



# Recentering Globalization: Popular Culture and Japanese Transnationalism

By Koichi Iwabuchi

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Globalization is usually thought of as the worldwide spread of Western—particularly American—popular culture. Yet if one nation stands out in the dissemination of pop culture in East and Southeast Asia, it is Japan. Pokémon, anime, pop music, television dramas such as *Tokyo Love Story* and *Long Vacation*—the export of Japanese media and culture is big business. In *Recentering Globalization*, Koichi Iwabuchi explores how Japanese popular culture circulates in Asia. He situates the rise of Japan's cultural power in light of decentering globalization processes and demonstrates how Japan's extensive cultural interactions with the other parts of Asia complicate its sense of being "in but above" or "similar but superior to" the region.

Iwabuchi has conducted extensive interviews with producers, promoters, and consumers of popular culture in Japan and East Asia. Drawing upon this research, he analyzes Japan's "localizing" strategy of repackaging Western pop culture for Asian consumption and the ways Japanese popular culture arouses regional cultural resonances. He considers how transnational cultural flows are experienced differently in various geographic areas by looking at bilateral cultural flows in East Asia. He shows how Japanese popular music and television dramas are promoted and understood in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore, and how "Asian" popular culture (especially Hong Kong's) is received in Japan.

Rich in empirical detail and theoretical insight, *Recentering Globalization* is a significant contribution to thinking about cultural globalization and transnationalism, particularly in the context of East Asian cultural studies.

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“Koichi Iwabuchi has given us a uniquely fascinating and empirically rich study of cultural globalization—Japanese style—as it evolved in the last two decades of the twentieth century. Eye-opening and insightful, this is an immensely readable book, adding considerably to the growing stock of non-Western voices and perspectives in transnational cultural studies.”—Ien Ang, author of *On Not Speaking Chinese: Living between Asia and the West*

“This book will be one of the most important in Japan studies to come out in a long time. The author’s analysis, which theorizes and critiques Japan’s position as a kind of intermediary between Western and Asian pop cultural formations, and the complex will to power that is being worked out under various consumerist guises, is smart and very much needed in the Japan field.”—Karen Kelsky, author of *Women on the Verge: Japanese Women, Western Dreams*

"A very rich and subtle study. I predict that Iwabuchi’s book will quickly become a central reference in debates over the global organization of popular culture"—Ulf Hannerz, author of *Transnational Connections: Culture, People, Places*

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