

Aruga Kizaemon :
The Household, the Ancestors, and
the Tutelary Deities

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INTRODUCTION

Approach. Aruga Kizaemon (1897-1979) contributed an interesting article to issue no. 8 of the quarterly *Yanagita Kunio kenkyū* [Yanagita Kunio studies] (1975). This issue is a special collection of essays on the theme "Questions a century after Yanagita Kunio's birth." Aruga's contribution bears the title "'A study of adopted husbands' and Yanagita Kunio." In this article Aruga calls attention to the fact that when "A study of adopted husbands" was first published, Yanagita had given it the subtitle "History vs. folklore." He expresses disappointment that when this study was included as a chapter in the monograph "Kon'in no hanashi" [Talks on marriage], Yanagita himself dropped this subtitle, and that the editors of the *Yanagita Kunio shū* [Collected works of Yanagita Kunio], following his lead, treated the subtitle lightly (see Yanagita 1969, esp. pp. 152-198).

Aruga considers Yanagita's deletion of this subtitle a setback in the battle to achieve recognition for folklore study as an alternative to history as the study of ancient documents. For Aruga, folklore study is indispensable as a source of working hypotheses for constructing a rational perspective in terms of which to understand and interpret history—a perspective, moreover, not to be expected from the study of ancient historical records. In "'A study of

Translated by Noah Brannen, with the kind permission of the author and of the editor, from "Aruga Kizaemon: Ie to senzo to ujigami" 有賀喜左衛門~家と先祖と氏神, *Kokusai shūkyō nyūzu* 国際宗教ニューズ 17/1-2: 10-20.

adopted husbands' and Yanagita Kunio" Aruga writes:

For this purpose [namely, the construction of a rational perspective as a working hypothesis] Yanagita, holding that an overall grasp of life on the basis of incidental references in ancient documents was impossible, attached greater importance to the systematic survey of life in present-day society – including the recent past. He did not, however, ignore the singularity of historical events; he focused attention, rather, on the folk culture traditions that support them. Non-recurrent historical events are always changing and being created anew, but what Yanagita thought even more important were the traditions that gave these developments their character and direction.

Yanagita's folklore study was an attempt to grasp these traditions, radically and systematically, through the lives of contemporary or near-contemporary people. He also referred to his studies as *minkan denshō no gaku* ("the study of oral folk traditions"). It was his conviction that these traditions must be sought out from the ways of life that underlie the existence of the Japanese people (1976, pp. 109-110).

It would appear that in this statement Aruga, in the form of a critical comment on Yanagita's folklore study, is really setting forth the starting point that supports his own academic work.

Cultural individuality. Concerning the tradition that provides this constant character and direction to non-recurrent historical events as they change and come into being, Aruga states: "Since the beginning of time, in various ways among peoples nearly everywhere in the world, there seems to have been some interchange with the dominant cultures (that is, as regards those aspects that lend themselves to cultural diffusion.) These cultural elements, in different natural, social, and historical settings, gave rise to cultural traditions

unique to each people.... As imported cultural features grew into an ethnic culture, a number of changes naturally occurred. This phenomenon, however, should be viewed not simply as a matter of change, but as the creation of a new culture on the foundation of a people's preexisting cultural traditions. It is doubtless true that by adopting, one after the other, cultural traits and values from other people, a given people's culture gradually changes. But through this change, a new and richer ethnic individuality is constantly being created" (1977, p. 5).

Thus Aruga emphasizes that tradition is not merely a matter of "habit" or "custom," but the basis for the creation of ethnic distinctiveness. He is saying, in other words, that despite the many forms of cultural interchange in the course of human history, the fact remains that each people possesses its own unique cultural individuality, and that without understanding the folk culture tradition, we cannot accurately understand this distinctiveness.

Method and intention. How, then, is a particular and individual folk culture tradition to be grasped? In this regard, Aruga holds the following methodological principle as essential: "It is through minute examination of the content and developmental processes of particular ethnic cultures that we can learn how, in the course of mutual interchange, the cultures of the world took shape" (1977, p. 6).

