

## Yanagawa Keiichi as an Educator

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### Qualifications of an Educator

Japanese universities are legally defined as institutions of both research and higher education. "The Standards for Founding a University" stipulated by the Ministry of Education prescribe that one of the essential functions of a university is to carry out higher education. The salary scale for national university faculty members is that for "teachers," and not for "researchers."

The teaching function of universities in Japan, however, is often questioned. John F. Zeugner of Worcester Institute of Technology, who has taught at Keio, Kobe, and Osaka Universities, for example, openly criticized the lack of serious teaching in Japanese universities in *The New York Times* and *The Change* magazine. These articles mentioned regrettable practices in these universities with regard to educational responsibilities. His comments comprise only one of the many observations that give warning of the need to recognize the shortage of a responsible attitude toward education among Japanese academics.

The issue raised here is related to the problematic attitude of Japanese university faculty members. It is their tendency to identify themselves primarily as researchers, and to emphasize research, whether substantial or merely formal, as a reason for slighting education and making it a secondary responsibility.

American universities, on the other hand, take teaching more seriously. The faculty handbook of The University of California at Berkeley, for example, prescribes the following as the necessary qualities for its faculty members. Berkeley's administration uses these standards of judgement in the appointment and promotion of its faculty members.

1. Ability to completely cover their area of specialization;
2. Continuous growth in their specialized discipline;

3. Ability to organize materials for teaching and to present them effectively;
4. Ability to make students understand the relation between the themes of the subjects being taught and knowledge in other areas;
5. Ability to encourage the motivation of students and to maintain their zeal as a teacher in the teaching-learning process;
6. Ability to arouse curiosity among beginning students and to stimulate creative learning among advanced students; and
7. Involvement in the guiding and advising of students.

In short, the necessary qualifications of a faculty member require him or her to be a person who will keep growing academically and is willing to effectively share his or her expertise and growth with the students.

It is hard to argue that many professors in Japanese universities fully meet all of these qualifications. It is also hard to believe that even at Berkeley a large number of professors fully meet these requirements. In view of such realities, the clarification of a standard for the assessment of a college teacher becomes all the more important.

Today, the trend toward university reform around the world reaffirms the need for strong and vital liberal arts education. It also calls for an assessment and reinforcement of faculty qualifications. The sample cited above from the Berkeley handbook is to be viewed as a reflection of such trends. If Yanagawa Keiichi's quarter-century of professorial life is viewed in such a mirror, how does he look, particularly as an educator?

At the occasion of Yanagawa's retirement from the chair of religious studies at Tokyo University, all of Yanagawa's articles and recorded speeches were compiled by Ishii Kenji into a four volume set. I was thus able to read them through in chronological order. What follows, then, are my notes after tracing his publications, with a view toward seeing how he integrated his research and his devotion to teaching in the fulfillment of the qualifications of an ideal educator.

### **An Obedient Student of the Science of Religion**

Yanagawa reminds himself that he had a predilection toward seriousness since childhood. While attending elementary school he says he doubted if his parents were his real ones and planned to run away from home. When he was a middle school student, he confesses, he loved looking into mirrors in an attempt to produce wrinkles in his forehead, so that his ordinary appearance might be modified. While he was a college student, he decided to keep his head low whenever he walked so that he might appear to be

thinking deeply. Eventually when he entered university, he chose to study religion with the expectation that it might help solve the real problems of life (Yanagawa 1985 I, p. 621).

At the Religious Studies Department of Tokyo University, Yanagawa met Kishimoto Hideo and was his outstanding student for many years. Yanagawa's articles in his earlier days indicate his adherence to Kishimoto's ideal, which advocated the scientific, objective, and descriptive study of religion.

Indeed, Kishimoto advocated the establishment of "the science of religion." In the first paragraph of his book, *The Science of Religion*, he proclaimed: "The science of religion is an academic discipline which attempts the scientific study of religion. It aims at obtaining basic knowledge of religion as an aspect of culture, without any particular ties with the position of specific religions. In order to achieve this aim fully, religion cannot but be observed scientifically" (Kishimoto 1961, p. 1).

