

Yanagawa Keiichi and Community Religion

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Sociological Science of Religion

By chronologically tracing the achievements of one particular scholar, one often discovers how a single, hitherto unnoticed thread runs throughout his whole life. For example, in pursuing the life of Kishimoto Hideo (1903-64), one of the “restorers” of Japanese studies of religion, one sees the formative process of a “psychological science of religion” built upon a view of religion that can be rightly called “religion of the heart” (Shimada 1982). Several authors have drawn attention to the fact that this psychological science of religion has been one of the main streams in the history of Japanese religious studies (Ōyano 1982, Tamaru 1984, Fukazawa 1985). This shows that the most effective method for attaining insight into what Kishimoto called “religion on the personal level” is the psychological, and why in the religious soil of Japan, in which the phenomenon of religion cannot be grasped solely in terms of divine-human relationship, there have been not a few attempts at viewing religion from the side of human beings.

In the theoretical framework that Kishimoto set up in his *Shūkyōgaku* (“The Study of Religion” 1961), “religion on the personal level” is contrasted with and complemented by “religion on the social level.” However, an understanding of the latter merely by the methods of the “psychological science of religion” is impossible. If we can think of a binary distinction between “psychology” and “sociology,” it is also possible to establish a “sociological science of religion” versus a “psychological science of religion.” But what view of religion then becomes the basis of such a science? What view of religion here corresponds to that of “religion of the heart?”

I would like to see this as “community religion.” If “religion of the heart” mainly refers to the inner beliefs of individuals, “community religion” refers to the outer life of individuals where social interaction is conducted. Especially in Japanese culture where religion and social customs intermingle in a

complicated way and where the individual's consciousness of belonging to a community is very much emphasized, the religious life of the individual and of that individual's community are inseparably interrelated, so that the importance of community religion can hardly be denied. Harada Binmei, the sociologist of religion who in a sense can be called an advocate of this "community religion," has argued that the village community, which is the archetype of Japan's communities, is an autonomous entity whether in real life or in people's thinking, and he has consistently claimed that for village inhabitants there is only one single world: their village, and only the village god. Harada's claim that "god is society" obviously resembles the theories of Emile Durkheim (Ishii 1985). Yanagawa Keiichi's academic achievements must be viewed along the same line as a "sociological science of religion."

Kō Groups as a Model

It often happens that the first academic achievements of a scholar hint at themes which run throughout his whole life. In the case of Yanagawa, his first presentation at an academic convention was entitled "Kō groups as an object of sociology of religion" (Yanagawa 1953). The articles he published in the 1950s also deal with this central theme. Yanagawa did field research on mountain religions under the guidance of his mentor, Kishimoto Hideo. But in contrast to Kishimoto, who focused his attention on the mystical elements in mountain religion, he was attracted by the small *kō* groups organized by the ordinary villagers.

In his first presentation on the *kō*, Yanagawa proposed a binary classification of religious groups as groups based on community bonds and groups based on faith bonds, locating *kō* somewhere in between. In the first article he wrote on the subject, "The Organization of Mountain Faith in Villages" (1955a), he elaborated that classification, explaining that community bonds are those found in groups based on local or blood ties, as exemplified in the *ujiko* ("Shinto parishioners") groups of the village, and faith bonds found in groups of people with the same beliefs, as exemplified by the human relationships in churches and the like. He then argued that *kō* groups, as religious groups, are in between those two poles and of several grades according to their closeness to either pole, so that in fact various types of *kō* exist. In the same article he dealt in detail with three villages in Yamagata Prefecture and their faith organizations, centered on the worship of the three sacred mountains in Dewa. The characteristic of these groups is that they are constituted only of men, who become members with the family as a unit, and that their scope is limited to the village or the hamlet. He further

stressed the fact that those who climb the sacred mountains perform the pilgrimage to the mountain shrines as “individuals from the village.”

