama’s (and Dobashi’s) head. Dobashi especially did not want Menon to bypass him and make trouble in the sector. He was afraid that people in the Japanese anime sector would be annoyed if they were exposed directly to Menon’s ‘Indian’ behaviour without any mediation. If that happened, it would diminish Dobashi’s own credibility within the sector, because Dobashi was the one who had brought him in. In that sense, Menon was considered a ‘double-edged sword’: on the one hand, Menon could be a ‘useful’ player if DTA could use his energy and ambition in expanding their business in India. He could, however, also become a ‘dangerous’ player if DTA could not control his interface with the Japanese anime sector. To limit Menon to accessing the anime industry through DTA, and to hold the right to close the ‘gate’ whenever necessary, were thus agreed to be indispensable for the success of this business.

[Before the NCR show (3) in Tokyo]

Ikeyama and I were in a typical Japanese-style pub (*tachinomiya*) around 7pm and having a beer. This was a drinking session (*nomikai*) between Ikeyama and me.

In the daytime we had had another Skype meeting with Menon in Shibuya (the same co-working space used before) to discuss the establishment of MAX and preparation for the NCR show. There was a moment when Ikeyama raised his voice towards Menon when it

turned out that Menon had not read the MAX website development quotation in advance. The quotation had been shared by the third party in Delhi to whom we were considering outsourcing the website creation. Since the proposed cost seemed too big, how to reduce it was one of the agenda items of the meeting. ‘Menon-san!’ he shouted, ‘You should understand that if we don’t do this business soon, somebody else will! Time is really important!’ Menon retorted that he was serious about the project. However, we managed to pull ourselves together and concluded the meeting. After that, Ikeyama and I moved to the *tachinomiya* and started *nomikai*.

It was the first time I had had a casual *nomikai* with Ikeyama. A few beers, and the unpretentious atmosphere of the bar, seemed to make Ikeyama relax and open up.

I referred to the meeting we had had with Menon that day. I especially referred to the dispute which had taken place several times with Menon, and asked how Ikeyama reflected on that and on the Indian market in general.

I think India is a market in which you have to knuckle down and have a very long-term vision. Many people in Japan advertise India as if you can make money from there immediately and easily. I don’t think so. I even think such ‘like taking candy from a baby’ (*nurete de awa*) thinking is disrespectful (*shitsurei*) to India.

But on the other hand, I also think that I should say harsh things to Menon-san to make our business a success. As I told you before, Indian people have a mindset that they are poor people entitled to rip off (*takaru*) rich countries like Japan. I’ve seen many Japanese companies become victims of such a mindset, and I’ve seen the Japanese image of the Indian market growing worse and worse in consequence. Menon-san should understand that. And many Indian entrepreneurs do no more than pass their money around among themselves and never scale up their business. This will also disappoint some Japanese people. Menon-san should understand that as well.

But overall, I want to do business in India *because* it is a hard business. Everybody says that India is a messy (*mendokusai*) market. I'm motivated whenever I hear that kind of thing. I am not interested in the domestic vested interest in Japan. I want to go outside. I am interested in the first-mover advantage in the area which nobody has ever tried before.

The *nomikai* wrapped up with Ikeyama's comment on the future of his business with Menon:

I think whether you succeed in Indian business depends on how deeply you commit to it. Trying to make a JV agreement with an Indian player is an out-of-the-ordinary commitment. I showed my willingness to make such a commitment to Menon-san. Now it is Menon-san's turn to show me how seriously he is considering business with me. We will see how he behaves.

[Before the NCR show (4) in Tokyo]

Ikeyama, Dobashi, and I held another meeting at the café in central Tokyo. The main topic at this meeting was how to cope with Menon. At this stage of the negotiation, it had become evident that it was very tough to get along with Menon, especially in terms of money issues (including MAX operation costs, website development costs, and travel costs, as depicted above).

Ikeyama even suggested in an email he sent before the meeting that establishing a JV (i.e. MAX) in India might be costly and might not be a good idea. It seemed he had started to doubt whether Menon would be a good business partner for him to establish a deep business partnership. He had started to consider a simpler/lighter relationship with Menon instead. Ikeyama also seemed to consider changing the meaning and purpose of the NCR

show for his business. Instead of being an occasion for announcing the launch of MAX, he wanted to turn it into an opportunity to examine Menon and see whether he would be a reliable and beneficial business partner. It could be said that Ikeyama had begun considering to postpone the establishment of MAX from pre-event to post-event.

At the meeting, although we decided that we would still pursue establishing MAX in India with Menon, we agreed that we should nevertheless continue ‘taking the measure of’ (*mikiwameru*) Menon through our communication with him, especially at the NCR show. Menon’s seemingly ‘greedy’ past behaviour and ‘mean’ attitude towards bearing the necessary costs on his side seemed to make Ikeyama and Dobashi wonder whether they could undertake a successful and profitable business in India with him. ‘We should see at the NCR show how many prospective business partners and customers Menon can bring to the event for our business,’ Ikeyama said. That would show, he suggested, how popular and powerful Menon was in the Indian market, which would forecast the future of Ikeyama’s business with him.

On the topic of invitations, Dobashi raised a key point to keep in mind when hosting guests in India from the Japanese anime sector: frequent changes of plans. We reaffirmed that we should choose people who would be generous in response to such an ‘Indian quality.’

Dobashi tried to contextualise Menon’s position by comparing the Indian market with the Chinese market, another big market for the Japanese anime industry:

When you try to cultivate the Chinese market, you cannot and should not directly approach mainland China by yourself. There are complicated and subtle under-

the-table business customs out there which are very different from Japanese business customs, and you just cannot understand or get along with them. So you have to hire some Chinese or *hua ch'iao* (overseas Chinese) intermediaries in Hong Kong or Taiwan and let them cope with the mainlanders for you. There are a bunch of such brokers in such gateway countries, and most of them are sole proprietors, because the better they are at brokering, the more they are inclined to do it independently. The problem for the Japanese anime sector is thus how to pick out the 'good' brokers from the pool of such self-employed people. Although the Japanese anime sector has been coping with the Chinese market for decades, it is still hard to distinguish 'good' brokers from 'bad' ones. Bad brokers are really bad, you know, and if you are involved with them, your anime business in China will become a tragedy. You will just end up coming home 'shorn' (*migurumi hagareru*). That is the difficult part of the anime business in China.

I think Menon-san is in a similar position in the Indian market. I know Menon-san would like to occupy a kind of Danny Choo<sup>54</sup> position in India. So our mission is to see how determined he is to act as an intermediary for the Japanese anime sector in the Indian market, and to see whether we would be able to have heart-to-heart talks (*kokoro ga tsujiru ka douka*) with Menon-san in doing anime business in India.

It was interesting to see that Ikeyama and Dobashi seemed to agree that the ultimate factor in establishing sound business relationships with Indian players was whether they would be able to have heart-to-heart talks (*kokoro ga tsujiru ka douka*) with their Indian counterparts. It seems the emotional 'heart' (*kokoro*) lies at the core of an activity as rational as establishing a business relationship with Indian players. It was also interesting that Ikeyama seemed to think he could not 'have heart-to-heart talks' with Menon insofar as his behaviour appeared to be 'greedy.'

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<sup>54</sup> A son of Jimmy Choo, the shoe designer. Danny Choo, a Malaysian-Chinese man born in the UK, is a pop culture blogger based in Japan and famous among Japanese pop culture fans around the world. He also owns his own anime-style mascot character, 'Suenaga Mirai.' See also, <http://www.dannychoo.com/ja>.

[Before the NCR show (5) in Tokyo]

On this day, we (Ikeyama and I) held another Skype meeting with Menon.

We talked about the MAX JV agreement, which was being negotiated between Ikeyama and Menon. This agenda item was (for me) the highlight of the meeting. Ikeyama raised the issue of the ‘non-competition’ clause written in the draft JV agreement and asked Menon to reaffirm that he would not contact any players in Japan without the pre-approval of DTA. Menon opposed this clause, saying that he was already in contact with several creators in Japan and this article would stop his collaboration with them. Ikeyama counter-proposed amending the article to specify the exact sectors in Japan on which Menon should consult Ikeyama first – the ‘negative list’ of sectors which Menon could not contact freely. Ikeyama explained that he assumed that the Japanese anime sector should be included in such a ‘negative list.’ Since anime goods were DTA’s main products, and since Ikeyama was involving Dobashi as his collaborator, he did not want Menon to freely enter the Japanese anime sector over his head. Ikeyama explained that the Japanese anime sector was such a ‘closed’ and ‘conservative’ sector that Menon would not be able to handle the relationship with them: they might not even listen to a stranger like Menon, however attractive the Indian market might sound for them.

Menon contradicted Ikeyama’s claim by raising his voice, ‘Why do you think I might do something secretly with anime people in Japan behind your back?’ His counterargument clearly was a moral censure against Ikeyama. ‘How could I do such a

thing?’ He pressed on, using kinship terms: ‘For me, you are my *oniisan* (older brother, in Japanese) in doing anime business with Japan!’ This seemed to suggest his willingness to follow Ikeyama’s patronage when dealing with the Japanese anime sector, just as one follows his/her older brother, i.e. *oniisan*. Menon insisted that, although he could promise that he would never contact the Japanese anime sector without Ikeyama’s permission, such a promise was not something that should be formalised by ‘legal bullshit’ like a JV agreement. We agreed to postpone a conclusion on this issue.

Menon’s response was opposed to the advice in the ‘let’s do business in India’ books that are often published in Japan (cf. Chapter 2). Such books emphasise that Indian businesspeople are very different from, and unfamiliar with, Japanese businesspeople. They strongly suggest that Indian businesspeople are ‘greedy’ and ‘tough negotiators’, whom ‘polite’ Japanese businesspeople should not expect to act like themselves. Having such widely-accepted assumptions in mind, I thought Ikeyama’s hard-line claim proper: otherwise Menon might override Ikeyama in the MAX business. Surprisingly, however, Menon’s response was unexpectedly ‘Japanese.’ Instead of being a ‘tough’ negotiator, he raised the matter of politeness – as if Ikeyama was doubting that Menon would do something ‘behind his back’ – to make Ikeyama change his mind. He even used Japanese kinship terms – ‘you are my *oniisan*’ – and emphasised the importance of non-monetary mutual trust which could not, or should not, be made explicit by ‘legal bullshit.’

In fact, to be honest, when Menon responded in this ‘Japanese’ way, I felt guilty towards him. I felt it mean to distrust Menon so much and support harsh claims towards him. It felt simplistic to swallow what was written in the textbook and not to think of Menon’s feelings as a person. Since it seemed evident that Menon was badly insulted by our excessively ‘greedy’ assertion, I thought that we had to re-think our attitude towards him.

However, I reconsidered (again) Menon’s attitude (and my sense of guilt) after the meeting finished and after I had arrived home. Was there any possibility that Menon had *intentionally* acted in such a ‘Japanese’ way? Would his attitude itself be his ‘game plan’ to gain advantage in the negotiation, knowing that the Japanese are sensitive to such an issue of politeness and to being called an *oniisan*? Was such a ‘Japanese’ way of behaving part of his ‘tough’ negotiation attitude, or was he sincere? I could not tell. What was clear, at least, was that in this negotiation we (Ikeyama and I) were trying to behave like Indians and Menon was trying to act like Japanese, and such behaviour did not effectively intersect.

Shortly after this day, I told Ikeyama that I was confused by Menon’s attitude and asked whether he thought of the Menon’s behaviour as intentional or sincere. ‘I think it would be safe to think it is intentional,’ Ikeyama answered. ‘Indian negotiators can become strategic to that level.’

[Before the NCR show (6) in Tokyo]

As the date of the NCR show drew near, Ikeyama became busier and busier. Huge numbers of emails were sent and circulated on the Japan side (Ikeyama and Dobashi) and on the India side (Menon and his team).

Ikeyama and Dobashi were forced to take time confirming who to invite to the NCR show. This was mainly because the invitees' schedules were not confirmed until the last minute. This made it impossible for the Menon side to purchase the air ticket for one guest (Takatsu) who had already agreed to attend the event: the price of the ticket became too high for their limited budget. Menon requested that we cancel the invitation to Takatsu.

This, in turn, made Ikeyama and Dobashi angry. Dobashi insisted that it was unimaginable for an event to cancel an invitation after the guest had explicitly agreed to attend. Moreover, Takatsu is a 'big name' in the Japanese anime sector: he played a key role in making one of the famous titles that virtually all Japanese anime fans know. According to Dobashi, if Menon was going to follow such a course, such behaviour would show that he could not meet the standard for doing serious business with the Japanese anime sector. Dobashi suggested cancelling all the guests, and only Ikeyama, Dobashi and I would visit the NCR show. Dobashi could not expose his colleagues in the Japanese anime sector to bad-quality hospitality managed by such an unreliable host. Ikeyama agreed with Dobashi.

According to Ikeyama, the problem with the invitation to Takatsu was also due to the event's (and Menon's) 'loose budget estimation.' Following Dobashi's suggestions,

Ikeyama decided that DTA would pay the air ticket fee for Takatsu 'as an emergency measure,' and charge the cost to Menon side later.

It also became clear that NCR Show was going to separately invite two other guests from Japan. According to Menon, they were illustrators/designers, independent pop artists who worked in a field outside the Japanese anime sector. This also seemed to cause Ikeyama and Dobashi frustration: it seemed to mean that the event was willing to pay travel costs for such artists, while hesitating to pay for a 'big name' guest like Takatsu. They also seemed to be frustrated because the event's priority in guest invitation seemed to downgrade the Japanese anime sector as a whole.

[During the NCR show in Delhi]

Our group (Ikeyama, Dobashi, guests from anime sector, and I) had little chance to communicate with Menon during the NCR show. Menon was extremely busy handling the tasks in his charge at the event, and Ikeyama was also extremely busy conducting his business affairs. Ikeyama also had to attend to the guests from the Japanese anime sector: we had to 'supplement' the hospitality offered by Menon's side, which was not always satisfactory.