Kishimoto developed his perspective on the scientific study of religion in the chapters of this book. The composition of the chapters is as follows; 1. The areas of the science of religion, 2. How to define religion, 3. Basic structures and functions of religion, 4. Religion as a personal phenomenon, 5. Morphology of religious activities, 6. Formation of belief systems, 7. Various aspects of religious thought, and 8. Religion as a social phenomenon.

Yanagawa's approach to religion in his early days was neatly summarized in a book-length article titled "A Scientific Study of Religion" (Yanagawa 1985 I, pp. 216-39). This article revealed how closely Yanagawa tried to trace the proclamation of Kishimoto relative to the establishment of the science of religion. In this article he wrote:

"Let us examine several of the definitions of religion that prevail among a commonsensical and/or experiential understanding of religion." Several of these are summarized and then followed by the reasons why they are insufficient, given in parentheses. 1. 'Religion represents a mystic world that transcends the human world' (This neglects the functions of religion in human life.) 2. 'Religion always loves peace' (In many instances religion has supported war.) 3. 'Religion is superstition.' (Religious faith and intellectual immaturity do not necessarily coincide.) 4. 'Religion is the worship of God or Buddha.' (There are several religions that do not advocate the worship of God or Buddha.)

By showing these examples of the inadequacy of popular definitions of religion, Yanagawa argued that it is the responsibility of science to amend and to adjust these commonsensical understandings. He contended that there is a need for an objective and observation-based understanding of religion in addition to experiential understanding.

In this article, Yanagawa attempted a scientific approach to religion on the basis of objective, experimental, and scientific research. In the first chapter, 'Science and Religion,' he tried to clarify what is meant by science when a scientific definition of religion is being discussed. In the second part, he described the principles of behavioral science which constitute the content of science as defined in this article, and, in the third part, identified four principal elements of the scientific definition of religion. In the fourth to seventh parts, he delineated each one of these four elements (Yanagawa 1985 I, p. 7).

The composition of these two works clearly revealed that Yanagawa in earlier days assumed an academic position very close to that of Kishimoto. During these days, Yanagawa had been engaged in field work on Japanese mountain worship together with Kishimoto. Yanagawa's field notes and articles, very much like his mentor's, were objective and descriptive on the one hand, and, on the other hand, recorded many attempts to explain his findings in terms of various Western theories of social science.

### **Freudian Confrontation with His Teachers**

Yanagawa, however, gradually came to experience some confrontation with Kishimoto. In his article, "Festivals and Modernization," Yanagawa recognized two fundamentally opposing observations as regards Japan's modernization.

One observation he identified is that, although there remain pre-modern elements in Japan's social as well as cultural environment, she is moving in the direction of modernization where universalism is common with that of the West is becoming increasingly dominant. According to this view, defeat in World War II and the strong economic growth that followed consolidated the movement in this direction. The concentration of the population in cities weakened traditional local integration and rendered people's ways of thinking more individualistic. These tendencies, this observation concluded, provided a counter-impact against the continuation of festivals and forced changes in the nature of shrines. Yanagawa cited Kishimoto as a typical example of this sort of observation with regard to Shinto and modernization.

Another type of observation Yanagawa recognized is the one represented by Robert N. Bellah. This is the observation that Japan has skillfully utilized new imports as means to an end, but has not changed her basic ways of thinking. Although Japan's modernization resembles the modernization of the West, they are intrinsically heterogeneous. As indicated by the popular phrase, "Eastern morality and Western technology," her technological

modernization developed around the axis of the traditional morality. The ethos of group orientation or prime loyalty to the group survived the process of modernization. According to this type of observation, even if the forms of festivals may change, the basic cause of festivals or the identification with the group remains functional and sustains the condition for continuing festivals.

After presenting and comparing these observations, Yanagawa reached the conclusion that the latter observation can better explain the quintessence of the festivals. He wrote, "To me, the argument of the latter appears to explain the current phenomena a little more accurately" (Yanagawa 1985 I, pp. 310-311).