It is in fact possible to read this article only in terms of its classification of religious groups. However, behind this classification we find Yanagawa's value system. In his attempt at classifying religious groups, we find an evaluation of the *kō* religious groups more positive than that of the other groups in the classification. The criterion for this positive evaluation is the autonomous character of the *kō*. Yanagawa wrote as follows about the Ontake *kō* of Kurokawa County in Kiso, which he compared with the *kō* of the three Dewa mountains:

With respect to the Kurokawa *kō*, we can say that it is endowed with the elements proper to an absolutely perfect religious institution. A religious hierarchy exists: the villagers themselves become leaders, and it is the villagers who perform their training; it is up to them to decide whether the ascetic practices are sufficient or not. There is absolutely no need for a higher-level religious institution which nominates or dispatches teachers. Also the charms (talismans) are printed and distributed by the *kō*. And what is important above everything else is that the highest religious authority lies within the *kō* itself. The word of the *kami* can be directly heard through the *nakaza* (“medium”) of one's own *kō*, so that there is no need at all for intervention by a higher-level organization (Yanagawa 1955a, p.51).

In their religious activities the *kō* do not rely upon outside authority or power and enjoy an autonomy whereby they deal with all problems by themselves. Also the religious functionaries are the villagers themselves, and in the *kō* composed of those villagers, it is their own *kami* who exist. For the villagers who entered the *kō*, the *kō* bonds which lie outside the realm of everyday life constitute the religious world.

But Yanagawa did not limit his discussion to *kō*. Rather, the *kō* were gradually given a place as one part of “the religion of human relationships” that constitutes one system within the village community. But the *kō*, and even more strongly when speaking of a male *kō*, remains the archetype of what Yanagawa repeatedly called “religion of human relationships” or “community religion.” His interest in *kō* greatly influenced the direction of his later research. In a word, the *kō* became for him the very model of what religion is. It corresponds to what for Kishimoto the model of religion was, namely the mystical stage reached by those who had passed through ascetic practices.

Contemporary Society and Religion

The first time that Yanagawa used the term “community religion” was in an article on “Contemporary Society and Religion” written in 1955 (Yanagawa 1955b). The nature of this long article sharply contrasts with that of the series of articles he wrote about the problem of the *kō*. While the *kō* articles were based on data from field research on mountain religions, this one developed theories based on the work and thought of various scholars of religion and of believers. He especially brought into focus the role of religion in society with regard to social problems. As Yanagawa himself expressed it, “the main theme is what power religion has in present-day society.”

One can easily conjecture that the writing of this article was heavily influenced by the social trends of that particular period, ten years after the end of the war. On the one hand, as the expression “rush hour of the gods” aptly described it, there was an upsurge of various new religious groups which were able to attract numerous followers and drew the attention of society as a whole. (It was in the same year 1955, for example, that the Sōka Gakkai’s political arm, later to become the Kōmeitō or Clean Government Party, had for the first time more than fifty candidates elected in the local legislature.) On the other hand, “progressive” intellectuals felt threatened by the advance of the Sōka Gakkai and others in the social arena and were not sparing in their critique on religion. Yanagawa, who placed himself neither on the side of the religions nor on that of the critics of religion, tried to deal with the relationship between religion and society in a historical, objective way.

Our interest is in his reference to “community religion.” Yanagawa wrote as follows:

Among the religions there are some which have no interest at all in social problems. This lack of interest, and the fact that they do not speak out on social problems, are due to the specific nature of those religions. First of all, religions should be mentioned which are as it were “destined” to have no attention for social problems. I would like to call this type of religion “community religion” (1955 b, p. 184).

This was his first use of the term “community religion.” In this connection, Yanagawa touched upon the binary classification of social groups in *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, and stated that “community religion refers to religion as held by a family, a people, a village, or similar social groups.” It

was certainly strange to talk about religions that had no in social problems when dealing with the social role of religion. But one can understand how Yanagawa could think about community religion as a special type of religious group.

He described the characteristics of “community religions” as: (1) each of them possesses its own *kami*, (2) they spontaneously arise with the establishment of the community, and (3) they possess a closed nature so that people outside the specific community cannot become part of them. Also Japan’s State Shinto was considered to have been one type of community religion. The problem here is the relationship between society and a community religion with no interest at all in social problems. Yanagawa had this to say about this problem:

Community religion has its basis in natural society. All members of the family, the village, the people, the nation or other secular societies are naturally believers and not cut off from these secular societies. Society is divine and no criticism against this divine society is allowed. To criticize contradictions in society and to make efforts to solve them are attitudes which are not to be taken by the religion of the community which is society itself. Even if there are contradictions in society, community religion exists for promoting social unity with a disregard for the disturbing elements (1955 b, pp. 190-191).

For people who are left out of society or are oppressed, “other types of religion should be available.”