One of the guests from the Japanese anime sector (Sumi, an anime creator) was at that time working together with Dobashi to make and produce an anime show in Japan. Although the NCR show prepared a one-hour stage session for Sumi, he spent the rest of the

time mostly in the VIP lounge (which was separated by a door from the public space of the event venue) doing his own work (including the work for that anime show) by communicating with Tokyo via the Internet. Dobashi had to give his undivided attention to Sumi and support his work with Tokyo. This seemed to be their normal practice at overseas anime conventions. Since popular players in the Japanese anime sector are extremely busy in making anime shows to fill the slots in the Japanese domestic TV channels (cf. Chapter 3), it is often hard for them squeeze in the time to visit events in foreign countries. When they do so, they often do their domestic work at the foreign convention venue thanks to the Internet (e.g. communicating with their business counterparts in Japan through SNS).

Another guest from the Japanese anime sector, Joh (an animator), was almost forced to draw more than 50 individual signed portraits of the participants of his stage session after it had finished. This was violating a promise Ikeyama had made with Menon before the NCR show. Ikeyama had requested: '(P)lease NOTE that there are NO autograph session because we would like to respect each individual's private policy and avoid any conflicts in envious eyes.' This 'drawing session' took place spontaneously and unexpectedly, and Menon was unable to control the participants because he was not there. Although Joh himself seemed to enjoy drawing the portraits, this (mis)arrangement not only made Ikeyama sorry for Joh but also seemed to make him doubt Menon's capacity to host guests from the Japanese anime sector.

According to Ikeyama and Dobashi, Menon broke another promise. When the guests were invited to a private dinner at the home of the relative of one of the event's staff (I was not there since I was attending another networking meeting in another place), Menon approached Sumi and (out of the blue) proposed launching the anime co-production project together. This surprised not only Sumi but also Dobashi and Ikeyama, since they had asked Menon not to contact any players in the Japanese anime sector without the pre-approval of DTA, and Menon had appeared to agree. After the dinner, Ikeyama and Dobashi complained about Menon's behaviour in breaking his promise with them, which also confused Sumi.

Throughout the NCR show, it seemed that Menon's interest was focused more on the two Japanese pop illustrators/designers the event had invited than on us. When the two were doing their stage session, Menon sat in the audience and commented through his personal SNS (social networking service) account about their session, admiring their artwork. On the other hand, when guests from the Japanese anime sector did their stage sessions (including the DTA session by Ikeyama), Menon did not comment about them, and often even did not attend them, performing other event operation work elsewhere.

[After the NCR show (1) in Delhi]

Ikeyama and I visited Menon's office during another business trip to India. By now, Ikeyama had decided not to ally with Menon, and the aim of this visit was to tell Menon that Ikeyama would not ally with him (I heard this from Ikeyama afterwards).

According to Ikeyama, when we were standing outside the office, Ikeyama spoke to Menon (who was at that time standing next to him) and said, 'I assume that you must be very busy in managing BAND. I also have my own company DTA. I think we should concentrate on our own businesses.' Menon seemed to understand what Ikeyama was trying to say and accepted his suggestion to 'break up.' Although I was also accompanying Ikeyama, I did not notice that such a conversation took place between the two around Menon's office.

The atmosphere between Ikeyama and Menon was not bad at the meeting, which was friendly, and Menon proudly showed us the newly-created online retail website of BAND and asked us to use it when doing our anime business in India. BAND seemed to be purchasing and importing cultural products, not only from Japan but also from other Asian countries, such as Hong Kong. On the BAND website, pictures of Japanese anime-related goods (such as figures of niche anime characters) were I felt oddly juxtaposed with pictures of fancy pop culture goods from Japan and other Asian countries.

[After the NCR show (2) in Delhi]

I arrived at Indira Gandhi International Airport and was met by Okabayashi, riding a shuttle train with him from the airport to central Delhi. I heard from him that Ikeyama, who had arrived at Delhi a few days earlier than me, had had a huge fight with Menon and decisively broken off relations with him after he had visited Menon's office to talk about the uncollected airfares. At this time Ikeyama had already allied with Okabayashi, and they had started to

develop the CAP business together. Ikeyama had decided to make another business trip to Delhi to meet with Okabayashi and other prospective Indian business partners. I accompanied him a few days later, and until my arrival Okabayashi had attended Ikeyama's meetings at Delhi, including the one with Menon.

According to Okabayashi, when Ikeyama asked Menon to pay Takatsu's airfare, he suddenly and retrospectively charged certain fees to Ikeyama, and proposed to offset the 'debt' of the airfare in that way. The fees were, however, slightly higher than the airfare, which meant that Ikeyama had to pay an additional amount to Menon if he accepted this offset. This made Ikeyama upset.

This triggered both sides to voice all the complaints they had against each other about the behaviour during the NCR show. Menon claimed we (Ikeyama's delegation) had been 'rude' during the event. According to Menon, we rarely communicated with local fans, almost always staying in the VIP room. Our 'fan services' appeared to have been offered at a minimal level. Menon also said we were always huddling together throughout the event. The only guest Menon admired was Joh for his fan service, drawing portraits of whoever requested it of him. Menon told Ikeyama he did not understand India. If Ikeyama tried to do business in India, he should understand and appreciate the 'Indian way.'

Ikeyama retorted. He insisted that Menon lacked hospitality as one of the key organisers of an event. The guests Ikeyama brought to the NCR show were the ones Menon could not bring to the event without Ikeyama's mediation. The level of operation of the NCR

show had not reached the standard of other anime conventions around the world, and Ikeyama had had to fill in the gap by making additional logistical arrangements so as not to leave the guests from Japanese anime sector dissatisfied. In the end, however, Ikeyama agreed to ‘offset’ the debts and pay Menon as a ‘solatium’, and left the office with Okabayashi.

I strongly regret that I was not at the meeting. I asked Okabayashi how angry Menon had been. ‘He was *very* angry,’ Okabayashi answered. ‘I have attended many meetings between Japanese and Indians, and of course they do sometimes quarrel. But Menon’s level of anger was one of the highest in my experience. I think he was *truly* angry. I assume that was not a bluff.’

I wondered why Ikeyama stuck so resolutely to collecting airfares from Menon, and why he requested Menon to pay them in a way that had made Menon ‘truly’ angry. It seemed that Ikeyama’s demands of Menon had been very aggressive (as I had witnessed throughout his negotiation with Menon). Was this aggressiveness a ‘bluff’ thrown by Ikeyama at Menon after all? Okabayashi commented:

Indians often bluff. They often request completely unacceptable things of the Japanese side, and the Japanese side is often surprised by them, thinking how nasty they are. But there is often no ill-will in those requests. For them, such demands are just the starting point of the negotiation. They are just throwing out a random negotiation ball to the Japan side. The interesting thing is that the Japanese side often tries to respond in an Indian way and tries to say as many nasty things as possible to the Indian side when negotiating with them. But it seems that there is a red line which should not be crossed, and when the Japanese side’s level of nastiness crosses that line, the Indian side becomes truly angry. Since the Japanese are not used to being nasty in negotiations, they often do not

know where to stop. I think Ikeyama-san crossed that line, but I don't know when he crossed it.

When I met Ikeyama later in the business trip, I asked about this meeting. He commented shortly, 'Well, it was a good-bye' (*gubbai desune*).

Several months later, I had a chance to ask Ikeyama about the reasons why he decided not to ally with Menon. He raised three reasons: (1) Menon's business was not Japan-focused. He was trying to import anime goods from Japan (through Ikeyama), but also goods from other Asian countries, such as Hong Kong. Ikeyama thought that if that were the case, his importance for Menon would be obscured (*umoreru*) by the other Asian suppliers; (2) Menon did not have enough money to do satisfactory business with Ikeyama; and (3) his business ethics (*moraru*) were not sufficient for serious business with Japan. Ikeyama told me that the first reason was the most important. He added, 'Menon-san was not a businessman. He was an artist.'

### ***Discussion***

I would argue that the above ethnography can be contextualised as follows. The two dichotomies of art versus commerce and the 'Japanese' versus 'Indian' way of doing business played critical roles in the attempts of Ikeyama and Menon to establish business alliance, and in their eventual rupture. In this case, Ikeyama put himself on the arts/'Japanese' side *vis-à-vis* Menon, who is contextualised as being on the commerce/'Indian' side. When trying

to ally with Menon, Ikeyama expected him to be more on the arts/‘Japanese’ side than the commerce/‘Indian’ side. In other words, Ikeyama as a broker/entrepreneur expected his prospective business partners in India to become *completely the same as himself* when allying with them. This forms a sharp contrast with the behaviour of Ikeyama *vis-à-vis* the Japanese anime sector: when trying to ally with the sector, he tried to show himself as *the same as* but also *different from* its members in terms of the two dichotomies (see Chapter 4). The two dichotomies were ethnographically manifested in the two Japanese phrases *kokoro ga tsuujiru* (to have a heart-to-heart talk) and *gametsui* (greedy) that Ikeyama (and Dobashi) utilised as the criteria in deciding whether or not to ally with Menon or other prospective Indian business partners. When Ikeyama evaluated Menon’s behaviour as *kokoro ga tsuujiru*, it actually meant that Menon appeared to appreciate the logic and practices of the Japanese anime sector’s creativity and the ‘Japanese’ way of doing business. When he evaluated Menon’s behaviour as *gametsui*, it actually meant that Menon appeared to act in a commercial manner towards the sector and to impose his ‘Indian’ way of doing business on the Japan side. The dual-agent ambiguity of Ikeyama as a broker in terms of the two dichotomies was also observed in the ethnography (but was performed in a very different way from the one that we saw in the previous chapter). The rest of the section will be devoted to unfolding this argument.

The dichotomy of art versus commerce seemed to be one of the significant discrepancies that Ikeyama had to resolve when allying with Menon. Indeed, Ikeyama (and

Dobashi) seemed to be observing Menon's behaviour from the perspective of whether he was ready to respect the logic and practices of the Japanese anime sector's creativity. Ikeyama's assumption seemed to be that this 'level' of readiness – 'how determined he is to act as an intermediary for the Japanese anime sector in the Indian market' – had to be high enough if Menon was to ally with Ikeyama, i.e. if Ikeyama was to '*kokoro ga stuuji*' (to have a heart-to-heart talk) with Menon. This could be paradoxically observed in how Ikeyama (and Dobashi) was disappointed with the way in which Menon treated the anime creators (Takatsu, Joh, and Sumi) when inviting them to, and hosting them at, the NCR show. Recall the following facts. Menon appeared not to understand how 'big' a name Takatsu is in the Japanese anime sector: he not only tried to cancel his invitation, but also gave a higher priority (and paid more attention) to the Japanese illustrators/designers whom the event had invited separately from outside the Japanese anime sector. Despite Ikeyama's strong request not to make Joh do unexpected work at his stage session, Menon failed to make such arrangements. Menon also violated his promise to Ikeyama that he would not contact players in the Japanese anime sector without the pre-approval of DTA by directly proposing to Sumi to launch an anime co-production project. Menon's behaviour was summarised by Ikeyama as lacking 'hospitality' towards the anime creators. These ethnographic facts substantially overlap with the misbehaviour of entrepreneurs and brokers who were rejected by Dobashi as being overtly commercial in the previous chapter (especially their practice of 'bypassing'), behaviour which seemed to be taken as *gametsui* (greedy) by Ikeyama (and Dobashi). Menon

failed to place enough ‘emphasis’ on anime creators when coping with Ikeyama: his level of ‘determination’ and ‘business ethics’ appeared unable to ‘go beyond’ the homogenously commercial, and therefore he could not ally with Ikeyama.

The dichotomy of the ‘Japanese’ versus ‘Indian’ way of doing business seemed to be another crucial discrepancy that Ikeyama needed to resolve when allying with Menon. One of the crucial points that Ikeyama examined when trying to ally with Menon was how deeply he was rooted in the Indian business scene. This was the qualification that Ikeyama lacked, and thus formed an important factor in a complementary relationship with Menon. Recall the fact that Ikeyama paid attention to the number of prospective Indian business partners and customers Menon could bring him as a forecast of the future for their joint business. Ikeyama (and Dobashi) nonetheless mainly seemed acutely aware of Menon’s behaviour from the perspective of whether he refrained from imposing the ‘Indian’ way of doing business on Ikeyama (and Dobashi) (by appreciating the ‘Japanese’ way of doing business). The way Ikeyama contextualised this ‘Japanese’/‘Indian’ way of doing business generally reflected the contextualisation made in the ‘Let’s do business in India’ books overviewed in Chapter 2: he seemed to understand ‘Indian’ way of doing business as being mean about money (which Ikeyama labelled as *gametsui*, or greedy behaviour), in contrast with the ‘politeness’ that is required in Japan when making money transactions. Recall that Ikeyama once said he was afraid Menon might think himself entitled to ask for as much money as possible because Japan is a rich country and India is a poor one. He also said such

a mindset among Indians often led to the failure of business arrangements between Japanese and Indian players. Ikeyama's assumption that Indian players are *gametsui* led him to evaluate the approximation of the MAX operation cost as an 'unnecessarily high figure' which had to be 'cut down.' Menon's *gametsui* behaviour appeared to hit a peak when he counter-charged money to Ikeyama when he visited his office to collect his credit towards Menon over the airfares: this triggered the fatal altercation between the two, which eventually led them to rupture, a result that was far removed from being able to *kokoro ga tsuujiru* (have heart-to-heart talks). These features overlap widely with those of the Indian merchants as portrayed in the 'Let's do business in India' books, which argue that they 'care about nothing but making money' (Shibasaki 2011: 129) and will 'rip off' the Japan side (*takaru* in Ikeyama's terminology and *fundakuru* in Shibasaki 2011: 129).<sup>55</sup> Menon's 'determination' and 'business ethics' appeared not to reach a satisfactory level for allying with Ikeyama on this point.

In contrast with the alliance between Ikeyama and Dobashi (the Japanese anime sector), Ikeyama's attempt to resolve the above two dichotomies with Menon failed. What made such a difference? It seems there was a difference in the way Ikeyama performed the dual agency in terms of the two dichotomies. In short, it seems that his behaviour in blurring the boundaries between the two dichotomies did not successfully intersect with Menon's

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<sup>55</sup> Ikeyama's emphasis on the Indian market as the destination of his heroic entrepreneurial attempts ('I want to do business in India *because* it is a hard business;' 'Trying to make a JV agreement with an Indian player is an out-of-the-ordinary commitment') also resonates with some of the 'Let's do business in India' books.

desire to ally with him. It could further be said that Ikeyama's duality might be less nuanced (ambiguous) than the one he performed when he tried to ally with the Japanese anime sector. It seems that another incidence of *surechigai* (two ships passing in the night) took place between Japan and India (cf. Chapter 2).