Yanagawa's turning point apparently had much to do with his study at Harvard. Before his departure to the United States, he was committed to integrating a theory of religious studies by digesting and applying the functionalist theories of Talcott Parsons. Indeed, he wrote an analytical essay on the theories of a sociology of religion and for it earned a Japan Society Award for the Study of Religion in 1961. He was further stimulated by a meeting with Bellah when he visited Japan in 1960. He was very eager to go to Harvard and felt he had every reason to do so.

Yanagawa went to Harvard in 1962 and stayed there for one year, participating in the seminars of Parsons and Bellah. But his commitment to functionalism withered rapidly after his return from Harvard. Perhaps this was partly because functionalism had lost its influential position in America. Functionalism, which bloomed in the 1960's when America enjoyed her good days, declined along with the fall of the balance and order of American society, which was caused by the succession of the Vietnam war, racial and sexual segregation, and the new left and hippie movements (see Yanagawa 1985 I, pp. 660-73). Perhaps more importantly, however, was that he sensed in the decay of functionalism the decline of American democracy as an acceptable ideal. Kishimoto retained his positivistic attitude and trust in American democracy throughout his life, but Yanagawa began to doubt reliance on it as a guiding principle.

Yanagawa stopped writing on functionalism, and erased it from his lectures. His lecture titles since then have no reference at all to functionalist theories of religion. His focus of concern since then seems to have returned to the environment at hand. His search of theoretical reflections also shifted from foreign to Japanese predecessors in religious studies.

In this regard, most interesting is his comparison of Anesaki Masaharu and Yanagita Kunio. Anesaki was the founder of the chair of religious studies at Tokyo Imperial University and stepfather of Kishimoto, and with such status had been beyond any critical appraisal by students of religious

studies. Yanagita, on the other hand, was a career bureaucrat, and though he is now widely recognized as the founder of Japanese ethnology (due mostly to achievements after his retirement), he never held a chair of ethnology in any Imperial university.

Yanagawa contrasts and assesses Anesaki and Yanagita in an article wittily titled "An Imperial Science vs. A Field Science." He mentions a few instances in which Yanagita referred to Anesaki. One related to the latter's lack of critical appraisal of the information provided by the informant before including it in an academic treatise. The second had to do with the life style of an academic relative to the way they used the opportunity of going abroad. Yanagawa carves Yanagita in relief as an independent observer of Western society and Anesaki as a community bound armchair philosopher, by using citations of the former's reference to the latter (Yanagawa 1985 I, p. 153).

Yanagawa recognized that Yanagita's statements were not flattering toward Anesaki, but his main interest was not this point. The focus of his interest is to establish the conceptual qualifications of an academic. He observes that the idea that someone who had enjoyed as much of a reputation as Anesaki could have become anonymous is an interesting phenomenon, especially as it relates to the question of the modalities of religious studies. By citing Origuchi Shinobu's essay on Yanagita titled "Sensei's Learning," he praises Yanagita as an independent man of learning in a vital society, as contrasted to an academic molded to an Imperial University. To be identified as a scholar because of having a position in an Imperial University is one thing, and to be a real man of learning is another. According to this classification, Anesaki is a scholar primarily because of having a position in a university, but is lacking in heuristic modalities that characterized Yanagita's style of studies.

Yanagawa's current observation relative to the limitation and the nature of academic studies carried out by an educator was summarized in his recollections which were referred to at the beginning of the preceding section of this paper. By confessing that he chose to study religion expecting to solve the real problems of life and that this expectation has never been fulfilled, he gave a warning concerning a common misunderstanding regarding academic studies. He considered that, provided that it is appropriate to characterize man as *homo ludens*, humanistic studies ought to be born from play.

In his view, one of the origins of humanistic studies is the riddle, and another, the narrative. In a riddle, people appreciate the joy of reasoning. In the narrative, the narrator and the listeners share the commotion of the mythological cosmos, even if one feels that the story is not truthful nor

realistic. He argues, therefore, that the requirements of a humanistic scholar are excellence or expertise in reasoning, and skill in composing impressive narratives (Yanagawa 1985 II, p. 621).