We must not make the mistake of taking Aruga's many studies of the distinctively Japanese folk tradition as nothing but so many ways of emphasizing the uniqueness or peculiarity of Japanese culture. We must understand his studies as constituting one case study of Japanese culture intended as a contribution to precise and accurate comparative study of the cultures of the world. Aruga's studies of Japanese religion belong to this same frame of reference.

IE AND ANCESTRAL CULT

A cardinal feature of Japanese religion. Aruga regards as meaningless any generalization concerning the nature of human cultures which does not take into consideration that which makes a people's culture distinctive. More bluntly, he regards such generalizations as clearly mistaken. Consequently, for Aruga the very first step to be taken is to acquire an understanding of the cultural uniqueness of each people.

The same principle holds for the study of religion. Thus, for him, the central theme of religious studies is to grasp the uniqueness of the religion of each ethnic group. In accordance with this principle Aruga, in his studies of Japanese religion, attaches great importance to the subject of the ancestral cult.

The term "ancestors" means, in brief, "guardian deities of the *ie*." In order to understand the distinctive nature of Japanese religion as it comes to view in the ancestral cult, it is necessary, therefore, to understand the meaning of *ie*.

The ie and its functions. Under one aspect, the *ie* has the characteristics of the Japanese family. It is not identical, however, with the family as defined by G. P. Murdock. The term *ie* refers to a culturally distinctive entity that the Japanese people have forged on the basis of their own cultural tradition and in the context of the political and economic conditions of their society as a whole. Aruga defines *ie* as: "a household group organized about a married couple and engaged in business or production" (1970, p. 65), "a productive unit that guarantees the life of a family" (1970, pp. 131-132), "a group with a married couple at its center that leads a collective life" (1969, p. 269), "a group that performs fundamental life functions" (1969, p. 269). He further characterizes it as a group that combines life functions in the dimensions of faith, economics, law, morality,

self-government, art, etc.; a group in which, "with the performance of these various functions, those inside who cooperate in carrying them out are termed 'family'—members constitutive of the *ie*" (1969, p. 270). It also happens that some of these functions come to be performed by outside groups and thus removed from the purview of the *ie*. The functions of the *ie* are subject to change, therefore, in accordance with political, economic, and social conditions in society as a whole. Nevertheless, in the last analysis the *ie* is a group with a married couple at its center that engages in production or business and consequently has the character of a unit that involves living together cooperatively and guarantees the existence of those who constitute it.

The reason that the *ie* came to have such a character is that "government measures concerning the people lacked the element of social policy. It was extremely difficult for the people to oppose political power, and since organized outbursts of opposition by the people were almost impossible, opposition took the form of internal discord. One consequence was that their *ie* had to become, in the highest degree, self-defense groups. The *ie* took on the burden of guaranteeing totally the life of its members" (Aruga 1965, p. 24). The nature of the *ie* was dictated, as it were, by the political destitution of society as a whole.

In order to counter unfavorable conditions and protect its members, the *ie* had to assume, and was expected to perform, many functions. On the one hand, it had to carry on its enterprise in reliance on its members, sometimes to the extent of imposing on individuals an unwelcome but unavoidable fate. On the other, it had to serve as a source of physical and spiritual sustenance, something on which they could mutually rely. Only as it performed both kinds of functions and responded to both kinds of expectations could it qualify as a *ie*. In this sense it had at once a rational and a functional character; it was at once a cooper-

ative enterprise and a mutual assistance group.

In many cases, however, it became impossible for a single *ie*, acting on its own, to carry out these life-supporting functions and provide adequately for its members' security. It became necessary, therefore, for *ie* of various kinds to form unions. The *ie* thus developed into a constituent unit in various kinds of *ie* unions such as the *dōzoku dan*.¹

Ie continuity principle. Herein lies the rationale for the Japanese feeling that the *ie* is something that ought to be maintained from generation to generation—something that *must* be maintained. This idea, namely, that the *ie* has to be kept intact and handed on from generation to generation, has given it a distinctive internal structure. The *ie* distinguishes between members of the direct line and those of a collateral line. This distinction appears in the form of status differences between superiors and subordinates. On this point Aruga writes:

What was the nature of the status relationship between the head of the house (a direct-line member) and a collateral-line member?