As briefly mentioned above, Ikeyama stood persistently in support of his original position – the arts/'Japanese' side – throughout his negotiations with Menon, and one-sidedly expect Menon to comply with his side, or to become *completely the same as himself*. This forms a sharp contrast with Ikeyama's nuanced attitude towards the Japanese anime sector (especially Dobashi), in which case he showed himself to be *the same as* but also *different from* it; he especially tried to show that he was ready to 'go beyond' his original position as a commercial player by showing his respect for the logic and practices of the Japanese anime sector's creativity (see Chapter 4). Ikeyama seemed not to adopt this kind of nuanced approach when coping with Menon, but rather communicated with him in a more patronising way. Ikeyama repeatedly and explicitly told Menon that he 'should understand' what Ikeyama (and the Japanese anime sector) expected him to do: Ikeyama once even showed me his sense that he 'should say harsh things' to Menon to make their business a success. Ikeyama often explicitly showed the attitude that he was 'examining' Menon to see whether he could be a trustworthy business partner by, for example, saying that he would 'see how he behaves,' that he would 'take the measure of' (*mikiwameru*) Menon at the NCR show, and by accusing Menon's 'looseness' in budget estimation. Ikeyama did not show these kinds

of patronising attitudes towards the Japanese anime sector, at least not so explicitly.

The blurring of the dichotomy of art versus commerce was rarely observed in the above ethnography. Ikeyama's interest regarding this dichotomy focused consistently on how to protect the anime creators from commercial India (e.g. he got upset when Menon tried to bypass him in approaching the sector), rarely trying to appreciate their logic and practices in commerce. The *surechigai* between the two on this point could vividly be observed in how divergently the two men evaluated the fact that Joh had had to do unexpected drawing work after his panel at the NCR show. While Ikeyama seemed to regard it as a failure to 'respect' Joh's privacy at the event, Menon understood it as a success for the marketing purpose of the event and MAX towards their prospective consumers in India ('fan service'). Moreover, Ikeyama showed little interest in Menon's creative capacity. For example, although he seemed to understand Menon's aspiration to 'design and manufacture his own products and establish his own brand' in India through pursuing MAX business, Ikeyama seemed to regard Menon's orientation towards creativity as no more than a naivety unsuitable to doing anime business in India. Recall the Ikeyama's answer when asked why he eventually decided not to ally with Menon: his last (additional) answer was 'Menon-san was not a businessman. He was an artist.' Ikeyama also assumed that the illustrators/designers whom NCR Show invited should inarguably have been subordinate to the guests Ikeyama had selected.

It seems that the ‘Japanese’ and ‘Indian’ way of doing business did not so much intersect as make *surechigai*. Ikeyama was so worried about being ‘ripped off’ by *gametsui* Indian merchants that he completely abandoned the ‘Japanese’ way of doing business and behaved like another *gametsui* Indian businessperson in protecting his money (e.g. in making hard-line claims to Menon not to override Ikeyama in MAX business). His attempts nonetheless did not contribute to resolving the discrepancies in business customs, but caused him to cross the ‘red line’ and rupture with Menon. Ikeyama insisted on making Menon pay the airfare so aggressively that he made Menon ‘truly’ angry. On the other hand, Menon’s attempt to act like a ‘Japanese’ businessperson (for example, by raising the matter of politeness by criticising the JV contract as ‘legal bullshit’ and calling Ikeyama *oniisan*) was suspected by Ikeyama (and me) to be no more than another technique to win at the ‘tough negotiations’ Indian businesspeople are so good at.

I have mentioned that, although Ikeyama (and other players) dichotomised a ‘Japanese’ and an ‘Indian’ way of doing business, there seem to be no inherently ‘Japanese’/‘Indian’ business customs. Such a dichotomy is not so much ontological as situational. According to my observations, there were a number of moments when Ikeyama’s assumptions about a ‘Japanese’ way of doing business were relativised by Menon. This could be vividly observed in how Menon accused Ikeyama’s delegation at the NCR show of being ‘rude,’ while Ikeyama assumed that the ‘Japanese’ way of doing business was ‘polite.’ This showed that the ‘Japanese’ way of doing business is not inherently polite, but may sometimes

appear unacceptably rude in the eyes of an Indian businessperson. This also suggests that both Ikeyama and Menon assumed their own business customs to be 'polite', and those of their counterpart to be 'rude'. The above ethnography depicts Ikeyama's frustration at Menon's 'Indian' way of doing business. However, there is a big possibility that Menon was also frustrated by Ikeyama's 'Japanese' way of doing business. Menon might have wondered why neither Ikeyama nor Dobashi was able to confirm the guests for the NCR show until the last minute, which would just make the airfare higher. This might be due to the involuting nature of the Japanese anime sector (cf. Chapter 3), which makes anime creators too busy to confirm their schedule with enough lead time, and seems to suggest that such an involution might be functioning as an impediment for the Japanese anime sector in expanding its business to India. Menon's frustration that the guests Ikeyama brought to the NCR show 'were always huddling together' seemed to be critical of the 'Japanese' way of doing business, something Ikeyama seems not to have recognised until Menon's accusation. This feature, nonetheless, resonates with the general tendency of Japanese overseas expatriate communities to create their own 'environmental bubbles' (Cohen 1977) and separate themselves from their host surroundings (see Ben-Ari and Fong 2000).<sup>56</sup> Although I assume this relativisation might become a critical basis for Ikeyama and Menon to resolve the conflict between the 'Japanese' and 'Indian' way of doing business, it did not function in a

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<sup>56</sup> I also heard similar separatist tendencies from a non-Japanese owner of Japanese restaurant in Delhi. She told me that she always tells the waiters and waitresses not to wait on the tables of Japanese customers too much because 'they want to be among themselves' and 'don't want any fuss' while they are dining (interview by the author, April 2015).

way that allowed the two to ally. On the contrary, it led to *surechigai*.

The ambivalent, dual agency could also be observed in Menon. This was particularly manifested in the dichotomy of the ‘Japanese’ versus ‘Indian’ way of doing business. On the one hand, he strongly tried to represent the ‘Indian’ way of doing business when negotiating with Ikeyama, insisting that Ikeyama should follow the ‘Indian way’ when Ikeyama did business in India. On the other hand, Menon tried to follow the ‘Japanese’ way of doing business on several occasions as mentioned above (for example his denunciation of ‘legal bullshit’ and his use of the term *oniisan*). On one occasion when I had a chance to talk with Menon, he showed his excitement at the potential of MAX to change the landscape of Indian business, which was overtly motivated only by money. I strongly inferred that he understood the strength of his position in India was based on his having connections, and the capacity to get along, with the players in the Japanese anime sector. Ikeyama had guessed that Menon’s objective in allying with him was to leverage ‘the popularity of Japanese anime’ and establish his own brand in India.

### ***Comparative discussion***

It seems worth carrying out a comparative examination of Ikeyama’s behaviour in Japan and in India. Ikeyama acted as a broker between the Japanese anime sector and the Indian market. In doing so, he allied on one hand with Dobashi in the Japanese anime sector, and on the other hand he tried to ally with Menon in the Indian market. His task was to mediate between

the two sides via these two insider individuals. The sociocultural discrepancies between the players, including Dobashi and Menon, that Ikeyama had to resolve in allying with them and carrying forward his business were contextualised as the dichotomies of art versus commerce and the 'Japanese' versus 'Indian' way of doing business. Ikeyama's ambiguous dual agency was performed to blur the boundaries between the two dichotomies. This worked out for Ikeyama in allying with Dobashi (the Japanese anime sector), but it did not work in allying with Menon (India).

First of all, the Janus-like duality of Ikeyama regarding the two dichotomies of art versus commerce and the 'Japanese' versus 'Indian' way of doing business was evident when mediating between the Japanese anime sector and the Indian market. While he represented the commercial/'Indian' side when coping with the Japanese anime sector (Dobashi), he represented the art/'Japanese' side when coping with the Indian market (Menon). In other words, it could be said that he represented India while coping with the Japanese anime sector, and represented the Japanese anime sector when coping with India. These seemed to be his basic positions in trying to involve the relevant players in his business from each side.

The nuances of how Ikeyama tried to blur his original positions to meet those of his potential business counterparts nonetheless differed in approach depending on whether he was dealing with Dobashi or with Menon. As briefly mentioned above, Ikeyama was more careful in making his positionality intersect with Dobashi's than he was with Menon. As ethnographically depicted in Chapter 4, when coping with Dobashi, Ikeyama showed his

respect towards the logic and practices of the Japanese anime sector's creativity, while simultaneously representing the commercial interest in making money out of anime. His commercial interests were nonetheless rarely shown boldly to the Japanese anime sector, including Dobashi (recall the scene where Ikeyama implicitly prompted Dobashi to establish his own anime company, with Ikeyama as a financial advisor). Similarly, Ikeyama carefully considered how to show his 'Indian face' as well as his 'Japanese face' to the Japanese anime sector. When coping with Menon, on the other hand, Ikeyama rarely showed respect towards Menon's commercial logic and practices (let alone his creative capacity and aspiration). He tried to act like a *gametsui* (greedy) Indian businessman, and did so in such a blunt way that he made Menon angry. It seems that his persistence in sticking to his original arts position and his bluntness in emulating the 'Indian' way of doing business led Ikeyama and Menon to *surechigai*.

The ethnography of Ikeyama's Indo-Japanese anime business project depicted in this and the previous chapter has amply shown how critical the dichotomies of art versus commerce and the 'Japanese' versus 'Indian' way of doing business are in creating the transnational flow of the anime business between Japan and India. It also shows in detail how a broker (Ikeyama) plays a key role in resolving these dichotomies through his Janus-like dual agency, blurring the boundaries between the dichotomies. Moreover, what the ethnography highlighted is how this Janus-like dual agency is performed in a highly contingent manner: it is implemented not so much consistently as situationally (recall that I

was initially bewildered by Ikeyama's incomprehensible decision-making ways). It is performed in a myriad of ways (the ethnography was unable to categorise the ways of blurring the boundaries), and it is not always successful (the ethnography was unable to identify either 'key success factors' or 'key failure factors' in the blurring of the boundaries). What is evident, however, is that this dual agency boundary-blurring carried forward Ikeyama's anime business project, whether to success (in allying with Dobashi) or to failure (rupturing with Menon). In other words, the Janus-like liminal positionality of a broker is a chaotic driving force bridging the Japanese anime sector to the Indian market.

Lastly, it would be worth examining how this ethnography of the Indo-Japanese anime business could be situated alongside previous ethnographic works on transnational business, especially on the expansion of Japanese business into other countries (especially into Asian countries). It seems that the ethnography of Ikeyama's business forms a sharp contrast on some points with the relevant previous works. Overall, such studies have revealed that when they (Japanese businesspeople) try to do business in/with other (Asian) countries, the 'sameness' between Japanese expatriates and the local (Asian) partners was often emphasised, while the unequal power relationship, i.e. the 'superior' Japanese and the 'inferior' locals, was implicitly set in place and naturalised. In Ikeyama's case, however, Japan's 'unfamiliarity' with their Indian counterparts (Menon) was emphasised throughout the negotiations. Although the 'superiority' of the Japanese side was explicitly insisted on by Ikeyama, this 'authority' was explicitly questioned and countered by Menon.

By ethnographically examining the operation of a Japanese book company in Singapore, Ng and Ben-Ari (2000) revealed how the company tried to foster ‘the corporate family environment’ – that is, ‘a strong coupling between commitment to and identification with workmates’ – within its Singapore operations (117). What emerged throughout such practice was, however, the implicit assumption that Japanese expatriates were ‘superior’ to the Singaporean local staff in decision-making in everyday operations:

[...] because there is no clear demarcation line between the store managers and the Japanese expatriates problems constantly arise. For example, it is often unclear who has the right to make the final decision when it comes to matters concerning the store or the staff. Formally speaking, it should be the store managers who have the final say. In effect however, the Japanese managers (at the store level) seem to hold certain power just by their presence in the store and by virtue of the fact that they are Japanese and that this is a Japanese company. (122)

Through interviews with the staff, Ng and Ben-Ari also highlighted how such a gap between Japanese expatriates and local staff (‘the company treat the Japanese better’) was seen as ‘natural’ among the staff members (125).

This also resonates with Japan’s overseas organisational practices in the non-profit sector. Conducting her fieldwork in a Japanese NGO’s agricultural training program operating in rural Myanmar, anthropologist Chika Watanabe (2014) depicts how the ethic that both Japanese and Burmese aid workers should share ‘muddy labor’ (collectively engaging in agricultural work in muddy fields to successfully achieve their mission) created a collective form of intimacy between them, while implicitly naturalising and reinforcing the working practices that assumed the superiority of the Japanese. Watanabe shows what

happened at the field site when Cyclone Giri hit and the crops and livestock were jeopardised by heavy rain, strong wind, and the breaking of a dam upstream. In such an emergency, they (both the Japanese and the Burmese) worked together collectively, without being told by others what to do, and swiftly saved their crops and livestock by hauling sand, packing bags with corn in the storage house to move them to a safer place, and wading through muddy water to save the animals from flooded sheds. Although this experience strengthened a sense of solidarity between the Japanese and Burmese aid workers, Watanabe reflects, it was always the Japanese staff who decided what to do, and the local Burmese staff who followed their directions. This was not questioned by either the Japanese or Burmese workers, either in the midst of the emergency work or afterwards, which suggests how deeply such a hierarchy had been internalised in their ‘muddy labor’ ethics and practices.