### Appropriate Methodology for Religious Studies

Developing countries as well as industrialized countries speak of *appropriate* technology when technological transfer is discussed or implemented. *Appropriateness* is not usually spoken of in the discussion of academic methodology in specific disciplines, but it may be a useful concept. In this regard, Yanagawa's essay titled "An Unorthodox Theory of Religious Studies" abounds in rich suggestions.

In this essay Yanagawa identified religious studies as being like the activities of a guerrilla band. He extracted the characteristics of religious studies through observation of his colleagues.

According to his observations, the general tendencies of his colleagues or the scholars of religious studies are:

1. to publish few books or articles,
2. to define areas of specialization very vaguely to the extent that they are extremely shaky,
3. to be possessed of very broad interests and concerns, which often stretch into mundane affairs beyond religious phenomena,
4. to chase after novel academic theories irrespective of their disciplines,
5. to be skillful in classification and assortment,
6. to be good at talking, with a style more like that acting out a drama than of conducting an academic discourse, and
7. to be keen on discussing methodologies and yet to end up by lamenting the difficulties of religious studies.

Yanagawa added that these items are all related to each other. He explained that the reason religious studies scholars do not publish profusely is not that they are idle, but primarily because they are looking for various materials and theories relating to religious studies. According to his interpretation, this contributes to their skill in handling information.

He regarded the second, the third and the fourth items as being characteristic of inquisitive busybodies (*yajiuma* N N N ), with reference to a dictionary definition of a busybody as, "a person who sniffs around things that are not related to one's own affairs." In his opinion, this definition is unkind to a busybody, because it reflects the assumption of an academic who sits and deliberates in an armchair in his own study. He strongly

sympathizes with a busybody, stating that he himself sniffs around because he feels that everything is related to his own affairs.

Yanagawa also argues that the scholars of religious studies resemble the constituents of a guerrilla band. A guerrilla band is defined by the absence of uniforms, the lack of formal affiliation with a regular army, and engagement in combat against the enemy. He observes that scholars of religious studies do not have a uniform, nor do they clarify their affiliation with a regular army, and yet they engage in intellectual combats. Thus they are qualified to be identified as a guerrilla band.

A guerrilla band is further defined as a person or a small group that makes surprise attacks, achieves a minor victory against a segmented target and retreats promptly. Through this analogy comparing the methodology of religious studies with these guerrilla tactics, he attempted to convert the demerits of religious studies into merits. He insisted that, just as a guerrilla band does not stay on the battle front for a long time, so scholars of religious studies withdraw as soon as regular armies such as sociology, anthropology or whatever arrive at the front and begin contending with all sorts of regimentation, such as the exactness of research findings, role structures, functional analysis, or the minimum requirement of more than one year's living experience in the field of research, learning the local language of the target tribe, etc. Inasmuch as a guerrilla band aims at a minor victory against a segmented target, scholars of religious studies specify the target in their area of interest in religious phenomena and are satisfied with a minimal furtherance of their understanding of those phenomena. Endless involvement in philosophical discussions and precise research, according to their observations, do not suit the role of religious studies. He therefore judged, for example, that scholars of religious studies should avoid explaining new religions by using the anxiety thesis of social psychology or the theoretical framework of American sociologists. He proclaimed that it is time for the scholars of religious studies to retreat from indulging in these practices.

Yanagawa called attention to the point that religious studies have traditionally had two appropriate methodologies. One is comparison and another intimation. He recalled that the field of religious studies used to be called "comparative religion." Once it was very influential, so that a man like Max Weber was stimulated by it to initiate the comparative sociology of religions. Careless abuses of this method, however, undermined the credibility of the field and religious studies eventually dropped 'comparative' from the designation. And yet the conviction that the understanding of religious phenomena is impossible without comparison is firmly alive. He contended that the revival of comparative religion is essential for the revitalization of



religious studies.