One can think of several levels in this community religion. As the scale of the social group widens—from the village level to the level of a nation or state—contradictions arise between society and religion. Conversely, a small-scale village tends more easily toward the ideal group, but only seldom does such unity between society and religion materialize. It does become possible in the case of *kō* groups within the village community. In comparison with the village community to which the *kō* groups belong, the latter are small-scale groups. Furthermore, the faith that brings people together is not just mutual interests. To be sure, the *kō* are limited in scale and have only a temporary nature defined by a specific time or space. It is precisely this which safeguards them from contradictions. Only in such small-scale *kō* groups can ideal human relationships be realized. Yanagawa’s interest was primarily directed to this particular point.

Development toward Festival Theories

In 1962, after returning from the United States where he had spent a year of study at Harvard University, Yanagawa undertook a full-scale research of festivals, focused on the Summer Festival of Chichibu Shrine from 1963 and on the Gion Festival in Aizu-Tajima from 1965. Academic reports based on the data gathered at Chichibu and Aizu-Tajima were published in the beginning of the 1970s. But why did his American experience turn his interests away from the *kō* groups to festivals? Yanagawa himself explained it as follows:

I started to be interested in the phenomenon of festivals in 1960, just when I became a professor in the Department of Literature of Tokyo University. It was the time that the whole society was in an uproar because of the problem of the revision of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty. [My interests in festivals began at that time.] (1976, p. 11).

In the street demonstrations against the Treaty he discovered elements resembling the traditional festivals, and this led him to look at society and religion with the same eyes. Again in his words:

I started doing research on festivals in the hope that through this research I could gain new insights into the way of life of the Japanese (1976, p. 12).

In this sense, his turning to this type of research was closely related to the general social trends of the time and he felt that the mood of festivity was giving new life to society.

There are indeed not a few points of resemblance between his earlier object of study, the *kō* groups, and the new one, festivals. In contrast to institutionalized religions, which fulfill the function of sustaining the social structure of community, as exemplified in the relationship between the *ujigami* ("local deities") and the *ujiko* ("shrine parishioners") or the *dannadera* ("family temple") and the *danka* ("temple parishioners"), the *kō* groups are non-institutionalized religions answering to the needs of people who want to escape from those structures. In other words, the *kō* are places inviting people to enter the non-everyday world. It was in those terms that Yanagawa had approached his research. In the festivals he discovered a similar element. In their "collective effervescence," as Durkheim called it, the point that they liberate people from the dark side of ordinary everyday life corresponded to a similar function in the *kō* groups.

We could also say that Yanagawa's change of interest from *kō* to festivals went hand in hand with changes in the communities of Japanese society. Indeed, it was the period that Japan experienced rapid economic growth, with the accompanying shift of social life from the village to the town, from the rural community to the urban one. The *kō* groups remained places where one could experience the non-everyday world within the small-scale village community. But in tandem with the development from village to city, the festivals took over the role of providing that place of non-everyday experience. This is why festivals manifest aspects of collective effervescence. Festivals are sustained by different social groups which in daily life compete with each other on the basis of city quarters or *kumi* ("groups"), and it is only when the community that performs the festival exceeds a certain size that this effervescence can arise. When we think of Japanese society in general, it is almost an inevitable process that, in a period in which towns and cities rather than villages must become the object of research, festivals rather than *kō* groups appear as foci of academic attention.

What particularly attracted Yanagawa's attention in this respect? The answer probably lies in the similarities between *kō* and festivals mentioned above. Festivals just like *kō* are occasions liberating people from everyday life. Admittedly, if we cling to functional theory, festivals also fulfill the role of strengthening human bonds between the people participating in them. But this theory attaches too much importance to social structures, subordinating festivals to them. The *raison-d'être* of festivals then is to dissolve the contradictions and anxieties that arise in everyday life. Yet, is it possible to grasp the deepest significance of festivals only with this theory?

Through his research of festivals, Yanagawa seems to have tried to break out of this functionalism. Functional theory as represented by Talcott Parsons, with whom Yanagawa came into contact while studying at Harvard, takes the position that the integration of society is sustained by the differentiation and tension among its various constituting elements. If one applies this scheme to Japan, *kō* groups are considered to fulfill the complementary function of sustaining the social structure of the village. However, Yanagawa's approach to the *kō* was rather different, since he considered them not as religious groups with a complementary function but as groups with their own autonomy. From this we might conclude that there were in Yanagawa's thought elements incompatible with functional theory. In the case of festivals he stressed their autonomous nature in the following terms:

The direction of the approach I would like to continue following in the future is that of considering festivals as religious movements. Festivals challenge, as it were, modern society or moderni-

zation. They are positive reactions of people who question whether it is all right to remain in such society (1970, p. 125).