Several other ethnographies also depict the naturalisation or normalisation of the Japanese expatriates’ ‘superior’ power over local employees. For example, Wong (1999) conducted anthropological fieldwork in the Hong Kong branch of a Japanese supermarket and highlighted how ‘the position of “superior Japanese expatriates” was [...] naturalised by ethnicity, seemingly making it inevitable and necessary’ (164) to operate the branch:

[...] the idea that Japanese expatriates and local staff were different and the former were more superior than the latter became *the only one possible* and the superiority became *property* of Japanese expatriates. The arbitrary character of the relationship between Japanese expatriates and local staff was hidden and its potential for open debate was closed off. (165, emphases in the original)

It was also *natural* for local staff to accept the superiority of Japanese and to treat their privileges as neutral and even necessary. They thus neither engaged in

collective confrontation to eliminate structured inequality nor found their way to disprove the imposed ethnic stigma as legitimisation of socio-political differences whenever they perceived it possible to alter the existing order. (166, emphasis in the original)

Sedgwick (2007), in his ethnographic study of the French subsidiary of a Japanese multinational corporation (a factory making videotape-based products), showed how the senior Japanese engineer (Otake-san) – sent from Japanese headquarters and ‘the most knowledgeable person at the factory regarding technical aspects of its machinery and processes’ (112-113) – exercised informal authority over the factory operations, even though he was officially just an ‘adviser’ who did ‘not appear on the plant’s organisational chart’ (112). When the French engineering team failed to manage the ‘test’ to produce ‘new tape,’ Otake-san quickly took over the task by leading and organising his Japanese engineers instead (111-117).

Ikeyama’s attitude towards Menon forms a remarkable contrast to the above examples. Firstly, Ikeyama started from the assumption that the Japan side and the India were ‘different,’ rather than assuming the ‘sameness’ of both sides. This emphasis on difference might be attributed to Ikeyama’s position as a broker who was strategically contextualising the gap that he could arbitrage.

Secondly, rather than becoming an implicit assumption, the ‘superiority’ of the Japan side seemed to be explicitly insisted on by Ikeyama many times throughout his negotiation with Menon. Recall Ikeyama’s patronising attitude towards Menon. The ground

on which Ikeyama insisted on the Japan side's 'superiority' was, I would argue, not so much connected to Japan *per se* as to the *globalisation* of Japan. The above studies show how the implicit assumption of the Japan side's 'superiority' over local staff is justified by Japanese 'ethnicity,' 'by virtue of the fact that they are Japanese and that this is a Japanese company.'

In contrast, Ikeyama's case seems to show an example of the Japan side using the premise that Japan forms a centre of globalisation, at least in the realm of anime, as a source of authority. Recall that Ikeyama (and Dobashi) judged the performance of Menon at the NCR show by comparing it with other anime conventions held around the world. Ikeyama assumed that they could not expect the same hospitality at the NCR show as at other anime events elsewhere; he insisted that Menon should pay the guests' travel costs in advance, as other anime conventions do; he asserted that it was unimaginable for an event to cancel an invitation after an invited guest had explicitly agreed to attend; and he concluded that Menon lacked the hospitality as an organiser of an event and that the level of operation of the NCR show did not reach the standard of other anime conventions. In other words, we could see here how the Japan side portrayed themselves as a 'global standard' when coping with their Asian counterparts, rather than attributing their authority to their ethnicity.

Centrism in this sense partially overlaps with what Ben-Ari (2000) found in the 'cognitive schemas' (37) guiding the everyday business practices of Japanese business executives in Singapore, especially their interactions with local Singaporean staff. Incorporating Roland Robertson's (1992) concept of 'global talk,' Ben-Ari (2000) depicts

how such interpretive models of Japanese business expatriates 'are derived not only from Japan's national culture' but also from a 'specific view of the world as one unit' (38). Such a view includes a linear sense of the world order that categorises societies along the lines of 'more civilized' or 'less civilized' societies, and that situates Japan as a 'more civilized' society *vis-à-vis* other Asian societies (e.g. Singapore, Bahrain, and India) while imposing on themselves (Japanese expatriates) the requirement to 'emulate more advanced countries' (e.g. the UK) (48-51). How the centrism manifested in the ethnography of Ikeyama's business differs from that exhibited by Ben-Ari is, I would argue, that Ikeyama seemed to view globalisation as having *multiple* centres rather than having a single world order. Ikeyama did seem to recognise that there are other global centres from which entertainment flows and intersects in the Indian market, such as Hollywood and Bollywood. He did not seem to think that he should (or could) 'emulate' such centres, but, by the same token, he seemed to think he represented the centre in the realm of anime in its global landscape, in other words that there was nobody else in India 'ahead' of him when it comes to anime, and that his Indian business counterparts should thus follow him as a model.

Related to this point, Iwabuchi (2001, 2002) also emphasises that there are multiple centres in cultural globalisation, and argues that Japan has become one of the regional centres of globalisation in the realm of popular culture. He argues that the Japan side's centrism is manifested in the way how they see Japan's past in contemporary Asia. Japanese consumers consume Asian popular culture products as 'nostalgia': they try to find the social energy in

such products that Japan once possessed, and idealise Asian societies while denying that they co-exist with Japan contemporarily (2001: 24). While some other Japanese anime business projects conducted in India seem to share this Asia-as-Japan's-nostalgia discourse in an Indian context (e.g. Koga 2013), Ikeyama seems to manifest a form of centrism in the contemporaneousness of anime's globalisation. Indeed, what mattered for Ikeyama was, for example, not whether guests from the Japanese anime sector could find nostalgia (or the Japanese past) in the NCR show, but whether they could find the same level of hospitality that was implemented in Japan and other countries as well.

Thirdly, Ikeyama's explicit insistence on the Japan side's 'superiority' was contested, questioned, and undermined by Menon. Recall the following facts. Menon often went against the 'global standard' of operating anime conventions by insisting on deferring payment for the airfare of NCR show guests and cancelling an invitation after official confirmation of attendance. He insisted on maintaining his own networks with Japanese creators, out of Ikeyama's control. He ignored Ikeyama's request and let Joh do unexpected drawings after his panel at the NCR show, and approached Sumi directly. His online retail platform, BAND, was not 'Japan-focused', and dealt not only in anime goods but also in cultural goods from other Asian countries. He labelled the behaviour of Ikeyama's delegation at the NCR show as 'rude,' 'huddling together,' and performing minimum fan service. He disagreed with Ikeyama in his evaluation of Joh's unexpected 'fan service.' Menon, at last, seemed to conclude that he could not do business with Ikeyama because he did not

understand or appreciate the 'Indian way.' Such an attitude forms a remarkable contrast with that of the (Asian) local staff depicted in the previous studies mentioned above. The Singaporean bookstore staff conceived of Japan-side's 'superiority' as natural; the Burmese aid workers did not question the Japanese staff's decision-making authority; the Hong Kong supermarket staff naturally accepted the superiority of the Japan side, treated Japanese side's privileges as neutral and even necessary without trying to eliminate such inequality, and closed off open debate channels with the potential to arbitrage such a gap; and the French engineer team was taken over by a senior Japanese expatriate engineer after failing to carry out the new tape test. Menon's explicit autonomy overlaps with the attitude anthropologist William Mazzarella (2003) found in the local Indian advertisement agency when doing business with global multinational corporations (MNCs). In a case in which a global soft drink brand (with headquarters in the United States) tried to penetrate the Indian market using local Indian advertisement/marketing agencies, Mazzarella described how the local Indian agencies carved out 'a zone of autonomy' (222) by constructing an (imaginary) 'Indian consumer.' They used this as a leverage in their negotiations with global MNCs when carrying out their joint marketing research in India by insisting that the tastes and preferences of such 'Indian consumers' could only be understood by them (the local Indian agencies), and not by global MNCs.

In the next chapter, I will put Ikeyama's business project depicted above into the broader context of the Indo-Japanese relationship.

## **Chapter 6: A Bigger Picture: Two Discrepancies on Multiple Levels**

This chapter puts Ikeyama's business into the broader context of the (discrepant) Indo-Japanese relationship. By ethnographically examining the politico-economic relationship between Japan and India as a whole (especially the presentation meeting in Tokyo in September 2014, when Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was invited as a main speaker), and by comparing Ikeyama's DTA business with other anime business projects in the Indian market, this chapter will highlight how the dichotomies of art versus commerce and the 'Japanese' versus 'Indian' way of doing business are consistently manifested in the different layers and modalities of the relationship between the two countries. In other words, this chapter suggests that Ikeyama's business, which we have examined in Chapters 4 and 5, can be understood as an ethnographic 'synecdoche' (Clifford 1988) for Japanese anime business projects in India, and even for the Indo-Japanese business relationship as a whole.

### ***The ethnography of the politico-economic relationship between Japan and India***

How does Ikeyama's business project (DTA) fit into the broader context of Indo-Japanese business relationships in general, and other Japanese anime business projects in India in particular? What are the common points and differences? To answer these questions, this chapter will first ethnographically examine the presentation meeting attended by Indian

Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Tokyo's Hotel Okura on 2 September 2014 (during my fieldwork). This meeting seems to form an ethnographic summary of the general context of the business relationship between Japan and India.

After being elected Prime Minister of India in May 2014, Modi visited Japan in late August. It was emphasised in Japan that Japan was virtually the first 'major country' to be visited by Modi after he became Prime Minister,<sup>57</sup> and that this priority showed how much India valued Japan and the closeness of the relationship between Japan and India (and between the Japanese Prime Minister Abe and Modi). India was widely known by the Japanese business sector to be a rising big market. Since Modi was known as a pro-business leader who governed Gujarat like a 'CEO' when he was chief minister thereby actively attracting industry to the state, and who had insisted on applying the 'Gujarat model' nationwide after becoming Prime Minister, the Japanese business sector paid a great deal of attention to his visit. They expected that Modi would present India's basic policy on how India would accept (and welcome) foreign investment from Japan.

The presentation meeting at Hotel Okura in September was regarded as an opportunity for Modi to show such indications to the Japanese business sector, and discuss the future of the Indo-Japanese business relationship. The meeting was named the 'Address by His Excellency Mr. Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India,' and Modi's presentation was titled 'My vision of India: Toward a New India-Japan Business Partnership' (*korekara*

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<sup>57</sup> To be precise, the first country Modi visited after becoming Prime Minister was Bhutan.

*no indo aratana nichiiin bijinesu pātonāshippu no tameni*). The meeting was hosted by Nikkei (Japan's quality business newspaper) and JETRO (the Japan External Trade Organisation), and supported by the Embassy of India in Japan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), the Japan-India Business Co-operation Committee (JIBCC), the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI). The two-hour meeting (3pm-5pm) was scheduled to start with Modi's address, to be followed by the 'Welcome Speech' of Osamu Suzuki (Chairman and CEO of Suzuki Motors) and a 'Business Session' of the business leaders in India and Japan. The participants of the business session were the President of CII, the Vice President of FICCI, the President and CEO of Mitsui & Co. (*Mitsui Bussan*), the chairman of Indian manufacturing company groups (Bharat Forge Limited and Kalyani Group), the Vice Chairman of the Indian IT service company (Tata Consultancy Services), and the Secretary of the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) of the Indian government. The moderator of the session was the Chief Director General of JETRO at New Delhi.

Although anyone could attend the meeting, the website for the meeting application said they would enter participants into a lottery if the number of applicants exceeded the capacity of the venue. I was informed about this meeting by Ikeyama. We both applied to attend the meeting, and only I won a ticket. It was said that there were more than 4,000 applications for the 1,200 seats at the meeting. I became a representative of DTA to hear

Modi's presentation and report back to Ikeyama on how Modi's policy of attracting Japanese industry to India would affect DTA's business. Ikeyama was especially interested in whether Modi would be willing to loosen the FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) regulation on retailing service. This regulation restricted the retail business of non-Indians on the Indian market, and thus made it impossible for Ikeyama (DTA) to sell anime goods directly to Indian fans. Due to this regulation, DTA had to use local Indian retailers rather than deal directly with Indian consumers, and let the retailers sell the anime goods on behalf of the DTA.

On the day of the meeting, Hotel Okura was filled with Japanese 'salarymen' in their dark suits and ties. It seemed that they mostly belonged to (big) Japanese companies. I also found my ex-boss at METI in the crowd of dark suits while I was waiting in the long line to complete the registration. I was virtually the only one who did not wear a suit. Instead I wore a casual short-sleeved polo shirt, which made me feel out of the place. The main hall in which Modi was going to give his speech quickly filled up, and the remaining participants who could not enter the hall, including me, were led to a separate 'satellite' room. There was a big screen set up at the front of the room showing the main hall's stage. Chairs were arranged in many lines in the room, and on each chair there was headphone equipment (to hear the speech from the main hall) and programmes (in which Modi was introduced as being 'known to be pro-Japanese'). The chairs in the satellite room also filled quickly.

Modi's presentation began with a big round of applause from the floor. On the stage he behaved like India's Minister of Industry, rather than as Prime Minister: he used his

speech to make the appeal that India was a potential market to his audience of Japanese salarymen. Nikkei summarised Modi's speech in an online article uploaded after the meeting as follows:

Indian Prime Minister Modi emphasised the deregulation by saying 'India will provide the necessary environment.'

[...]

As for the relationship between Japanese companies and Indian companies, Modi showed his view that Japan and India are in a complementary relationship by saying 'India is good at software, and Japan is good at hardware. Software would be useless without hardware, and hardware would not move without software. If we combine Japan and India together, we could make many miracles in the world.'

He also repeated the term 'make in India' many times in his 30-minute speech, and encouraged the Japanese manufacturing sector to invest in India. He also promised 'We will provide the necessary environment for you to make your products,' and pointed out that it would be possible to provide the low-cost but high-skilled human resources and the partnerships with local universities. He also mentioned the necessity to develop metropolitan railways and high-tech industry, and made advances in the wide range of industrial sectors in Japan.<sup>58</sup>

What caught my attention during the meeting, however, was something that was *not* mentioned in the above article. There was a question and answer session after Modi's speech, and the moderator of that session, an editorial writer and senior staff writer for Nikkei, asked Modi a slightly captious question. He said that, although Modi had claimed that India would welcome Japanese industry, there must be some specific sectors which India would especially welcome, and other sectors India did *not* want to welcome. The moderator

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<sup>58</sup> [http://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXLASGM02H17\\_S4A900C1I00000/](http://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXLASGM02H17_S4A900C1I00000/) (accessed 11 November 2015).

confessed that he was referring to India's FDI regulation on retail services, and asked Modi whether India would be ready to welcome Japan's retail industry, in other words whether he would loosen the FDI regulation of the retail service. Modi did respond to this question, but there was no clear comment on the regulation. I understood that the regulation would remain for a time, and that I should report this to Ikeyama.