As for intimation, Yanagawa related its adaptation as a methodology in religious studies to the abundant and rich instances of intimation inherent in religious phenomena. For example, God is called upon as Lord, King, Father, etc., so that the characteristics of the invisible are intimated through the vocabulary of everyday life. In order to avoid misunderstanding caused by the identification of the attributes of the Lord, King, Father, etc. in our daily experiences with the attributes of God, the decoding of the codes becomes indispensable. Inasmuch as a man is often fooled by a woman (or a woman is often fooled by a man) when he(she) takes her(his) words literally, scholars of religious studies, he insists, should imply intimation in the decoding of the codes (Yanagawa 1985 I, pp. 347-51).

Thus Yanagawa confirmed comparison and intimation as the appropriate or fundamental methodologies of religious studies. He was pragmatic inasmuch as he based his understanding of religion on first hand observation of religious phenomena. He overcame the myth of science and objectivity through confrontation with his teachers. He was liberated from the spell of theorization by observing the decline of functionalism and the democratic dream in America. It was then that he looked around himself and developed his own style of research using the appropriate methodologies of comparison and intimation.

### **The Decoding of Human Relations**

The prevailing connotation in Yanagawa's work is that of festivals and festivities. An attempt to decode this connotation is appropriate in carving his relief.

When Yanagawa was appointed Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Tokyo University in 1960, it was exactly during the height of upheaval due to the protest movement against the revision of the U.S.-Japan Mutual Security Treaty. The Diet voted in favor of ratification on May 19, 1960, and it was to become legally effective by midnight of June 19th. In early June 1960, a female student of Tokyo University was trampled to death during the confusion of a demonstration in the Diet Compound, and the protest movement intensified its activities. He was much influenced by this environment and participated in the demonstrations.

The last rally was held on the 19th, but it was only symbolic. A great mass of demonstrators dissolved in front of the official residence of the Prime Minister, and, as they were tired after a long day of walking and shouting, Yanagawa and his students went for a drink of beer. Then a student (who is now a professor at a university) announced, "Now this is the end of it. I

shall get back to my studies from tomorrow." He felt that this announcement was very much to the point. According to his later writings it was the first time he recognized the affinity of a mass political demonstration with the upheaval of festivals (Yanagawa 1985 II, p. 511).

Motivated by this incident, Yanagawa began to focus his research on the participatory observation of festivals. He noted that the style of procession and the rhythmic shouts in the demonstration are very close to the style and shouts that provide the rhythm when the portable shrine is carried around in a festival; banners with various colors also remind him of the atmosphere of a festival; the rapid upsurge and the rapid dissipation of the protest movement symbolized in the announcement "Now this is the end of it. I shall get back to my studies from tomorrow" approximates the end of a sacred time and the return to an ordinary time at traditional festivals. If the Japanese mass political protest movement had much in common with festivals, festivals may abound in symbolic clues to understanding the Japanese way of life.

Thus he was attracted by the idea that the decodification of the symbols of festivals may provide an explanation of the basic features of the behavioral patterns of the Japanese people (Yanagawa 1985 I, p. 352). In short, he began the study of festivals with the hope of understanding the Japanese way of life (Yanagawa 1985 II, p. 511).

Yanagawa presented several observations from his intense participatory research of festivals. These observations, summarized below, are somewhat contrary to the popular explanation of the decline of traditional practices, such as festivals, as being due to the advancement of modernization.

The first observation was that festivals continue to be more prosperous, or grow larger in proportion to social involvement, keeping pace with social changes which result from modernization, urbanization and industrialization (Yanagawa 1985 I, p. 315). Festivals, according to his observation, contain an element of gathering people together, making them merry, and encouraging them to engage in common activities. In addition, they have another important element: the sacred and the profane are linked together through a mediator through the symbolic processes of festivals. This is a quintessential element of festivals, as long as they are religious phenomena, and remains a solid element in contemporary festivals.