The relationship between a person of the direct line and one of the collateral line would ordinarily coincide with a blood or close kin relationship such as that between a parent and child, an older and younger brother, or an older and younger sister. But the distinction between direct and collateral lines had to do with a social relationship altogether different from blood and kin relationships. The

1. The *dōzoku dan* may be characterized as a body that is comprised both of consanguineal and non-consanguineal households organized in various degrees of mutual reliance around a central household, and that observes certain ritual practices oriented to obtaining the favor and protection of guardian kami and spirits. Found not only in rural but also in urban areas, it appears to have functioned as a model or prototype for many social institutions that continue to the present day.—Transl.

distinction was one between those with and those without direct responsibility for *ie* continuity. The criterion, in other words, was not one of blood or kinship relations, but of roles entailing responsibility for the continuation of this organization called the *ie*.

For direct-line members, this was their major responsibility. They were expected to contribute directly to the continuance of the *ie*. And its central figure, the *kachō* or head of the direct-line *ie*, supervised its enterprises and expenditures, demonstrated that he was the one with final responsibility through fulfilling the office of priest in services for the kami and for the ancestors, and exercised control over each individual member so as to preserve and continue the *ie*.

The situation of collateral members eventually required them to leave the *ie*. In matters of family enterprise, consumption, and religious ceremonies, they shared responsibilities assigned them by the head of the house; so whether they were kin or not, and even though their functions were not insignificant, since they had no managerial authority, their position in the *ie* was low, and their rights were few (1970, p. 42).

Aruga contends, then, that the direct/collateral line distinction took shape as a relationship between superiors and subordinates based on a division of responsibility for the continuation of the *ie*. As far as the *ie* was concerned, therefore, the heir (eldest son) and the non-heirs (second and third sons), even though born of the same parents, stood in a superior/subordinate relationship to one another—a relationship of *oya* or *oyabun* (“parent” or “parental status”) to *ko* or *kobun* (“child” or “child status”).

The same conditions applied to those incorporated into the household enterprise as servants (non-consanguineous). A servant shared duties in the house enterprise and in this sense was accepted as a member of the family. This meant, however, as a collateral-line member, one who stood in re-

lation to the head as a *kobun* to an *oyabun*. By the same token, he was permitted to establish a branch house similar in almost every respect to the branch houses that second and third sons eventually formed.

The branch houses (*bunke*) that thus came into existence—both those of second and third sons and those of servants—of themselves regarded the house that got them started as the main house (*honke*), in relation to which they stood in a subordinate position. United on the basis of this main/branch family tree relationship, they constituted one *dōzoku dan*, each house of the *dōzoku dan* being bound to the others in a relationship of mutual assistance.

Since, in the absence of the *ie* or *dōzoku dan*, there would have been no way of protecting individuals or sustaining life in the midst of unfavorable political and economic conditions, the *ie* worshiped ancestors as guardian deities and besought them to preserve the *ie* from generation to generation. In this way the ancestors of the main house came to be taken as the guardian deities of the entire *dōzoku dan*, so the branch houses too participated in the rites directed to them.

This has been a rough sketch of the circumstances that led to the worship of ancestors as guardian deities. But what meaning do “ancestors” have for the Japanese people?

DOUBLE ANCESTORS

Identical ancestors for direct and collateral houses. While pursuing the Japanese concept of the ancestor, Aruga made an important discovery: the existence of the concept of double ancestors. Of this concept he says: “The idea of ‘double ancestors’ points, on the one hand, to the founder of each particular *ie* together with the generations of those who followed him, and, on the other, to the ancestors of the main house (generation by generation) in a situation where there is a family tree relationship among main and

branch houses [all of which belong to a specific *dōzoku dan*]” (1969, p. 338).