The article also did not mention the welcome speech by Suzuki Motors (Osamu Suzuki) or the business session. It seemed reasonable for Suzuki Motors to follow Modi's speech. Suzuki Motors, a middle-ranking car company in Japan, is regarded in Japan as virtually the only Japanese company which has succeeded in the Indian market. They have been cultivating the Indian market for many decades (while other Japanese top car companies, such as Toyota and Nissan, were cultivating the United States market) and were thus understood to be a successful precedent and symbol for Japanese success in India (see also Chapter 2). In his speech, Osamu Suzuki briefly reviewed the company's history and said that they had decided to do business in India in 1982 with the support of the Indian government. He emphasised that, although Suzuki Motors started as a small medium-sized enterprise (SME), they had ended up producing 1.2 million automobiles in India 30 years on. He appealed to the audience, or his fellow potential successor salarymen in the floor, that these figures and facts show how good things happen to a Japanese company when they expand their business in India.

What caught my attention in the business session that followed Suzuki's speech was the speech by the DIPP Secretary. While the tone of the session focused on welcoming Japanese companies to India, the Secretary conversely showed his frustration towards the negative and hesitant attitude of Japanese companies to do business in India. He criticised Japanese companies for demanding perfection and too much discipline from Indian workers, and insisted that they should give up pursuing these things if they are to succeed in the Indian market. He insisted that India could, and would, yield sufficient profits without Japanese-style perfection and discipline. He also argued that Japanese companies do not take risks when cultivating the Indian market. He contrasted the attitude of Japanese companies with that of Korean companies (such as Samsung, LG, and Hyundai), and praised those Korean companies that actively took risks in the Indian market, which explained why Korean companies were doing well there (and Japanese companies were not). The secretary emphasised that Japanese companies should be ready to take risk when entering the Indian market: if they did not, they would lose the market; if they took risks, they would receive large returns. Although I found his sarcastic and straightforward criticism interesting, I doubt it reached the ears of most audience, because many of them left the venue after Osamu Suzuki's welcome speech and a very limited number remained in the room to listen to the business session.

The meeting as a whole did not mention the creative industries (let alone the anime industry) at all. The speakers mainly talked about how to match the Japanese manufacturing and infrastructure sector against the Indian service (especially the IT service) sector, and in this sense Nikkei's summary quoted above was correct. But I found they did not discuss intensively the sectors that were not in a 'complementary relationship' between Japan and India, such as the retail services and the creative industries. On the next day of the meeting, I reported to Ikeyama in an email that (1) Modi had appeared more like India's Minister of Industry than the country's Prime Minister; (2) the retail sector would remain a sensitive issue for India since Modi had not clearly answered the question on whether he would be willing to ease India's FDI regulation on retail services; (3) the 'big picture' I had formed of the Indo-Japanese business relationship was that (i) India has little incentive to ally with other countries (including Japan) in the field of the service industry: its sectors are either too strong (such as the IT service) or too weak (such as the retail service) to ally with foreign capital, (ii) the country has a big incentive to ally with others in the field of manufacturing and infrastructure because they are relatively underdeveloped in India and will generate employment and improve the welfare in the country once developed, (iii) so India wants to ally with Japan in the manufacturing sector or infrastructure sector (such as railway transportation, energy, and smart community); and (4) my overall impression of India was that it wants heavy industries from Japan, and therefore that the anime business was not on the main agenda for the top executives in either country.

### *Discussion, with references to other anime business projects in India*

The background of this meeting seems to comply with the context of the Indo-Japanese relationship as overviewed in the previous chapters (especially Chapter 2): the rise of India as a new global politico-economic superpower on the one hand, and Japan's relative unwillingness/inability to capitalise on this due to India's unfamiliarity on the other. The oversubscription for the meeting and its venue filled with Japanese 'salarymen' seem to show the rising interest of the Japanese business sector in the Indian market, but the frustration of India's DIPP Secretary regarding the Japanese companies' continuing negative and hesitant attitudes towards business in India seems to suggest that many Japanese companies still do not know how to implement their business interest effectively into actual operations in the Indian market. The meeting depicted in the above ethnography could be understood as another intermediary activity to fill this gap by encouraging Japanese businesspeople to do business in/with India, just like the 'let's do business in India' books I reviewed in Chapter 2. This time it was not the business consultants who wrote such books, but India's Prime Minister and business executives from both countries who tried to persuade Japanese businesspeople to expand their business to the Indian market.

At the above meeting, entrepreneurial attempts (i.e. taking active risks) were encouraged to resolve this gap between a rising India and a hesitant Japan. Such gaps mainly took the form of the dichotomies between art versus commerce and the 'Japanese' versus 'Indian' way of doing business. The art versus commerce dichotomy seems to be manifested

in the way that Japan as a whole, or at least at the national and top management level, still does not know how to incorporate the creative sectors to leverage its exports to the rising Asian markets (such as the Indian market). The meeting described above (which aimed at enhancing Indo-Japanese international business) was dominated by the overtly ‘business’ oriented sector (e.g. Suzuki Motors, Mitsui & Co., Bharat Forge Limited and the Kalyani Group), and was attended by very few people from the creative sector (including the anime sector). The organisations and associations in creative/anime industries in Japan and India (such as, for example, the AJA,<sup>59</sup> UNIJAPAN,<sup>60</sup> and associations in Bollywood) were neither included in the hosting body nor invited as speakers to the above meeting. Hotel Okura was filled with Japanese ‘salarymen’ in their dark suits and ties, which alienated me in my casual short-sleeved polo shirt. The fact that Modi emphasised in the meeting that Japan’s ‘hardware’ and India’s ‘software’ are in a complementary relationship seems to mean, conversely, that the creative sector has not yet been given an established position in the institutional and organisational arrangements in promoting Japan’s exports to the rising Indian market. Ikeyama’s DTA business was unable to find the meeting relevant, as I reported to him after the meeting.

In 2010 the Japanese government suggested in a report (METI 2010) that the Japanese economy and industry should break away from their ‘one-legged hitting style’ (*ipponashi dahou*) (3) to be solely dependent on the automobile industry for growth. They

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<sup>59</sup> The Association of Japanese Animations (<http://aja.gr.jp/>) (accessed 1 December 2015).

<sup>60</sup> <https://www.unijapan.org/> (accessed 1 December 2015).

designated five industrial sectors – including the creative industries – to be intensively supported by the government to boost this multi-polarisation of Japan’s industrial structure. This report seemed to be a strategic move prior to METI’s establishing the Creative Industries Division (CID) in 2011. It was surprising, however, to see in 2014 – four years after they declared they would heavily support the creative industries – that the Japanese government still seemed to be struggling to incorporate the creative industries into their industrial vision.

In other words, Japan as a whole still seems to gravitate overmuch towards the heavy industries when considering its business relationship with Asian rising economies like India. However loudly some governmental sectors (at the ministerial level, such as METI) trumpet the potential of the creative industries for the country’s future growth, and thus the importance of promoting the exports of the creative industries to foreign markets, including India (see Chapters 3 and 4), the priority of the creative industries is nevertheless kept strikingly low when it comes to the national or top management level. As we saw in the above ethnographic vignette, Modi and other participants of the meeting (Presidents and CEOs) did not mention the creative industries, let alone the anime industry, at all in their speeches and discussions. Their central interest seemed to be on the sectors of manufacturing, infrastructure, and IT services.

It was, at least to me, surprising that the participants of the meeting did not mention the *Suraj the Rising Star* anime project. This is an Indo-Japanese anime co-production that

involved many Japanese and Indian big companies as its sponsors (such as Maruti Suzuki, All Nippon Airways, Nissin Foods, Kokuyo Camlin, and Daikin India). It had been heavily reported nation-wide in Japan's major papers and on the TV news as an innovative way of developing Japanese business in the rising Asian market. The silence of the participants at the meeting on the *Suraj the Rising Star* anime project appeared odd, at least to me, especially when I saw one of the project's sponsors, the CEO of Suzuki Motors, actually participating in the meeting and giving a welcome speech without mentioning it. Moreover, although METI seemed to implicitly regard the project as a 'model case' of Cool Japan (interview by the author with a producer of the *Suraj the Rising Star* project, March 2015), such a perspective was never mentioned at the meeting.

The fact that the Japanese official 'hero' of doing business in India was contextualised as Suzuki Motors in the meeting seems to symbolise this situation. Although the new 'hero' in Indian business is not Toyota Motors or Nissan Motors (the old 'heroes' who 'conquered' the United States market in Japan's high-growth period), such a shift in the term 'hero' has nevertheless occurred *within* Japan's automobile sector. The players in other sectors, such as anime sector, did not (or have not yet?) become a new 'hero' in Indian business. It seems that Japanese 'salarymen' still need their old framework to understand and cultivate the new market.

To see further how Japan's institutional and organisational arrangements at the national level to promote its exports have failed to incorporate the creative industries, it

might be worth examining the malfunction of JETRO, one of the major public organisations that has traditionally functioned as a facilitator for Japan's external trade, in supporting the export of creative industries to the Indian market. At the meeting's business session, the Chief Director General of JETRO in New Delhi emphasised the importance of finding the right local Indian partners if Japanese companies are to succeed in the Indian market. This claim seemed to be an implicit advertisement of JETRO's New Delhi Centre, suggesting that the audience members contact the centre to find local Indian partners. However, it seemed that they were talking only about the manufacturing sector, and that the creative/anime sector fell beyond their scope. Indeed, although there was substantial market information about India on JETRO's official website,<sup>61</sup> there was virtually nothing about the creative/anime industry. For example, one research report entitled '*Tēma Chousa 'Indo to Kumu': Nichiin Kigyō ni yoru Pātonaring no Jittai*' (Theme Study 'Partnering with India': The Reality of Partnering Japanese and Indian Companies)' (JETRO 2013) introduces many detailed cases of partnerships between 'more than 100' Japanese and Indian companies and tries to 'to meet the increasing needs of Japanese companies by organising the know-how and focal points in allying with Indian companies' (2). However, there are no cases of alliances between Japanese and Indian creative/anime companies in the 100 cases reported in the paper. Another report named '*Chuushō Kigyō no Indo Shinshutsu o Kangaeru: Indo Jigyō Kankyō Kenkyūkai Houkokusho*' (Thoughts on the Business Expansion of Small and

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<sup>61</sup> <https://www.jetro.go.jp/reportstop/asia/in/reports/> (accessed 1 December 2015).

Medium-Sized Enterprises in India: Report by the Study Group on the Business Environment of India) (JETRO 2012) is written for people in Japanese SMEs who are interested in expanding their business in India (1). In order to make the report easy for them to read, each chapter has short stories about a fictitious Japanese SME, ‘*Yamamoto Seisakusho Umi o Wataru*’ (Yamamoto Corporation Goes Overseas)’, to portray how the CEO and workers decided to enter the Indian market. The fact that this ‘Yamamoto Corporation’ is a *manufacturing* company also seems to show JETRO’s manufacturing sector centrism in arguing about overseas business in India. When I asked one ex-JETRO official during my fieldwork why JETRO did not issue a report about the Indian anime market as they do for many other places such as the United States, Europe, China, Korea, and Southeast Asia, the ex-official said that there was not yet enough need for such a report.

Such a malfunction of JETRO in facilitating creative/anime businesses in India was no exception for Ikeyama’s business. When we made a business trip to Delhi, we visited JETRO’s New Delhi Centre to ask them whether they could introduce local logistics companies who are good at distributing anime goods in the Indian market. All we found out after the one-hour meeting with them was, however, that they knew very little about such a sector and could not help Ikeyama’s business substantially, although they were willing to support us. The Indian logistics company which we eventually found by ourselves, and the network we used in finding them, had no connection with JETRO’s New Delhi Centre. Similarly, virtually no representatives of the other Indo-Japanese anime business projects

told me during my fieldwork that they had used, or were helped by, JETRO when developing their business in India.

We have seen in the previous chapters how Japan's Cool Japan policy is situated on the trajectory of the traditional industrial policy by METI, and how it has nonetheless been rejected by the Japanese anime sector, which insists that such a governmental intervention is nothing but a negative institutionalisation of anime's creativity (cf. Chapter 3). This also seems to support the view that Japan's traditional method of promoting the export of its industries (i.e. its industrial policy, in this case) does not function effectively when it comes to exporting creative industries.

From the perspective of the Japanese anime sector, the fact that the sector did not participate in the Modi meeting seems to reinforce the view that the sector is 'involuting' and is unable to reach out to its outer world in developing and leveraging business. The absence of the anime sector at the meeting seems to show that the sector has been unable to make connections with the country's big companies (most of which belong to manufacturing sector) that dominate Japan's national-level political economy.

This inability also seems to be substantially relevant to the dichotomy of art versus commerce. One of the objectives of the Cool Japan policy seems to facilitate the anime sector (i.e. the arts side) in establishing a strategic business cooperation with the country's national brands (i.e. the commerce side) so that both can have synergy in cultivating the overseas market, including the Indian market (METI 2012b). It is assumed that, by doing so, Japanese

national brands will be able to use anime's global popularity, and the anime sector will be able to use the big companies' capital and global distribution power/platform. That is why the *Suraj the Rising Star* anime project was regarded as a 'model case' of Cool Japan, and why one of the Cool Japan Fund's major investment criteria is whether the proposed project has '(c)ollaboration among various businesses and industries.'<sup>62</sup> The Cool Japan policy seems to try hard to connect people in the anime sector with people in Japanese big companies. METI and its affiliated organisations have been hosting numerous 'business matching' meetings by inviting the anime sector and national brands.<sup>63</sup> When I was doing fieldwork in Japan, I once attended a seminar on Cool Japan. The main speaker was a business consultant known for collaborating intensively with the government's Cool Japan policy. In the seminar, he emphasised that enhancing the collaboration between the creative sector (including anime sector) and Japan's national brands was one of the most important tasks for the Cool Japan policy: 'Toyota Motor Corporation is obviously the biggest motor company in the world, but they are by no means the company that make the world's coolest cars,' he said, 'It is this gap that Cool Japan policy should resolve.'

However, the reality seems to be that such collaborations cannot be easily achieved due to the discrepancy between art and commerce. This discrepancy between the ways of carrying out creative business in the Japanese anime sector and the ways of doing business

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<sup>62</sup> <https://www.cj-fund.co.jp/en/investment/flow.html> (accessed 15 November 2015).