Secondly, he observed that festivals have the structure of a drama. He claimed that in Japanese festivals the continuity of man and divine beings does not exist by itself, but rather in someone who represents the group and bears the responsibility to mediate for them. Once the festivities begin, the chief priest of the community's shrine, namely the sponsor of the festival, cannot direct nor order anything but must join figuratively in the procession

as if to symbolically represent the sacrifice (Yanagawa 1985 I, p. 331).

A third observation was extracted from an often used expression, "according to the ancient traditions." Yanagawa observed that there is a consensus among the participants that the festival in which they participate is an act of tracing what it used to be in an ancient society. According to his decodification, there is a consciousness of the resurrection of the mythological world, of the act of returning to the original, behind the forces that support the activities of the festival. Hence festivals may well symbolize a forceful reaction against the current social situation. Consequently, festivals sometimes represent a movement that aspires to construct a new social order or prepares to meet the end of the world. Festivals conceive an eschatological element which may sometimes burst out with revolutionary energy into contemporary society (Yanagawa 1985 I, p. 324).

These observations are only a few of the typical samples of the decodification of festivals that Yanagawa has suggested. His involvement in religious studies has lingered around this question from the time of his appointment to the time of his retirement. I do not mean to discuss the validity of his research findings nor the appropriateness of his research methodology here. What I mean to show is that his total commitment in research activity is fully transplanted in his involvement in teaching.

### **Involvement in Teaching**

The theory that Yanagawa formulated through his study of festivals may be summarized as that of the uneven dichotomy of the sacred and the profane. He recognized the impact of minor traditions, as much as that of major traditions, on social changes and development. If lectures form a major tradition in which the vanguard of research is transferred from professors to students, seminars form a minor tradition where professors and students collaborate to supplement the process of higher education.

Yanagawa transplanted his lifelong dedication in religious studies into his involvement in teaching. He always prepared his lectures carefully. The following pages, however, will observe his approach to teaching mainly through his appraisal of various types of seminars.

By observing various seminars, he gained the impression that they function in the dimension of symbols rather than serving as an effective method of teaching. He contrasted lectures and seminars and set them in the framework of an uneven dichotomy.

A few examples of contrasts between lectures and seminars include: high podium and low benches vs. flat seats surrounding a table; one-sided flow of information from the professor vs. the reports of students and discussion

among the students and the professor; passive attitude in listening to lectures vs. aggressive attitude in disputation among participants; openness to the mass of students vs. closeness among a few students; no smoking in the lecture halls vs. smoking permitted in the seminar rooms.

Lectures and seminars thus coexist in a dichotomy, but their positions in the collegiate structure are uneven. The ratio of lectures and seminars in his department of religious studies, Yanagawa mentioned, was twenty credit hours to eight credit hours, proving that the seminars are a non-ordinary and anti-structural element of the educational process.

In order to explain their symbolic effect, he proposed four types of seminars based on an impressionistic deduction from his experiences both as a student and as a teacher. They are seminars as rituals, tournaments, festivals, and cultivation of vegetables in a back yard.

*Seminars as ritual.* The most traditional type of seminar is the reading of works in their original language. These seminars are like the ritualistic recitation of the Bible or the incantation of Buddhist sūtras. This type of seminar requires an authentic atmosphere to impress the students. This is a very appropriate method for both making students feel the graveness of the academic tradition and for nurturing perseverance. But just like rituals in a church, it tends to be formalistic and assessment can be made only in terms of the rate of attendance. So, if academic achievement is to be expected, seminars as rituals ought to be discredited.

*Seminars as intellectual tournament.* Yanagawa refers to Kishimoto, who instructed his students to behave in seminars as if they were crossing swords with their opponents. If these are intellectual tournaments, so are there several ranks in a hierarchical order: the master, assistants to the master, and the disciples. Questions and answers are intimated to offense and defense and through the process of the seminar the winners and the losers of the tournament are clearly identified. Compared with seminars as rituals, seminars as tournaments are credited with higher merit because they are able to endorse academic meritocracy, and the involvement of students is usually realized. Nonetheless, unless there is much in common in terms of the materials and methodology of research, seminars of this type usually end up in abstract and radical inquisitions, such as "Why the hell are you working on this silly theme?" In such cases they turn out to be the theater of vengeance and are not productive. With such an observation, Yanagawa hesitated to fully approve seminars of this type.