The approach to festivals as religious movements is one that attempts to see in them elements denying secular life entirely, and it corresponds in this sense to the theory which propounds the autonomous nature of the *kō*. In other words, Yanagawa argued that there is something more in festivals than merely the function of promoting social integration. When he talked about the "theology of festivals," we feel behind this a desire to get away from functionalism. For Yanagawa theology meant "a scholarly discipline which assigns the status of ultimate cause to factors that do not permit of experimentation, observation, or proof," in contrast to science which was for him "a scholarly discipline which investigates the relations between directly observable data" (1974a, p. 18). In a word, in festivals there are not only functions which are to be analyzed by science but also parts which have to be considered within a theological framework, i.e. the creation of a specific world of meaning.

This bold attempt to propose a "theology of festivals" is not an easy task. In theology an ultimate cause is presupposed to exist, and humans try to approach this ultimate cause step by step. Yet, as it is "ultimate," it is by definition unattainable. Its nature is that it can neither be reached nor exhausted by human words. The difficulty in following the development of Yanagawa's thought about festivals might be because there his attitude of trying to reach the ultimate strongly comes to the fore.

For example, in his analysis of the Gion Festival of Aizu-Tajima entitled "Theological and Scientific Thinking about Festivals," (1974a) he discerned three ways of thinking theologically about festivals: (1) the festival as a bond of interrelation, (2) the festival as a sacred drama, and (3) the festival as a coincidence of opposites. Referring to several Western theories on religion and festivals, he tried to find a concrete application in the Gion Festival of Tajima. That he attempted to analyze the festival not by one single theory but by a combination of many can be taken as proof that all the different theories are applicable, and, in reverse, also as a claim that in the festival there are elements that cannot be analyzed by scientific thinking. One could even say that Yanagawa wanted to demonstrate that, after all, festivals cannot be completely analyzed. Did he not develop his own theory anticipating that from the very beginning festivals cannot possibly be analyzed? Perhaps this is precisely what makes theology into theology. When one talks too much about what festivals are, they lose their very power to induce people to the non-everyday world. At that point the meaning of studying festivals will probably disappear.

Readers of Yanagawa's treatises on festivals are not expected to "understand" what they mean but rather to "feel" them. This is especially true for his essay on "The Feeling of Festivals" (1976). Just as Yanagita Kunio in his *Nippon no matsuri* ("Japanese Festivals" 1942) has shown the beauty of Japan's festivals, Yanagawa has tried to show the non-everyday world that Japan's festivals manifest in their contemporary forms.

Interest in Traditional Religion

Yanagawa's object of research changed from *kō* to festivals, and then again from festivals to the religion of Japanese emigrants. But all of them are based on empirical field research. Several characteristics of Yanagawa's research methods can be pointed out. The first is that it was group research. Yanagawa did not adopt the methods of the cultural anthropologist who goes alone to the field of study and tries to acquire insights into society on the micro-level through sharing life together with the inhabitants. Yanagawa's group approach to research might have been partly due to the fact that many of his research projects were closely connected with his educational work at the university. But there was more to it than this. Let us deal with this point later on.

A second characteristic is to be found in the choice of his research objects. Yanagawa never neglected the latest theoretical trends in the scientific study of religion, in anthropology and sociology. He was extremely interested in the trends within society. However, he almost always chose traditional communities with villages as the center, or traditional observances focused on festivals as his research objects. (He did some research on the New Religions, but it was his students who did the actual work and he himself never published articles related to this topic.)

When we trace back the history of his research projects, we first find—as already mentioned—the study of *kō* groups in villages connected with mountain religion. After his period in the United States he turned to research on the Summer Festival of Chichibu Shrine and the Gion Festival of Aizu-Tajima, followed by a series of projects with the religion of Japanese settlers as central theme, in particular Tokoro in Hokkaido, Hawaii, and California. *Kō* groups of course belong to the realm of traditional religion. In the case of festivals it is traditional society which constitutes the focus of attention. The research on settlers was intended to clarify how religious forms seen in traditional Japanese society can be established away from Japan proper, and what transformation they undergo in the process. Finally, Yanagawa's recent research projects again thematized "village religion" and

were an attempt to acquire a holistic view of the religious life of mountain villages.