<sup>63</sup> See METI's website on the Cool Japan policy, [http://www.meti.go.jp/policy/mono\\_info\\_service/mono/creative/](http://www.meti.go.jp/policy/mono_info_service/mono/creative/) (accessed 9 February 2017).

in, for example, the manufacturing sector is so big that it is difficult to reconcile it. For example, the Cool Japan Fund seems to have difficulty in placing anime business sufficiently in their business portfolio. When I interviewed Cool Japan Fund officials during my fieldwork, they suggested that their relationship with the anime sector was still under construction, although anime was declared to be one of the main industrial areas for their investment. They suggested that although they were trying hard to advertise the fund to people in the anime sector to persuade them that the Cool Japan Fund might be another option for their business, it was hard for people in the anime sector to ‘make sense’ of such overtly financial options *vis-à-vis* their daily creative work. They also told me that they make it a rule to communicate with the anime sector in person, and not to make excessive use of the ‘language’ of finance (interview by the author, March 2015). This overlaps with Ikeyama’s attitude as seen in Chapter 4 regarding the need to appreciate the creative logic of the Japanese anime sector when proposing an overseas anime business project.

The difficulty of ‘pulling out’ the Japanese anime sector from its ‘closed’ world because of the dichotomy of art versus commerce affects not only by the Japanese government or Ikeyama, but also other anime business projects. A CEO of one anime producing company suggested when I interviewed him that there is a ‘filter’ between the ‘enthusiasm’ for anime’s creativity and ‘selling’ anime. According to him, a very small number of people are good at intermediating the two: a certain kind of ‘translation’ function is therefore necessary for the Japanese anime sector to do business with outsiders, including

overseas business partners (interview by the author, July 2014). Similarly, an independent marketing consultant (who was trying to bridge the anime sector and big companies in Japan by proposing to such big companies to use anime IPs and characters in their marketing promotion projects) admitted, when I interviewed him during my fieldwork, that the communication cost between the two sides often become very high in carrying out such co-projects. According to him, the two sides often give priority to different aspects when co-arranging such promotion campaigns. On one hand, big companies mainly care about figures and statistics – e.g. the quantitative progress in publicity and sales of their products/services by using the characters of their partner anime companies. On the other hand, the anime sector’s main concern is on ‘something other than figures and statistics’ – e.g. whether they could establish a personal trust relationship with their counterparts (the big companies), and whether such counterparts would or could handle their anime works and characters ‘carefully’ and ‘with respect’ in their promotion campaigns. The consultant also told me that to speak about anime characters in terms of figures and statistics in front of the anime companies which had created them might cause offence, because such a way of describing the character might imply that their characters ‘did not sell well’, or had no value. It is this marketing consultant’s responsibility to fill this gap by intermediating the communication between both sides when carrying out the co-projects. He told me that in doing so he always paid special attention not to offend the anime side when conveying the messages and demands from big companies by changing the mode of communication; for example, he would try not to sound

too business-like and bureaucratic (interview by the author, March 2015). This also seems to resonate with Ikeyama's attitude in Chapter 4 to appreciate the logic and practices of the Japanese anime sector's creativity. I once heard a story from my colleague in A-company during my fieldwork about the revulsion of a manga editor when he heard that some external investors were trying to become a sponsor of individual manga artists and make money out of their works' global popularity. According to that colleague, the editor insisted that the key for success in manga/anime business projects was creating attractive manga episodes. The trick was that the episodes would never become attractive by simply paying a large amount of money to manga artists: creating attractive manga stories is not a business-like activity, but a heavily interpersonal cooperative work between manga artists and editors. The editor insisted that a manga editor should therefore not ignore a phone call from a manga artist at 3am saying that they had run out of ideas and thus could not draw anymore and would therefore like to resign from the series. If that happened, an editor should immediately go to the artist's office and persuade them to keep on drawing employing all available means.<sup>64</sup> The colleague told me that the editor wondered whether external investors would be able to 'take care of' manga artists in that way.

The dichotomy of art versus commerce also seems prevalent in the anime projects carried out in the Indian market. On one hand, the assumption among the anime creators

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<sup>64</sup> During my fieldwork, I frequently heard about many unbelievable orders which manga artists gave to their editors to allow the artist to feel comfortable drawing their manga work. The most eccentric case (although I doubt its truth) was said to be that one female manga artist once ordered her editor to bring her a slice of a cake that could only be purchased at a shop in a very remote place in Japan. To accommodate her request, the editor had to hire a helicopter to deliver that cake to her office.

regarding the anime projects in India seems to be that they should not debase the creative quality of animation in such projects, no matter how much cost such debasement would save and no matter how much money they would make in the Indian market. On the other hand, however, one producer who was in charge of an anime business project in India told me when I interviewed him that it is such excessive requirements of creative quality that makes all anime projects in the rising foreign markets fail. According to him, such an excessive pursuit of the creative qualities of the animations in the anime business projects in the Indian market is similar to the self-righteous pursuit of the technical qualities of household electrical goods carried out by Japanese consumer electronics companies in India. Just as the Japanese electronics companies struggle in India because of such a quality-centric mindset that ignores the actual needs of Indian consumers, the Japanese anime sector would surely struggle in India if it is to stick to their art-for-art's-sake mindset. 'When the Indian consumers do not want high-quality refrigerators, then trying hard to make the technically sophisticated refrigerators is nothing but over-engineering that should be regarded as consuming unnecessary cost,' the producer said, while poking at his boiled fish (it was a lunch interview):

Similarly, if *Indian* kids are used to flash animation TV shows, why do we have to provide them with hand-drawn animation masterpieces that satisfy *Japanese* anime fans? People who criticise my anime project as being low in quality do not understand this point. My anime project is for Indian kids, not for Japanese anime *otaku*. They do not have the cost-effectiveness perspective. As you know, making a high-quality animation costs a huge amount of money. I think that even if we improved the quality of animation by switching from flash animation to hand-written animation and involving a number of animators, the revenue from the

project would not increase proportionately to the money spent on such quality improvement. (interview by the author, May 2014)

Similarly, a producer of *Suraj the Rising Star*, Yoshiaki Koga, showed in his retrospective book on the launch of the project (Koga 2013) how carefully he managed the relationship between his project team and the original authors of the manga on which they based the anime. According to Koga, it is of crucial importance when and how they acquire the permission from the original authors when starting and developing this kind of overseas anime project. The point is that you should not approach them too late or too early. Koga recalls that he thought he should approach the authors after they launched the project and after its ‘feasibility’ was demonstrated, because it would be a ‘discourtesy’ towards them if they got permission from the authors too early and the project was held up (110). He also emphasised that he physically visited their offices and homes to meet them in person when asking their permission to develop *Suraj the Rising Star*. The behaviour of Koga in terms of the dichotomy of art versus commerce substantially overlaps with that of Ikeyama *vis-à-vis* the Japanese anime sector, as observed in Chapter 4.

In this way, we can say that the above ethnographic vignette of the Modi meeting and the ethnographic data of the other anime business projects (in/with India) suggest that what we have seen in Ikeyama’s business is a general feature of the overseas anime business, especially in the Indian market. In all cases the dichotomy of art versus commerce was observed to be one of the major discrepancies jeopardising attempts to bridge the Japanese

and Indian anime businesses, although the way in which such a discrepancy is manifested differs in terms of layers and modalities. In addition, how Ikeyama tried to resolve the discrepancies in his business substantially resonates with the experiences of the Cool Japan Fund officials, the producer of *Suraj the Rising Star* and the independent marketing consultant. It could be said that Ikeyama's DTA business, ethnographically observed in the previous chapters, is not idiosyncratic, but rather a 'synecdoche' (Clifford 1988) for Japanese anime business projects in India, and even Indo-Japanese business relationship as a whole.

As for the discrepancies in the 'Japanese' versus 'Indian' way of doing business, the sarcasm shown by the India DIPP Secretary towards the Japanese side in the Modi meeting seems to be within the contextualisation of the Indo-Japanese business relationship as depicted in the previous chapters. The secretary firstly assumed the dichotomy that there were two ways of doing business, the 'Japanese' way and the 'Indian' way. He then contrasted the two ways by claiming the 'Japanese' way of doing business excessively admires 'perfectionism' and 'discipline', whereas the 'Indian' way does not. This seems to resonate with the attention paid to *jugaad* by Japanese businesspeople as the central characteristic of the 'Indian' way of doing business (cf. Chapter 2). The secretary also contextualised the Indian market as a field filled with 'risk' that required a proactive risk-taking mindset if the Japanese businesspeople wished to succeed there. This also resonates with the logic of the 'Let's do business in India' books published in Japan, which depict the Indian market as a 'frontier' that every entrepreneurial Japanese businessperson should

challenge to regain the glory of Japanese corporations (cf. Chapter 2).

The attitude of the DIPP secretary also substantially overlaps with those of Ikeyama and Menon, as observed in Chapter 5. The secretary assumes that the discrepancies in the 'Japanese' and 'Indian' ways of doing business are hard to resolve, i.e. something that should be resolved through enormous effort if the Indo-Japanese business project is to succeed. This assumption resonates with Ikeyama's when negotiating with Menon, postulating the 'differences' between the 'Japanese' and 'Indian' ways of doing business and setting one of the goals of his DTA business as resolving such differences. The secretary also explicitly denied the effectiveness of the 'Japanese' way of doing business in the Indian market, and insisted that Japanese businesspeople should abandon their 'Japanese' way of doing business to succeed in the Indian market. This also resonates with the behaviour of Menon towards Ikeyama, explicitly questioning the 'Japanese' way of doing business insisted on by Ikeyama, and insisting that he should understand and appreciate the 'Indian way' if Ikeyama wished to do business in India (cf. Chapter 5).

Many other anime projects in/with India also comply with the mechanics of dichotomising the 'Japanese' and 'Indian' way of doing business. Especially, the term 'greedy' plays a key role in contextualising (and emphasising) the differences between the 'Japanese' and 'Indian' way of doing business, just as it did in the case of Ikeyama, as seen in the previous chapters. In short, the Japanese side of such projects assumes that India is greedy, while Japan is not. In addition, they often aspire to have good local partners to take

care of such 'Indian' greediness for them. This also resonates with Ikeyama's experience of coping with the Japanese anime sector. For example, a producer of an overseas anime business project that tried to expand its operation in the Indian market once told me that he found his Indian business counterparts overwhelming to cope with directly. 'If you are to do anime business in India, it is very important to find a trustworthy business partner in the country and leave the negotiation with the Indian players to that partner,' he said, 'Otherwise, you will just become another sitting duck for the Indian merchants' (interview by the author, March 2015). Another producer even showed envy towards Ikeyama's DTA business, which had a proactive on-site business partner in India (Okabayashi). Their assumption seems to be that having such a local partner made a big difference in communications between Japan and India.

I once had a chance to sit in on a meeting between a producer who is regarded in Japan as a 'master' of anime business projects in India (due to his anime project's success in the Indian market) and his colleague, who was seeking advice in starting a business project in India. After listening to the outline of the colleague's business plan, the producer almost completely rejected it, as it did not understand how 'difficult' the Indian market was. He first emphasised that almost all Japanese companies attracted to the Indian market actually failed to make money there. 'When Indian businesspeople ally with Japanese businessmen, they always try to take as much money as possible from the Japan side,' he said, 'and it is very easy for them to do that, like taking candy from a baby. In fact, many Japanese companies

come to India and end up having their money snatched by their Indian business partners.’ He then insisted that such failures are due to the tendency of Japanese companies to try to carry out their Indian business in a ‘Japanese’ way, and suggested that his colleague’s business plan was making the same mistake. ‘When it comes to business in India, it is meaningless to make a business plan that is nothing but an extension of a Japanese business,’ he said. He also suggested that if you want to succeed in India, you should behave as ‘greedily’ (*hanaiki araku*) as Indian businessmen (observation by the author, August 2014). Here we could observe their assumptions and attitudes towards the Indian businesspeople, which substantially overlapped with those of Ikeyama (and the ‘Let’s do business in India’ books): the assumption that India is entitled to rip money off from Japan, and that one should try to be a ‘greedy’ Indian businessperson when negotiating with the Indian side.

Similar comments could also be collected from the previously mentioned retrospective book on *Suraj the Rising Star* (Koga 2013). For example, Koga describes the Indian businessperson as ‘sturdy,’ (*shitataka*) ‘tricky’ (*hitosujinawa dewa ikanai*) and ‘demanding (*shibia*) in the negotiation on terms and conditions’ so that the Japanese side would find it difficult to get along with them (82). In addition, Koga’s Japanese colleagues on the project also commented when asked for their impressions on their Indian business counterparts after working together on *Suraj the Rising Star*:

It was extremely tough to manage the negotiations with them. They have a very big attitude. They speak like machine guns, and three or four of them speak simultaneously. [...] They understand that Japanese people do not assert their rights strongly, and thus that they could make the Japanese people accept their

demands if they push them strongly.

But look now. We are also strong negotiators. We found that they sometimes give way if we retort strongly – strongly enough that make ourselves worry whether they might get angry. (173)

These assumptions and attitudes seem to resonate with those of Ikeyama, as observed in Chapter 5.

In this way, like the dichotomy of art versus commerce, we can also say that what we have seen in Ikeyama's business is a 'synecdoche' of the overseas anime business in general, and especially in the Indian market. The dichotomy of the 'Japanese' versus 'Indian' way of doing business was observed to be another major discrepancy in carrying out Indo-Japanese business in all the above cases, including the Modi meeting and other anime business projects in India. How Ikeyama tried to resolve the discrepancies in the 'Japanese' versus 'Indian' way of doing business also substantially resonates with the experiences of the DIPP secretary and the producers of other anime business projects in the Indian market.

The Janus-like dual-agency quality of the broker in resolving the two discrepancies while carrying out unconventional anime business projects could also be briefly observed in the above independent marketing consultant, who was trying to form a bridge between the anime sector and big companies in Japan. In the interview, he told me that he is not an anime fan: he indicated that you might make a mistake in assessing the business potential of a certain anime character if you have a specific preference for that character as a fan. On the other hand, however, he also told me that he makes it a rule to deal only with anime works that made him 'cry' (interview by the author, March 2015).