*Seminars as festival.* Seminars of this type are defined by Yanagawa as the ones that are free both from the excessive formalities of the seminar as ritual and the extreme offensiveness of the seminar as tournament. These seminars are characterized by jovial playfulness. There are no formalities

like those in seminars as ritual, where the professor's text was leather bound as opposed to the paperbacks of the students. There is nothing to resemble seminars as tournament, where the professor sits in the center and glares at his students, issuing cutthroat questions. Seminars of this type place egalitarianism at the forefront and authoritarianism at the very rear.

In seminars as festival, which prevail as the dominant style of seminars in American colleges today, the chairperson is a student and all the students rush to raise hands like Japanese elementary school children, and the professor sits behind smiling and joking at the reporter and discussants.

Yanagawa recognized that seminars as festival, among all types of seminars, embody the most suitable characteristics to symbolically represent the uneven dichotomy in the collegiate process. Their weak point, like the weak points of festivals themselves, lies in their tendency to consumerism, wastefulness and nonproductivity. Yanagawa sympathized with seminars as festival, and yet refrained from giving full support to this type of seminar.

*Seminars as the cultivation of vegetables in a back yard.* This is the type of seminar which emphasizes achievement through joint research, and has the aim of sharing intellectual exhilaration. Yanagawa proposed this as the ideal type of seminar he would like to sponsor.

He first intended to name this type of seminar "farming." Farming, however, is a profession which needs to sell its products and keep its independence as a business. Seminars in colleges, however, do not reach that level. Even if some gainful achievements might be obtained, the outcome of these seminars remains self-satisfaction. Hence the symbol of the fruit of cultivation from a private back yard. The produce is not expected to circulate in the open market, much as the vegetables cultivated in the back yard will not go beyond the family table. This is the type he proposes as the ideal seminar.

Yanagawa claimed that, as a scholar of religious studies, he places special emphasis on symbols. In that sense, he specifically esteemed the symbolic character of the seminars. In his opinion, to speak of the symbolic character of seminars by no means denies the significance of seminars, and yet the primarily symbolic character of seminars prevents them from ever replacing the substantive contributions of lectures in the instructional structure at colleges. If lectures are compared to business enterprises, seminars may be compared to the spirit of Protestantism.

Yanagawa recalled the then dominant style of conducting classes when he was a high school teacher a quarter century ago. The recommended style then was to encourage autonomous learning by the students and to discourage the teachers from pouring knowledge upon their students. Before too long, however, due to the increase in the amount of information and the

requirements of learning, efficiency became the norm and the imparting of fixed knowledge from the teachers prevailed over autonomous learning by the students. He lamented that the conditions of colleges are just the same as those of high schools. Although he agreed with the criticism against the inclination toward the one-way flow of information, he disagreed with the view regarding seminars as a panacea to remedy all the problems of college teaching (Yanagawa 1985 II, pp. 732-40). His own criticism of college teaching focused upon the breach of the balance between disciplinary instruction and autonomous learning, and leads to a call to recover the uneven dichotomy between the symbolic and the substantive.

The participatory observation of religious phenomena at first hand provides the Yanagawa seminar students with solid motivation to learn. While Yanagawa cultivates vegetables in his back yard, his students learn how to grow plants with him rather than receiving benediction, skill in swordsmanship, or excitement in festivity.

An important qualification of his seminars as the cultivation of vegetables in the back yard is that they are not the place for professional farming, employing laborers and selling the products to the market. Academic farms, in his view, lie in lectures, whether orally delivered in classrooms or published in printed form. He regards seminars ultimately as being in the realm of symbols. His approach to education, then, is to be concerned with the total balance of the educational process. Indeed, Yanagawa has been totally committed to realizing the ideal educator in his own person.

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