With regard to the former meaning of ancestors as the founder of a given *ie* and his descendants, no explanation is necessary. The latter, however, needs some clarification. A typical example is this: “In a case like that of the Kōnoike and Saitō houses where there was a superior/subordinate relationship between main and branch houses organized around the family enterprise, there was a strong feeling on the part of the branch house that the ancestors of the main house were their ancestors too. This is because these ancestors were of the main house enterprise in which they themselves actually participated. In this case the branch house took part in the ancestral rites conducted by the main house. More important, through these rites and in the context of this solidarity, the branch house, finding its ties strengthened and its existence supported to a certain extent, felt all the more that the ancestors of the main house were their own, and they worshiped these ancestors as their own guardian deities” (1969, p. 339). Thus Aruga describes ancestral rites in a situation where there is a strong mutual aid relationship among houses joined on the basis of a main/branch house genealogical relation.

There are instances, however, in which the mutual aid relationship weakens as a branch house undertakes its own separate family enterprise and gains independence. What happens in this type of situation?

Even in a situation where the main house had no more power than the branch house, the branch house could not easily destroy the tradition linking it to its main house. As long as the surrounding society perpetuated the tradition that it sprang from such-and-such a main house, the branch house could not ignore that tradition even if it tried. If a main house enjoyed an influential position politically, socially, and economically, the branch house exploited the

authority of the main house more and more in its own actual life (1960, p. 343).

In terms of the main and branch house relation, since the main house was, for the branch house, the matrix from which it originated, it came about that one condition for improving the social position of the branch house was that it be related to a socially influential source [main house] (1969, p. 343).

In either situation, where there was a strong *dōzoku dan* system the branch house, in addition to its own founder and generations of his descendants, worshiped the ancestors of the main house as their own originating ancestors in double ancestral rites.

Actual and "borrowed" ancestors. From the foregoing explanation it might appear that only branch houses had double ancestors, but this was true of main houses as well. "The authority of a main house over its branch houses depended not merely on such political, economic, and social influence as it might from time to time exercise but, in addition, on its own origin" (1969, p. 343). Regarding the double ancestors of *ie* in the main house line, Aruga writes:

In certain areas—certain towns and villages—a *ie* in the main house line, though it doubtless had some house as its own source, ignored that connection and looked to some powerful family in the Heian period or earlier. Some *ie* have been known to buy a family line. Since such *ie* had developed *maki* or *nōren uchi*,² they enjoyed positions of influence in politics and society. It was thus easy for such *ie* to convince their surrounding communities of the origin of which they boasted, and they were able to spread this belief to support their branch houses. For this reason, in addition to their actual ancestors, such main houses had ancestors in their

2. Both *maki* and *nōren uchi* are local terms for *dōzoku dan*. —Transl.

“created” line. Consequently, these independent main houses (*betsu honke*) likewise had double ancestors.³

In such cases, as opposed to the cases described above [of branch houses with double ancestors], these independent main houses were not linked to their ancestors via ties to some existing main house. The fact remains, nonetheless, that this tradition as to an independent main house’s source, lending it authority, was influential in strengthening its *maki* and *noren uchi* (1969, p. 344).

A branch house’s rites for the ancestors of its house of origin finds its explanation in the collective relation deriving from the life support and solidarity provided by the union of main and branch houses in the *dōzoku dan*. As for the ancestors to whom the main house traces its origin, the explanation drawing on the concept of the main house’s sociopolitical status and authority may not be immediately self-evident, but as Aruga explains: “We must not ignore the fact that such groups [namely, the *tsungtsu* of China, the *jongjung* of Korea, and the *dōzoku* of Japan] were basic political units in the local societies of each country and exerted influence on the political structure of each country” (1970, p. 175). When we look at it this way, we can see how Aruga arrived at his idea of connecting politics with the ancestors a main house claims to derive from.

To state this more pointedly, Aruga considers that the *dōzoku dan* constitutes the basis of the political organization of Japan. The quotations from his work cited thus

3. The specialist’s term *betsu honke* refers to main houses (*honke*) that recognize no other main house as their point of origin and in this sense are separate (*betsu*) or independent. If a main house sets up a second or third son with a home, property, and a place in the family business, his is a branch house (*bunke*). But if the second or third son simply goes out and makes his own way, in the long run doing well enough to set up his own second or third son in a *bunke*, his house, since it owes its existence to no other, is a *betsu honke*. —Transl.

far make it clear that *ie* successful in gaining recognition from society as deriving from the powerful and prestigious ancestors they claimed were able, on this basis, to raise the rank of their *ie*. This rank indicated not only a house's social position but its political position as well. With regard to the meaning of a family line as traced to its source, Aruga draws the logical inference: "In the first case, the genealogy and the cooperative relationships of the house are bound up together; in the second case the genealogy, though not linked to the collective and cooperative relationships of the house, functions to strengthen and unify it" (1969, p. 345).