The dual-agency quality of a ‘brokered’ player inside the Japanese anime sector (in our case Dobashi) can also be observed if we examine the hostile attitude of the manga editor towards the external investors, in combination with sociologist Sharon Kinsella’s ethnographic account of the manga editor in Japan’s major comic publisher (Kinsella 2000). Observing ethnographically how manga is made through the joint work of manga artists and manga editors, she depicts how manga editors – as the employees of a manga publisher, i.e. a big company – represent the management and bureaucracy of manga, trying to tame the creativity of the manga artists to fit into their company’s commercial aims for the manga business. In other words, in terms of our dichotomy of art versus commerce, Kinsella fixes the position of manga editor on the commercial side. The attitude of the manga editor depicted above, however, stands in sharp contrast with the one depicted by Kinsella. Instead of commercialising the manga artists, he rather firmly stands on the art side *vis-à-vis* the external investors by romanticising the interpersonal cooperative work between manga artists and editors, who create attractive manga works that cannot be purchased by money. This shows the dual agency of the manga editor in terms of the dichotomy of art versus commerce that widely overlaps with what we have seen of Dobashi in Chapter 4: the editor simultaneously becomes a critic and spokesperson of the logic and practices of creativity of the Japanese anime sector.

## Chapter 7: Conclusion

This chapter provides the answers to the original research questions posed in the introduction chapter. It also discusses the further implications and limitations of the thesis' debate.

### *Answers to the research questions*

In the introductory chapter, I exhibited the following set of questions that were developed from the counterintuitive gap between anime's global popularity and its precarious business performance in the overseas markets. What is happening in the overseas anime business? Why is the Japanese anime sector's business performance in the overseas market so precarious, although it has long been celebrated as globally popular? Why does the Japanese anime sector seem unable and unwilling to cultivate the overseas market? How can we understand the sociocultural context of the globalisation of the anime businesses? The answer to all these questions, at a very general level and suggested by the ethnography exhibited in this thesis (Chapters 3-6), is that the Japanese anime sector (and its relevant players) does not (yet) know how to globalise their anime businesses. The ethnography of this thesis revealed that the significant feature of the sociocultural context in globalising the anime business lies in the discrepancies between art versus commerce and the business customs between the 'Japanese' versus 'Indian' ways of doing business. It also depicted how the relevant players do not yet know how to resolve these two key dichotomies effectively

and systematically. I would argue that the dual-agent ambiguity of Ikeyama in terms of the two dichotomies when developing his anime business in/with India critically resonates with the precariousness of anime's overseas business performance. In short, the thesis suggests that the overseas cultivation of the Japanese anime sector is still in transition.

Analytically speaking, the ethnography of this thesis has provided anthropological insights into the following three areas of the literature: the creative industries (including anime studies), the Indo-Japanese relationship, and entrepreneurship/brokerage. Such insights are relevant to the following set of questions posed in the introduction chapter. How can art and commerce be intermediated in the context of a transnational creative business project? How can we understand the contemporary Indo-Japanese relationship? How can we understand an entrepreneur as a broker, especially in the transnational context? What kind of role does a broker play in resolving the discrepancies between art versus commerce and between business customs? How can we highlight the shortcomings of previous anthropological studies on anime? How can we understand the shifting nature of contemporary Japan's presence in a global context?

The ethnography of this thesis has suggested that anthropological studies on the creative industries (including anime) need to pay more attention to the industries' business players rather than to their creators and fans. By placing analytical weight on the perspective of a money-oriented businessperson/entrepreneur (Ikeyama) in anime's globalisation process, the thesis has sought to remind anthropologists who tend to (over)advocate the

creative industries' creators (and their 'art for art's sake' mindset) that the creative industries consist of art *and* commerce, and that they are therefore overlooking an important half of the story. This thesis has also highlighted that some 'neo-vitalist' anthropological works celebrating the creators'/fans' 'camaraderie' in the creative industries might be too strategic, political, and even essentialist to be seen as an effective contribution to the anthropological debate. The ethnography of this thesis has not only sought to counter-balance such a bias in the relevant literature, but has also demonstrated how this current analytical impasse in the anthropology of creative industries could be outgrown to open up wider arenas for the further understanding of creative industries by focusing less on the 'soul' of the creators/fans and more on the interactions between creators and businesspeople in creative projects.

As for the intermediation of art and commerce and the Indo-Japanese relationship, this thesis has revealed that the brokers (and their dual agency) are the critical point of reference in approaching them. Although the role of brokers and their brokerage activities is a well-known issue in the realm of anthropology (and sociology) in general, such a perspective has relatively rarely been applied in engaging with the above two topics. The thesis has thus sought to incorporate the anthropological accumulation of knowledge on brokers and brokerage, thereby enriching the ethnography of brokers by showing their significance in previously unexamined fields related to the anthropology of brokers, such as the creative industries (especially in resolving the dichotomy of art versus commerce) and the Indo-Japanese relationship (especially in resolving the dichotomy of the 'Japanese' and

the 'Indian' ways of doing business).

How this works could be contextualised as follows. As has been shown in the previous chapters, resolving the dichotomy of art versus commerce is one of the most prominent topics in the realm of creative industries studies. The previous studies on this issue have argued that such interactions could be formalised in terms of, for example, economic formulae (Throsby 2001: 107-108) and contracts (Caves 2000, 2003). Similarly, anthropologist Tomohiro Morisawa (2015) showed through the ethnography of Japanese anime production studios how the dichotomy of art versus commerce is absorbed into the stressful 'emotional labour' (Hochschild 1983) of the entry-level production operators who carry out the process of anime creation on the shop floor. This thesis has contributed to this critical issue by highlighting the ambiguous dual agency of the brokers, who try to intermediate art and commerce as the critical point of reference when (ethnographically) examining the intersection of art and commerce in actual creative business projects. This thesis has suggested that it is of critical importance to cast the ethnographic focus on the liminality of brokers (rather than pursuing formulae, contracts, or emotions) that blurs and fluidises the boundary between art and commerce, as a result of which the reorientation of the dichotomy can be explored.

The thesis has also provided the ethnographic data to show how the discrepancies between the 'Japanese' and 'Indian' business customs, and the resolution of such discrepancies by brokers, is one of the significant focal points through which we can examine

the contemporary features of Japan's relationship with India specifically and Asia in general. The ethnography depicted in this thesis suggests that the liminality of the dual agency of a broker (i.e. Ikeyama) in resolving the two business customs – and his failure to do so with Menon – resonates with the precariousness of Japan's relationship building with India (and other Asian countries). The ethnography of this thesis suggests that Japan still does not know how to situate itself within the Asian region. Ikeyama's failure (and that of other relevant players, depicted in Chapter 6) to successfully communicate 'Japanese' business customs to his Indian counterparts suggests that the two countries may still fall into *surechigai* in many ways that have been repeated throughout the history of the Indo-Japanese relationship. This also suggests that Japan's historical 'aporia' to (re)build its relationship with Asia remains, and demonstrates how deeply rooted (and long term) the country's awkward position in the Asian region is (cf. Iwabuchi 2001).

This precarious *surechigai* could, I argue, be contextualised more broadly as a prominent feature of the inter-Asian Orientalism between Japan and India (and other Asian countries). In applying the concept of Orientalism to Japan in Said's (1979) sense (an orchestration of knowledge on others that is performed to confine those others within a certain set of stereotypes without providing them with any chance to represent themselves), a number of scholars have pointed out Japan's duality *vis-à-vis* Orientalism. While Japan has been an object of the Orientalism of the West, it also proactively utilised the Orientalist approach towards other Asian countries when it aspired to colonise them (cf. Nishihara

2005). Japan also proactively inverted the concept of Western Orientalism and self-Orientalised itself (as a country of *samurai*, for example) when coping with the Western countries (cf. Iwabuchi 1994). In this sense, although the ethnography of this thesis depicts how Ikeyama and Menon failed to ally with each other through careless stereotypical dichotomising of the ‘Japanese’ versus ‘Indian’ way of doing business without appreciating each other (for example portraying Indian businesspeople as ‘greedy’ and Japanese businesspeople as ‘polite’, and by arguing that Japanese businesspeople should follow the ‘Indian’ way if they wish to succeed in the Indian market), this thesis nonetheless does not intend to attack Ikeyama and Menon personally as cultural bigots. Quite the contrary: I have shown in this thesis how such a blunt dichotomy is prevalent not only in the ‘Let’s do business in India’ books available in Japan (see Chapter 2), but also in the discourse of many other players on the Indo-Japanese business scene (such as India’s DIPP secretary and players involved in other Indo-Japanese anime business projects, including *Suraj the Rising Star*: see Chapter 6). This strongly suggests that the (failed) negotiation between Ikeyama and Menon was influenced by, and part of, a much broader sociocultural context of inter-Asian Orientalism. Ikeyama’s patronising attitude and his centrism towards Menon (see Chapter 5) could thus be understood as resonating with a Japanese Orientalism towards Asia that is (still) prevalent in contemporary Japan. We could also understand Menon’s somewhat essentialist objection towards Ikeyama that he should follow the ‘Indian’ way of doing business as part of India’s self-Orientalisation *vis-à-vis* Japan.

While Orientalism, especially in terms of Japanese anime, has mainly been argued *vis-à-vis* the West (Mihara 2010b; Napier 2007; Ueno 1998), the ethnography of this thesis will, I contend, provide critical clues to develop our understanding of another side of Japan's Orientalism towards Asia. Put differently, this inter-Asian Orientalism seems to be one of the elements that cannot be ignored when approaching Japan's (anime) business expansion into Asian countries.

The ethnography of this thesis has also provided the critical preliminary clues for thinking about business customs anthropologically, especially how their conflicts could be resolved. This topic seems to have been approached more comprehensively and precisely by the management studies in the context of cross-cultural management (Hofstede 1991; see also Browaeys and Price 2011 for its review) than by anthropologists, who have only relatively recently fully recognised business as their disciplinary field (cf. Jordan 2010; Sunderland and Denny 2014). Some managerial studies on cross-cultural management have nonetheless come close to acknowledging the significance of the liminal dual agency of brokerage in resolving the multiple business customs (or cultural 'way of doing business') in global business, although they do not use the exact word or concept. Such studies include those that emphasise the importance for the person in charge to be 'mindful' (Ting-Toomey 1999) or to (intentionally) fuse different business customs with one's own (Meyer 2014) in the successful management of multinational business teams and projects. Pursuing how the ethnographic findings of this thesis converge and diverge with the relevant studies on cross-

cultural management would, I believe, contribute to the cross-fertilisation between business anthropology and management studies by introducing anthropological arguments on brokerage into the realm of cross-cultural management, as well as by adding to the anthropology of business through the ethnography of the conflicts and compromises of business customs.

In terms of entrepreneurship/brokerage studies, this thesis has sought to provide a convergent analytical vantage point to see an entrepreneur as a broker, and to regard a substantial part of the activities of a start-up venture carried forward by an entrepreneur as brokerage activities, by merging the anthropological literature on entrepreneurship and brokerage. The case of Ikeyama's business has provided sound ethnographic data in support of this perspective.

This finding is not completely exclusive to this thesis and its ethnography, but also resonates with more general lines of debate on entrepreneurship. In particular, the entrepreneur's ambiguousness in his/her dual agency when carrying forward his/her business (as depicted in the ethnography of this thesis) substantially overlaps with the development of entrepreneurship studies to focus on the 'effectual' aspects of entrepreneurship (e.g. Sarasvathy 2001) and to understand entrepreneurship as a nexus of individual and opportunity (e.g. Shane 2003). As for the former, management scholar Saras Sarasvathy (2001), for example, tries to understand the process of creating a new firm as a contingent chain of decisions that may end very differently from the goals set by an entrepreneur at the

start:

[...] in using effectuation processes to build her firm, the entrepreneur can build several different types of firms in completely disparate industries. This means that the original idea (or set of causes) does not *imply* any one single strategic universe for the firm (or effect). Instead, the process of effectuation allows the entrepreneur to create one or more several possible effects irrespective of the generalized end goal with which she started. The process not only enables the realization of several possible effects (although generally one or only a few are actually realized in the implementation) but it also allows a decision maker to change his or her goals and even to shape and *construct* them over time, making use of contingencies as they arise. (247, emphases in the original)

To develop this perspective by focusing on the effectual aspects of entrepreneurship, Sarasvathy further emphasises the importance of examining an entrepreneur's 'characteristics' and his/her 'ability to discover and use contingencies' (251):

[...] the effectuating entrepreneurs' vision appears to involve more than the identification and pursuit of an opportunity; it seems to include the very *creation* of the opportunity as part of the implementation of the entrepreneurial process.

Sufficiency is provided by active implementations of imagined solutions that seize and build on several types of contingencies that ultimately carve out the structure and shape of the market. (249, emphasis in the original)

As for the latter, i.e. 'nexus of individual and opportunity' debate, management scholar Scott Shane (2003), for example, argues that entrepreneurship could be examined against the framework of an 'individual-opportunity nexus', or the dynamic interaction between opportunities and an individual trying to exploit them. He emphasises the importance of examining the characteristics of opportunities and individuals.

Examining to what extent the ambiguous dual agency of an entrepreneur as a broker in blurring or reorienting dichotomic forces overlaps with the above claims to focus on

entrepreneurs' effectual behaviour in making use of contingencies might be a productive subject for further research to enhance our understandings of entrepreneurship. This thesis has provided the critical preliminary bridge to link anthropological literature on entrepreneurship and brokerage with managerial studies on entrepreneurship.

This thesis has also contributed an ethnographic nuance to the debates on the structural aspects of entrepreneurship and innovation (e.g. social network analysis of entrepreneurship and innovation). Structurally speaking, Ikeyama's actions could be contextualised as an attempt to bridge the 'structural hole' (Burt 1995, 2004) of two separate clusters of networks (the Japanese anime sector and the Indian market). According to sociologist Ronald Burt (1995, 2004), a person in a position to mediate multiple clusters of networks – i.e. a person who can fill structural holes within the clusters – could be at a comparative advantage, as such a person could gatekeep the information flow between the clusters. The structural hole has been understood as one of the prominent sources of innovation through which novel ideas diffuse, and the capacity of the intermediaries to bridge this structural hole has been understood as one of the important qualifications for an entrepreneur (for the review of the studies in this field, see for example Wakabayashi 2009).

