



# 85 years of *Suye Mura*

## The life history of a Japanese village—and its anthropology a virtual lecture by William W. Kelly

There have been to date over 250 ethnographic monographs published in the anthropology of Japan, and of those, the one with the most surprising and most enduring afterlife is the very first, John Embree's *Suye Mura* (1939), a study of a village in Kyushu based on his fieldwork in 1935-1936. For a book that is widely ignored by scholars and unread by students, it has been a potent force in local and prefectural politics in debates on land reform, administration amalgamation, local identity, and economic revitalization. In this presentation, I want to revisit the book, its author, and the village to trace something of its remarkable legacy over 85 years and its relevance to the issues that continue to vex contemporary regional Japan.

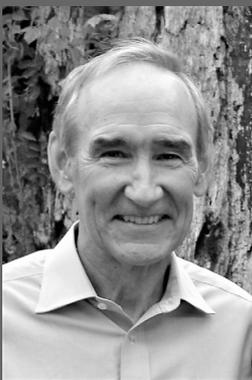


207 調査中のエンブリー夫妻 Mr. & Mrs. Embree doing field work  
熊本日日新聞社撮影 [the Kumamoto Nichinichi Shinbun 1935]

Thursday  
2020-10-29  
18:30~20:00  
online



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**William W. Kelly** is professor emeritus of anthropology and the Sumitomo Professor Emeritus of Japanese Studies at Yale University, where he has taught continuously since 1980. A principal research interest has been the historical dynamics of regional society in Japan, based on extended fieldwork in the Shōnai area of Yamagata Prefecture that began in the 1970s and continues at present. He has also explored sport and body culture and their significance in modern Japan. Among his recent publications is *The Sportsworld of the Hanshin Tigers: Professional Baseball in Modern Japan* (2018). He is presently writing a book on the history of Japan anthropology and its importance for Japan studies and for sociocultural anthropology.