Imperial family ancestors. This idea of ancestors claimed as a house's source can also be found in the imperial family. Aruga considers that the intention of those who edited the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* was to establish the tradition that the ancestors of the imperial household could be traced genealogically not only through the generations of emperors back to Jinmu, whom they regarded as the founder, but also through the various kami of the so-called "age of the gods" prior to Jinmu, and thus to strengthen the authority of the imperial house.

Here we can see that Aruga's religious studies are not limited to the problem of ancestor worship among the Japanese people, but are undertaken from a much wider perspective that includes the emperor system.

TUTELARY DEITIES AND ANCESTORS

Essential identity. The idea that, in the end, ancestors and tutelary deities are one and the same appears in Yanagita's "Senzo no hanashi" [Talks about ancestors] (1962, pp.1-152). Aruga evaluates this thesis of Yanagita highly but, while supporting it, considers that there are some places where Yanagita's idea is not clear. Aruga notes that "Yana-

gita, in the section on 'The origin of New Year observances within the *maki*,' observes that 'by participating in the annual rites of the main house, the branch house renews its recognition of their common ancestors.' This means that the idea of ancestors goes beyond his earlier point that it referred to the founder of a particular *ie* along with subsequent generations of descendants in this line; it now includes not only the founder and descendants of each particular *ie* but also the ancestors of the *maki* to which the *ie* belong. There are, then, two kinds of ancestors" (1969, p. 337). Thus, though Yanagita sensed that there were two kinds of ancestors (double ancestors), he did not pursue the point. For this reason it was not possible, in Yanagita's thought, to clarify the relationship between ancestors and tutelary deities. Not to mince words, Aruga criticized Yanagita for not being able to clarify the relationship between the tutelary deities and the ancestors of particular *ie*. Aruga clearly demonstrates this relationship between a house's ancestors and its tutelary deities—that is, between the ancestors from whom it derives (the generations of ancestors worshiped as its guardian deities) and its tutelary deities—by referring to the double ancestor concept he discovered.

Concerning this matter, Aruga, in an article originally published in 1956 introducing the family systems of Japan, China, and Korea, writes:

We must not overlook the fact that rites for the *ie* or family kami (at the kami altar) were even more basic than the co-existent rites for the ancestors. To put in simple terms the relationship between these two, the kami of the family or *ie* (the gods enshrined in the kami altar) are to be seen, more than the ancestors, as the proper and legitimate guardian deities (1970, p. 178).

Later, however, Aruga revised this idea. In connection with

the meaning of the word *hotoke*,⁴ he says:

The *hotoke* greeted at the Bon festival were the spirits of people included in the *ie* genealogy from the beginning and through subsequent generations. Most were related by blood to living family members, but sometimes people not related by blood were included. They were believed to exist as guardians of the *ie* after they became *hotoke* because they had been protectors of the *ie* during their lifetimes. At the time of Bon [a mid-summer festival] and on ordinary occasions at the buddha altar or grave, it was the general custom for living family members to worship them as guardians of the *ie*. Not only was this worship evidence that they could not extinguish their deep personal affection for the dead, but, beyond this personal dimension, it was always an expression of the established idea that these ancestors of former days were the *hotoke* of the *ie*—the guardians of the *ie*. The meaning of the word *hotoke* must be understood as based on this prior relationship. Thus even though the word *hotoke* derives from the word “buddha,” when used in the sense of “guardian deities of the *ie*,” it is different in meaning from the buddhas (“enlightened ones”) of Mahayana Buddhism. This concept of ancestors existed before Buddhism entered Japan, but the name *hotoke* came to be applied to ancestors for whom Buddhist services for the dead had been held (1969, p. 350).