The information gathered from these research projects has an important significance and greatly influenced the establishment of Yanagawa's frame of knowledge. When he touched upon religious phenomena outside religion in traditional society he followed this framework. Of course, herein the objects of his interest were the manifestations of the non-everyday world, which he considered to be in direct continuity with the community religion of traditional society.

For example, in the essay "A Little Prophecy" (1974b), he touched upon recent religious trends and offered a perspective on the future of religion. He first referred to the popularity of religious literature "which purports to teach how life has to be lived" as a characteristic of our present time. Since explaining how to live in the present world is "not an area originally taken care of by religion," he wondered whether, as a result of competition with other modes of thought that teach everyday ethics, "this area will not gradually recede from the influence of religion." He then predicted that after the decline of "theories about life" in the field of religion, a "revival of festivals" will occur. Let us remember that this period was precisely the time that Yanagawa put all his effort to developing his own theory about festivals, in which he focused on the non-everyday nature of festivals in contrast with everyday ethics. In a word, as he wrote:

In festivals matters that in everyday life are contradictory or do not fit together appear as possible. In festivals both the emphasis on and the disregard of social status, earnestness and frolicking, purity and obscenity, fasting and feasting, dressing up and nakedness, etc. are united (1974b, p. 3).

In this connection, he pointed out the importance of two elements usually found in festivals, namely seclusion (*komori*) and the procession, both acts which find place outside the world of everyday ethics. *Komori*, exemplified in the *shōjin*-kessai or religious purification needed to approach the sacred, is held at a place separated from the outside world, while the procession, exemplified in the procession of festival floats, corresponds to the journey of the *kami*. Yanagawa tried to apply these two actions to the phenomenon of religion in general:

Komori has given rise to the type of ascetics who practice asceticism in temples, monasteries, and other places separated from the secular world. On the other hand, processions generated wanderers without a fixed abode who travel through different countries carrying the gods on their shoulders. Holy men, itinerant monks,

marebito ("rare visitors") and the like are examples of this (1974b, p. 3).

The archetype of these two types of actions can probably be found in the religious behavior in the village *kō* groups. There are indeed regular periods of seclusion observed in the different *kō*, such as the *o-himachi* ("waiting for the rising sun") on the last day of the year or the day of Kōshin (deity worshiped on the day of the monkey). Corresponding to the "procession" are the pilgrimages performed by the *kō* groups which go to worship at famous shrines and temples, such as the Ise-*kō*, Ontake-*kō* and others. When we take these into account, we can understand how the image of *kō* has played an important role in the formation of Yanagawa's theoretical framework.

We see a similar tendency where he dealt with religion in the future. In this respect he points out the increase of small communities (communes) and the popularity of simple adventure trips. Communes indeed can be considered to be the "contemporary edition of *kō*," and trips the contemporary form of *nuke-mairi* ("secret pilgrimage to the Ise Shrines"). It is a way of thinking which originates precisely from the framework of community religion and in which the image of the *kō* as the ideal religious group is projected.

Ideas of the Beyond

Yanagawa was primarily interested in the phenomenon of the escape from the monotony of everyday life, or to put it positively, in the non-everyday life experience. If we employ the sacred-secular dichotomy, it is the phenomenon of withdrawing from secular time and space, defined by social structures which do not allow deviations, and of entering sacred time and space. The walls that separate people from each other in the secular world are torn down in the sacred world and people are melted together. It is at the same time the moment that the world of the sacred and the secular themselves become united. Certainly Yanagawa's theory of the sacred and the secular does not pose an opposition between the two worlds. He rather claimed that the sacred-secular dichotomy is very critical of anything fixed and rigid. In an interesting essay written in the beginning of the 1970s, "A Divergent Introduction to the Science of Religion," he wrote as follows:

The science of religion has provided us with the analysis of the relation between a sacred world, i.e. a world of the *non-rational*, the *non-everyday* life, the *non-common* sense, and a secular world.

If one accepts this dichotomy, which assumes the existence of a world qualitatively different from the everyday world, it readily affects our perspective on many things. For example, if we think of the world of politics as a world far removed from what ordinary people do, the following analogy becomes possible. Politicians are magicians; the construction of bridges and roads and the decrease of taxes are this-worldly benefits; the popular saying "dawn is near" comes to mean "belief in the other world." People's attempts to bring politics back to ordinary people can be conjectured as a universal priesthood or lay Buddhism. . . . If we consider sex to be pollution and dichotomize leisure and labor, also here we can apply the scheme of the sacred and the secular (1972, p. 10).