The critical contribution of this thesis to such a body of literature is that it has both drawn ethnographic attention to the entrepreneur or broker (Ikeyama) and also to their primary contact players within each cluster (Dobashi and Menon). Previous social network analyses on entrepreneurship have paid relatively less attention to such insider recipients of

innovation, assuming that all members within the clusters have the same, homogenous mindset and that they are thus only innovated by novel ideas brought into the cluster from outside. The liminal positionality of Dobashi and Menon *vis-à-vis* the groups they belong to, as highlighted by the ethnography of this thesis, nonetheless provides a more nuanced picture about the entrepreneur's insider collaborators within the clusters that an entrepreneur tries to bridge. The ethnography of this thesis prompts us to recognise the entrepreneur's collaborators inside the clusters less as passive recipients of novel ideas provided by an entrepreneur and more as autonomous participants of a venture project proposed by an entrepreneur. It strongly suggests that the insider collaborators have their own liminal dual agencies, just as an entrepreneur or broker has, and that the process of an entrepreneurial business project should be examined through the complexity of the overlaps and interactions between such liminalities.

### ***Implications and limitations***

I suggested at the very beginning of this thesis that anime is one of the crucial lenses through which we can examine Japan's global presence. This thesis could be seen as a pioneering ethnographic account depicting in detail the business expansion of the Japanese creative industries into Asian countries in general and India specifically. What implications does this thesis have for Japan in a broader sense, especially in the context of globalisation? The central nature of this research was, as noted in previous chapters, an exploratory case study

whose ethnographic findings differ from and overlap with previously accumulated knowledge on the relevant issues. How can this thesis find relevance in such areas of debate?

Although it is virtually impossible to try to know everything about Japan from just one ethnography, one possible implication of this thesis is, I would argue, that it leads us to think anthropologically about how Japan can re-orient itself towards the fluctuating global economy. The thesis has provided some preliminary clues for thinking about addressing such a topic within the ethnographic settings.

Institutional restructuring (and how to implement it) has been one of the central issues for Japan's political economy, especially after being exposed to the 'burst' of its 'bubble' economy (cf. Porter et al. 2000; Schaede 2008; Vogel 2006) and to subsequent neo-liberalist globalisation (cf. Harvey 2005). Numerous social and politico-economic challenges have emerged, forcing Japan to re-orient itself for its survival. These include the need to reboot the growth of the country's industrial sector in ways other than through manufacturing (such as services, medical/health care, agriculture, fishery, and IT software: see also the 'two Japan' thesis by Porter et al. 2000), to mitigate the negative impact of ageing and a low fertility rate, to accept immigrants, to empower women, and to cope with post-disaster nuclear power.

The ethnography of this thesis has touched on two such critical issues on which contemporary Japan faces pressure to re-orient itself: the creative industries, and Asia. One of Japan's main tasks is how to re-configure its political economy from one that is 'hard'

(e.g. focused on manufacturing) to one that is ‘soft’ (e.g. increasingly promoting the creative industries). As mentioned elsewhere in this thesis, the creative industries are recognised as one of the most promising alternative source of growth for Japan following the collapse of the country’s manufacturing sector. This collapse seems to be worsening as Sharp and Toshiba, the major consumer electronics companies that once represented Japan’s economic growth, demonstrate. Sharp was acquired by a Taiwanese company<sup>65</sup> and Toshiba teeters on the edge of disappearance.<sup>66</sup> We have nonetheless seen in this thesis how unaccustomed Japan is to incorporating creators (and their ‘art for art’s sake’ mindset) into its mainstream political economy.

Another prominent task for Japan seem to be how to change its mindset regarding rising Asian countries. With the rise of Asian corporations (such as Korean electronics companies) and consumers (through a rising middle class, see also Ganguly-Scrase and Scrase 2009; Heiman et al. eds. 2012), Asia is no longer Japan’s low-wage workforce supplier or the recipient of international aid and technology transfers. Asian countries are now Japan’s strong competitors in the global market, prominent investors to Japan, and its premier customers. Japan now confronts the question of whether and how it can accept the emerging (and previously unimaginable) fact that it is losing business to Asia, that Japanese are becoming the employees of Asia, and that Japan does have to serve Asia’s needs. This is

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<sup>65</sup> For example, see <https://www.wsj.com/articles/taiwans-foxconn-completes-deal-to-acquire-sharp-1470994207> (accessed 7 May 2017).

<sup>66</sup> For example, see <http://money.cnn.com/2017/04/11/investing/toshiba-earnings-delisting-westinghouse-crisis/> (accessed 7 May 2017).

a particularly difficult task for a country like Japan, whose history of modernisation has been substantially motivated by aspirations of escaping from Asia to join Euro-America (cf. Chapter 2). The case study covered by this thesis could be seen as being generated from such a momentum for change. Ikeyama's start-up venture represented itself (implicitly and explicitly) as the solution provider for Japan in promoting the creative industries and cultivating Asian (Indian) markets.

In this regard, the ethnography of this thesis highlights the depths of Japan's institutional inertia, or the tendency of institutions to resist change in adapting to their environment (cf. Chen 2008). Firstly, it showed how time consuming it is for Japan to change its existing institutional arrangements. I have depicted above that Ikeyama's business shows that the Japanese anime sector does not yet know how to globalise into the Indian market. It is surprising to see how long such a 'transition' status in promoting the creative industries and cultivating the Asian markets has lasted. It is almost one and a half decades since anime was designated as one of the alternative potential sources of growth for Japan (cf. McGray 2002), and almost half a decade since the rising Asian market was designated as a potential source of income for the country (cf. METI 2012d).

Secondly, the thesis has shown that Japan might be putting new wine into old bottles by trying to deal with its re-orientation in traditional ways. This thesis has ethnographically shown not only how the Japanese anime sector persists in its traditional mode of operation (domestic market centrisms) in response to the pressure to globalise, but also how Japan

(especially its government) has been unsuccessful in encouraging the sector to do so (and thus in incorporating the sector to boost the country's GDP) by utilising the traditional institutional arrangements that once worked for the manufacturing sector (i.e. industrial policy, JETRO, and so on). It could even be presumed that the brokerage function provided by Ikeyama's business for the Japanese anime sector to cultivate the overseas market might run in parallel with the intermediary role once played by Japan's *sogo shosha* (general trading companies) in trying to cultivate the overseas markets during the country's high growth period (cf. Yoshino and Lifson 1986). Ikeyama's business model might be nothing new, but rather a traditional one, no matter how enthusiastically Ikeyama himself advertised his business as innovative.

Thirdly, this thesis suggested that Japan might be repeating the same 'mistake' in spoiling promising sectors that might reboot the country's growth. This thesis has shown how precarious the overseas businesses of the Japanese anime sector have been, despite the euphoric vision of anime as the next source for Japan's future growth. The thesis also paints a gloomy future for anime if it follows the success-and-crash trajectory once taken by Japan's manufacturing sector (cf. Black and Morrison 2012). Being caught up in the inertia of domestic market centrism, the Japanese anime sector might be involuting into a subordinate position to the Euro-American/Chinese global entertainment conglomerates before even managing to secure the revenue from the overseas market that matches its overseas

popularity.<sup>67</sup>

One possible direction for future research might thus be to examine how we can envision Japan's re-orientation (and the challenges in doing so) on the basis of this thesis's ethnography. What does this thesis add to the debate on Japan's (and other countries') conflict between institutional inertia and reform/innovation? Could the Japanese anime sector's 'enigma' of domestic market centrism be generalised as another case of Japan's institutional inertia? Is it possible to understand that Japanese economic society is 'involuting' to persist to its successful experience in the area of manufacturing so much that they refuse to envision (or, to fail in envisioning) other ways of economic lives that suit to the contemporary service/knowledge/information economies? If entrepreneurship is mostly about brokerage, and if the Japanese version of brokerage in the context of political economy gravitates heavily towards the *sogo shosha* model, how can we envisage entrepreneurship and innovation in Japan? Are there any other ways to drive the re-orientation of the country?

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<sup>67</sup> The involution of the Japanese anime sector (as we have seen in Chapter 3) seems to be becoming more and more intense. In 2016, after I returned from my fieldwork, the AJA (the Association of Japanese Animations) published the latest report on the market size of the Japanese anime industries and their breakdown (the revised version of Chart 1, adding the figures of 2014 and 2015: AJA 2016). One of the most prominent features of these figures was that the revenues from the overseas market in 2015 was the highest since 2002. As for the 'broad definition' anime sector, the revenues from overseas markets in 2015 was about 580 billion yen, surpassing the amount of about 520 billion yen in 2005 (when revenues were at their highest between 2002 and 2014). The percentage of the revenue from overseas markets in the total revenues in 2015 was about 31%, crossing the 30% mark for the first time in 8 years since 2007. As for the 'narrow definition' anime sector, the revenues from overseas markets in 2015 was about 35 billion yen, surpassing the amount of about 31 billion yen in 2005 (when revenues were at their highest between 2002 and 2014) (2). One may think that this dramatic increase in anime sales from overseas shows that the Japanese anime sector is substantially and proactively developing their business in the overseas market. However, the AJA itself explained that this (sudden) increase could be mostly attributed to the 'massive purchase' (*bakugai*) of anime by Chinese companies (3), most of which are Internet streaming companies (personal communication with the AJA committee members). Just as we saw in Chapter 3, it could be inferred from these figures that the Japanese anime sector is persisting with the Japanese domestic market and increasingly becoming a target for the foreign Internet platforms that are trying to develop their business transnationally. The concern showed by an executive of an anime company in Chapter 3 that the Japanese anime sector might become China's 'premium subcontractor' seems to be turning into reality.

Is Japan really repeating the same ‘mistake’ of bursting its bubble in its attempts to outgrow its stagnating economy?

Such questions are undoubtedly beyond the scope of this thesis and await further investigation. However, this thesis has, I believe, raised a significant point: to think about Japan’s future re-orientation is an anthropological task, and not a topic reserved only for economists or political scientists. The ethnography of this thesis has demonstrated that Japan’s reorientation towards fluctuation is actually the country’s confrontation with its unfamiliar others; in other words, it is an encounter with individuals of different mindsets, such as creators versus businessmen and ‘Japanese’ versus ‘Indian’ businesspeople. This could also be extended to other challenges, such as institutional old-guards versus innovators, manufacturers versus non-manufacturers, men versus women, youth versus elderly, and Japanese versus immigrants. I thus suggest that anthropology, a discipline for understanding others, could add more to the issue of re-orientation. This thesis has also demonstrated that such a re-orientation could start from the specific transactions of these ‘different’ individuals, just as we observed in the many business meetings and negotiations that took place in various locations in Japan and India during Ikeyama’s business project. I thus also suggest that such individual transactions are anthropologically critical ‘moment of mediation’ (cf. Mazzarella 2004) for Japan’s re-orientation, through which individuals make connections with one another in terms of their differences (cf. Clifford and Ota 2003: 510). It could be said that Japan’s re-orientation depends on how they can incorporate others.

It is nonetheless unclear whether the case study of this thesis is the successful case for such a re-orientation. Ikeyama's project partly succeeded (in his alliance with Dobashi), but partly failed (in his failure to ally with Menon), and is still on-going (in his partnership with Okabayashi in Delhi). It might be of use to shift the focus from Ikeyama to Okabayashi to examine his transactions with the local Indian business partners if we are to track this case study project further in this regard. The case study also prompts us to question what actually represents 'success' in such a mediation for re-orientation. What are the criteria of success or failure? Do such differences have to be intermediated by a broker? Can we make a 'model' of the brokerage of differences for practitioners? What happens to the liminal dual agency if such differences are to be mediated directly, without brokers? The case study has highlighted how such mediations were carried forward ethnographically. To focus the ethnography on such a process of mediation would, I believe, provide anthropological insights into Japan's (and other countries') re-orientation towards the future.

This thesis could also be seen as a pioneering, in-depth ethnography of the trans-Asian globalisation of the creative industries (the creative industries of one Asian country going into another Asian country). From this perspective, this thesis has exemplified the nuance of Asia in the context of the Japanese creative industries. There seems to be a strong bias towards East Asia (especially China and Korea), occasionally including South-Eastern Asia, when the industries envision Asia in their overseas projects. The thesis has shown how heavily Asian development of the anime business is still biased towards Eastern/South-

eastern Asian countries, and how much it remains underdeveloped in the rest of Asia, including India (which made Ikeyama's business project unfamiliar to the Japanese anime sector). It is suggested that this bias is not exclusive to anime, but also runs in parallel with other areas of Japanese popular culture (see Iwabuchi 2001), and even with Japanese political economy in general (as was suggested in Chapter 2). The ethnography of this thesis is a reminder for the Japanese Asian school, and for those who are interested in examining the presence of Japan in a trans-Asian context, of the multiplicity and broadness of Asia as a region. It is a reminder that they are still overlooking substantial parts of Asia.

In addition, although not depicted explicitly in the ethnography of this thesis, it envisions the Asian region (a given Asian country) as the space in which multiple forces of the creative industries intersect, including Euro-American conglomerates, local Asian entertainments and the creative industries coming from other Asian countries. Ikeyama's project in India encountered the dominant presence of Hollywood (Euro-American entertainment) and Bollywood (local Asian entertainment). These two 'woods' seem to provide the mainstream entertainment for Indians, making anime (entertainment from another Asian country) specialty entertainment for those seeking 'cutting edge' culture outside Hollywood/Bollywood, and are alienated from both cultural globalisation (Hollywood) and nationalism (Bollywood, see Ganti 2012). This includes, potentially, ethnic minorities in India (see, for example, the ethnographic film on the presence of anime in

Nagaland).<sup>68</sup> Such people seemed to be the central customers for Ikeyama's DTA business. This picture not only exemplifies the nuances of anime's presence in India, but also encourages scholars with relevant interests to break away from their dichotomic analysis polarising anime versus Hollywood (e.g. Koyama 2009) into more multiple comparative analyses, such as the triangulation of anime, Hollywood and Bollywood, or the comparison of anime with other Asian entertainment (Bollywood, the Korean wave, and so on). Such a perspective would also be a fruitful research direction to be taken on the basis of this thesis.

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<sup>68</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-outZal1n5Q> (accessed 7 May 2017).

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