The idea that Aruga here expresses, then, is that the ancestors of a given *ie* are first and foremost its guardian deities. The arrival of Buddhism only meant that many of these ancestors came to be worshiped as *hotoke*.

Two altars. *Hotoke* are enshrined in the buddha altar. Most Japanese *ie*, however, have both a buddha altar and a kami altar. Aruga attaches considerable importance to this fact,

4. *Hotoke*, the Japanese term for “buddha,” is used in certain contexts to refer to the spirits of the dead. —Transl.

as is evident when he writes: "The coexistence of the buddha altar (*butsudan*) and the kami altar (*kamidana*) in the same home is unique to Japan. This shows that the Japanese view of the house or *ie* genealogy has a different character than that of China or Korea" (1969, p. 178).

But if the ancestors of the *ie* are enshrined in the buddha altar, who or what is enshrined in the kami altar? Concerning this matter, Aruga writes:

A variety of gods were enshrined in the kami altar. The nature and origin of some of them was uncertain; this was the case, for example, with the New Year god and the god of the rice fields. But the principal god was that of some shrine, and the name of the shrine was usually known.

Most of these gods were tutelary deities of powerful clans, deities which, as a result of alterations in main and branch shrine relationships over several eras of political change, had found a place among the kami that had become village tutelary deities. But in addition to the process whereby these kami of venerable origin were ritually invoked and enshrined as the guardian deities of numerous villages in connection with the changes history brought about in political structure, the independent main houses in various districts were able to claim them as their own ancestors—and in the houses of commoners innumerable gods came to be enshrined in the kami altars.

But even though a particular main house could adopt a particular kami as the ancestor from whom it claimed to derive, it could not monopolize this kami, for another main house could do the same. By nature, then, it was impossible for such an ancestor to belong exclusively to any one house (1969, p. 376).

The kami enshrined in the kami altars were basically, then, according to Aruga, the tutelary deities of ancient and powerful clans, deities adopted as genealogical starting points by influential *ie* and independent main houses because of their illustrious connections. Needless to say.

commoners likewise enshrined these noble gods in the kami altars of their *ie*, but not as the ancestors to whom they traced the origin of their house. On this point Aruga writes: "Perhaps commoners could have adopted these important kami as their own ancestors, but, since they lacked the wherewithal to convince others, under normal circumstances they refrained from doing so. There is, however, only a hair's breadth of difference between the common people who, though not calling such gods their ancestors, enshrined them in the kami altars of their *ie*, and the mentality of people of high-ranking *ie* who held up noble gods as the ancestral source of their house. I suspect that both probably reflect a common psychology, namely, an intense desire for the safety and perpetuity of their own *ie* in the midst of the severe conditions of life" (1969, p. 378).

In sum, then, what is enshrined in the kami altar that coexists with the buddha altar inside the *ie* is either the kami taken as the ancestor to whom the *ie* traces its origin, or some ritually invited prestigious kami (for example, the ancestral kami of the imperial household, its tutelary deities, etc.). Both the *hotoke* enshrined in the buddha altar (that is, the ancestors in the sense of the human founder of the *ie* and the generations of those who followed him), and the kami enshrined in the kami altar (that is, the divine ancestor from whom the *ie* is said to have sprung or the ritually invited and installed ancestral kami of prestigious *ie*) were together regarded as guardians of a particular *ie* and worshiped in that capacity. Support for this practice came from the powerful feeling held by the Japanese that the safety and perpetuity of their own *ie* must be sought, whatever the cost. In this way Aruga, on the basis of the double ancestor viewpoint, resolved the ambiguity in Yanagita's view of the relationship between ancestors and tutelary deities.

THE TUTELARY DEITY CULT AND BUDDHISM

The preceding section showed that Aruga, by explicating the relationship between tutelary deities and ancestors in the faith-life of the Japanese people, emphasized the importance of the fact that in their daily lives the Japanese see no contradiction in the coexistence of the buddha altar and the kami altar. It is not necessary to dwell on the point that the buddha altar came into being under the influence of a culture imported from abroad at a certain time in history. Here I propose to move on to a consideration of Aruga's studies on the mechanism involved in the acceptance of Buddhism in Japan.