The above text shows that Yanagawa's object of interest was not limited to so-called religious phenomena. All objects that can in a way be explained by the sacred-secular dichotomy attracted his attention. And what was most important was that these sacred and secular worlds fused into one. In Japan's traditional society, not only were *kō*, festivals, and pilgrimages taken up; but the New Religions were also seen in the same perspective. The so-called "counterculture movements" of the 1970s drew his attention, and ecstasy, communes, and trips were evaluated as means for binding people together. All these elements together constitute what Yanagawa himself called "the beyond orientation" or "ideas of the beyond." In other words, he strongly yearned for a condition transcending a world divided into the sacred and the secular.

The term "beyond the sacred and the secular" has been intended as a symbolic expression carrying a multiplicity of meanings. The sacred and the secular, the opposition between the non-everyday world and the everyday world, are thought to constitute the basis of the religious worldview. However, does this distinction not disappear when the content of religion changes? Is the sacred not something that cannot be separated from the everyday world, that is more a matter of course and gentle, instead of being severe and terrifying? This is how to look at one of the poles of the dichotomy. But it also has a different meaning. Although the sacred and the secular are opposed to each other in a dualistic way, they also complement each other and form one whole. As functional elements they perform nothing more than spiritually strengthening the normal established structures. If one wants to reform oneself,

one has to fly "beyond" the sacred and the secular. This meaning is also implied (1978, p.iii).

From the standpoint of the science of religion it is easy to criticize and to analyze the tendency people have of clinging to a fixed dichotomy between the sacred and the secular. However, do Yanagawa's ideas of reaching "beyond" really belong to the field of religious studies? The fusion of the sacred and the secular is certainly something frequently seen in the religious world and one can even say that this is precisely what religious people strive at. Yet, such a condition is only momentarily realized. A *kō* is a group which only on fixed days comes together, and to carry out one day of festival an enormous amount of everyday effort has to be expended. Pilgrims have to return one day to their village. If an ecstasy lasts too long, it becomes illness. Did the communes not develop into the tragedy of the People's Temple?

Realizing the fusion of the sacred and the secular is an extremely difficult task. Nowadays, under the impact of modernization, traditional society is collapsing; the New Religions, having reached the time of generational change, are themselves more and more becoming an establishment; and the counterculture movements are losing power. At such time it is not easy to talk about the beyond. If it is true that in society we cannot find an object for discussion, the only way left is to set out oneself on the search for it. But the result can be the rejection of the world of science. If we want to preserve the standpoint of the science of religion, we need somewhere to pause and stand still.

Yanagawa's recent interest is directed toward the problem of death. Death is taken up as death in the community rather than as personal death. In traditional Japanese society there are a number of observances, such like the *bon* feast, when people honor the dead, who are thought to return to the place of the living. As long as these observances last, a "community of the living and the dead" is realized. Yanagawa is very much interested in present trends in ancestor veneration practices. Ancestor veneration depends on the feeling of affection that both the living and the dead have for each other. The fundamental opposition between life and death is dissolved, and the "community of the living and the dead" comes into being. Could it be that precisely these mortuary rites are the ultimate basis and haven for Yanagawa's ideas of the beyond?

The ideas that Yanagawa fosters have perhaps become realized tangentially in the seminars he has conducted at the university. As mentioned above, many of his field trips were conducted together with his students. This group experience of going together on a research trip is one that cannot be gained in an ordinary university seminar, for there a sort of "community" is born. This corresponds exactly to the *kō* groups which lie at the basis of

Yanagawa's view of religion. In an essay in which he tried to classify seminars, he wrote that the research trips he led to study festivals themselves became festivals. In his words:

The festival-like seminars have as a keynote the familiarity of laughing voices and touching bodies, so that one female student made this very appropriate comment about the male students participating in the seminar: "You boys look like a bunch of gays!" (1975, p. 9).

In order to elucidate community religion one needs some feeling of sympathy with community. When Yanagawa's seminars themselves became a *kō* community, the students' insights into community deepened. And perhaps then the opposition between "those who do research" and "those who are the objects of research," always a problem on such field trips, dissolved, precisely because we could reach beyond the two worlds, because the time had arrived for fusing them together in one.

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