Context for adoption of Buddhism. Aruga holds that the introduction of Buddhism did not mean that a new culture was simply added to the old "promiscuously." Whether the reaction of the Japanese to this new culture was one of autonomous confrontation or conscious adaptation is not clear, but the fact remains that in order for new cultures to be accepted into Japanese life and continue to exist in this context, they had to create new cultural traditions within the way of life traditional among the Japanese people. The presupposition of "cultural promiscuity" is an inadequate basis from which to comprehend the assimilation of Buddhism in Japanese life.

How, then, does Aruga view Japanese tradition vis-à-vis the adoption of Buddhism? It is already clear that he sees the adoption of Buddhism in the context of the tutelary deity cult. In this cult tutelary deities were enshrined as guardian kami of the *uji*,⁵ and when the *uji* head, representing the group, performed acts of *misogi* and *harai*,⁶ all the *uji* members were considered as having performed them.

5. The term *uji* is here taken as equivalent to the term *dōzoku dan* (see above, note 1). —Transl.

It was into this group-faith tradition evident in the tutelary deity cult that the Japanese adopted Buddhism. In Aruga's words, "For the Japanese, the primary cultic basis for the adoption of Buddhism is to be found in the worship of tutelary deities (in the ancient sense of the term);⁷ therefore, just as people performed ritual acts of worship for tutelary deities, they did the same in the *uji* temple before Buddhist images taken as representing guardian deities of the *uji*" (1976, p. 37). A very interesting implication of this is that even Buddhist images originally regarded as representing figures who bring people salvation or enlightenment underwent a change of meaning: in accordance with the Japanese cultic basis, they came to be revered as guardian deities of the *uji*. To be noted here, however, is Aruga's point that in Japan the adoption of Buddhism took the form of an *uji* temple cult (including the *danka* temples: places where the spirits of the *dōzoku* dead were enshrined) based on the model of the *uji* deity cult. Aruga connects this way of thinking with his hypothesis that even the imperial prayer temples—intended as places where sutras were to be read and prayers offered for the security and tranquility of the realm and for all who died therein—actually functioned for the participants as *uji* temples.

Reasons for adopting Buddhism. Whether Aruga's hypothesis is right or wrong, the important thing is his observation that the prototype for the Buddhist temples in Japan was the *uji* temple. What was the necessity for *uji* temples when Japan already had its *uji* tutelary deity cult? And how was

6. Ritual acts for getting rid of dangerous and defiling pollution and restoring a state of purity and vitality. —Transl.

7. The word *ujigami* or tutelary deity, in its ancient sense, referred to the kami to whom the head of the *uji* traced his origin. In post-feudal Japan it generally refers to the tutelary deity of a village, a farm, or an amalgamation of villages and hamlets (cf. Itō 1973, pp. 37–38). —Transl.

it possible to establish them? The quotations that follow are a bit lengthy, but in them Aruga's answer to these questions comes into view.

The kami of origin were enshrined at Shinto shrines and worshiped as the kami of the *uji*, but the actual founding ancestors and subsequent historical ancestors were buried in tombs. There were, then, two kinds of ancestors, and neither could be overlooked in the ancestral cult. So why, in addition to tombs and *uji* deities, did they build *uji* temples and hold Buddhist services there for the ancestors? They did so because they regarded the buddhas (*hotoke*), represented in images, as new and powerful kami (foreign gods). In order to worship them properly, they ritually installed them in *uji* temples, and with this worship in *uji* temples they combined Buddhist services for their mortal ancestors from the first generation on (1976, p. 36).

Even though the *uji* temple cult was joined to the *uji* deity cult, we have to recognize that behind the Japanese belief in the gods is the mentality of calling on more and more kami for the protection of the group. The basis for this social psychology was the idea that adopting additional gods, even more powerful than the ones already held, would give their life that much more protection (1976, p. 37).

The fact that, after the introduction of Buddhism, the various *uji* (and *ie*) entrusted their human ancestors to Buddhism and held services for them in accordance with Buddhist rites indicates that this represented a poignant need to people faced directly with the reality of death. From their faith the ancient Japanese people learned to fear two aspects of death: the defilement carried by a dead person, and the curse of a dead person's spirit. Folk belief included the idea that with the passage of time these fearsome dangers would fade away, and the ancestor would then become a kami. Buddhism taught, however, that it could overcome this defilement of death and the evil spell

of a dead spirit, and it sought to dispel such superstitious beliefs. The reason that ancient *ie* of authority and influence took to erecting their own *uji* temples and holding Buddhist services for *uji* heads from the founder on was that Buddhism appeared not only as a religion with far more foresight about the world of the dead than their old *uji* deities could provide, foresight that could serve as a powerful guide for human life, but also a religion with the capacity to overcome the defilement of death and the dead one's curse (1976, pp. 43-44).

I surmise that the reason Buddhism, after coming to Japan, was soon bound up with the ancestral cult was that since the human ancestors of previous generations were now dead, people turned to the new rites in the hope that through Buddhism the defilement of death would be overcome, that the spirits of the dead would turn into these new kami called *hotoke*, and that as such they would have even greater power to protect the *uji*. The old *uji* deities, on the other hand, continued to exist as those to whom the *uji* traced its origin, so there was nothing about them then that would link them with Buddhism (1976, p. 50).

These four quotations speak for themselves. The second clarifies the social-psychological basis for the coexistence of the *uji* deity cult and the *uji* temple cult, and again for the coexistence of the kami altar and the buddha altar within the *ie*. The remaining three clarify the role that Buddhism assumed in the faith-life of the Japanese people upon its introduction to Japan.

What made it possible for Buddhism to establish itself in the life of the Japanese people was the function it performed in the context of the ancestral cult. As opposed to the deity ancestors to whom it traced its origin, the *uji* (and *ie*) also had its historical line of ancestors—its dead. According to the ancient Japanese faith, these dead who would eventually become kami were defiled beings, in some cases beings whose malevolence brought disasters on

the living. The function Buddhism performed was to dispel both defilement and curse, to offer ritual services for the dead, and to make them into the new kind of kami called *hotoke*.

When this interpretation is made a matter for investigation in more concrete form, it leads to such subjects as the meaning and origin of the word *hotoke* and the question of how to understand Bon and New Year rituals. Since these matters are discussed in detail in the work from which many quotations in this article have been taken, Aruga's *Hitotsu no Nihon bunkaron* [A treatise on Japanese culture] (1976), I refer the interested reader to that source.

CONCLUSION

As this article has shown, Aruga's religious studies are at once more comprehensive and more probing than ordinary sociology of religion. In his studies we see the efforts of a sociologist to throw light on his own life's roots in all their ramifications. Yet we cannot say that Aruga's work has made everything clear. One problem which runs through his religious studies but which he left largely untouched is that of the relationship between religion and politics. Investigation of this theme would no doubt burst the bounds of religious studies per se and lead to such problems as the formation of the emperor system, history and change in shrine worship, and changes in political structure. But it is impossible to package neatly a problematic that permeates the entire foundation of Japanese social life. It is up to us not only to explore further the problems that Aruga has placed us in such a strategic position to pursue, but also to bend every effort to open up new areas.

A Word about Aruga's Writings

Aruga's principal writings have been published by Miraisha in an eleven-volume series under the title *Aruga Kizaemon chosaku shū* [A collection of the works of Aruga Kizaemon] (1966-71). Citations in the present article on the subjects of the *ie* and the ancestral cult are taken chiefly from this collection. Since this series covers his works only up to 1971, however, his later writings are available only in separate publications—though some of his articles have been brought together in *Hitotsu no Nihon bunka ron* (1976).

In the Miraisha series (Aruga 1971b, part 2), there is an article titled "Michelangelo's Pieta" in which Aruga discloses what may be considered his view of man, a view influenced by the White Birch Society.⁸ Volume 10 (Aruga 1971a, parts 4 and 5) contains material (including photographs) on his parents and childhood home in Nagano Prefecture—material that enables us to come into contact with a bit of Aruga the man.

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8. The White Birch Society (*shirakaba ha*) is a literary coterie. —Transl.

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