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Kunio Yanagita: The Life and Times of a Japanese Folklorist

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ABSTRACT

Although little is known outside his country, Kunio Yanagita (1875 - 1962) was one of Japan's most celebrated 20th-century scholars. Born in the vibrant modernization period, Yanagita lived its different stages as a poet, bureaucrat, journalist and folklorist. His insights provided new perspectives on Japanese cultural elements which challenged the image of Japan as a monolithic entity.

This work is an attempt to understand Yanagita's analytical framework outside its Japanese context. It examines the evolution of his thoughts in relation to the socio-cultural contexts of the time with special focus on the social tensions caused by Japan's entry into the global system.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

To my husband, Hoi

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Japan had exercised its seclusion policy for two and a half centuries when its

opened its door to the world with restoration of the rule of the Emperor in 1868. It

marked the beginning of a new era called Meiji (1868 - 1911). In this era of rapid

changes, the government aspired to create a strong and modern nation. As the

government made conscious efforts toward modernization and industrialization, it

implemented measures that proved to be inconsistent with the socio-cultural climate of

the nation. An example of such inconsistency was the varying messages women received

regarding their position in the newly established society.

Changes in the status of women were recorded and studied by Kunio Yanagita (1875

- 1962), the founder of Japanese folklore studies. He argued that while the hierarchical social

system of the samurai, peasants, crafts people, merchants and *eta* (outcasts) of the previous

Edo period (1603 - 1867) was abolished as a part of the Meiji social reforms, the values of

the samurai class based on Confucian ethics were inducted at this time to all the strata of the

society. As a result, the samurai code of customs and norms based on hierarchy and

patriarchy were disseminated throughout the society. Consequently, the gender role of

women within the *jomin* (ordinary people) class changed drastically (Tsurumi, 1979c, p. 2).

For example, a wife's role changed from the *shufu* (female head of the house) to that of the

okusan, "the lady in the backroom" (Ueno, 1987a, p. 136), originally a term for a samurai wife.

Nonetheless many observers of Japanese society assume that the values, customs and norms which were universalized as a result of the Meiji reforms were traditional norms (Tsurumi, 1979c, p. 2). As early as 1900, however, Yanagita denoted such delusions and warned people of their blind faith in the Meiji modernization efforts, which were defined as *bunmei kaika* (civilization and enlightenment) by a universal slogan of the Meiji government. Moreover, feeling that women's domain was "unfairly restricted judging from their earlier position and responsibilities in ancient time" (Yanagita, 1976, p. 315), he urged women to seek knowledge by "linking the past, present and future of their gender" (Yanagita, 1976, p. 315) and to systematize it for the innovation of ideas concerning their status in society.

His insight has been described as a product of a "situational understanding" (Tada, 1985, p. 110) of particularities in life, which is explained by Ronald Morse, who translated Yanagita's most acclaimed work *Tono monogatari*, as "the intuitive or psychological grasp" (1985, p. 19). His insights have provided a basis for new perspectives on historical and contemporary Japanese cultural elements in various spheres of life. This study, then, reviews the system of thought proposed by Kunio Yanagita who was born in the vibrant modernization period and lived its different stages as a poet, bureaucrat, journalist and founder of the Japanese folklore studies. Taking a historical approach, it examines the evolution of Yanagita's thought in relation to the

socio-cultural context of the time with particular focus on social tensions as the result of Japan's entry into the global system.

Research Description

Research Rationale and Objectives

An interest in Yanagita was first sparked when seeking, for a separate project, a fitting analytical framework for interviews with Japanese immigrant women in Canada. Yanagita caught my attention with his unique stance toward women's status in modern Japanese society, which was said to have been achieved through his attentions to the "small things in life" (Yanagita, 1976, p. 5).

My interest in Yanagita was deepened further as I set out to understand the approach which enabled his insights. In the process, I discovered his celebrated status in twentieth century Japanese intellectualism and his minimal presence in North America. In Japan, Yanagita's collected works of 36 volumes, which came out between 1968 and 1971, sold over 60,000 sets in the 1970s alone, while it was very difficult to obtain works related to Yanagita in North America, either in Japanese or English. Even many of those who consider themselves as "Japanologists" have not heard about him. I found this contrast peculiar considering the rising interest about Japan in North America in the last three decades, as well as the great number of ethnographic works produced as a result.

Furthermore, the contrast reminded me of my earlier study on women's issues based on a notion by Leslie Sclair, who wrote *Sociology in the Global System*. Sclair

points out that humanistic concerns such as women's issues have been incorporated into the global system (1991). In the study, I concluded that it was imperative to situate women's issues in an appropriate international perspective (1994). After pondering the contrast between Yanagita's reception in Japan and North America and my earlier contention, three questions came to my mind. Is it feasible to examine Yanagita and his humanistic concerns within the scope of the global system? If so, is there merit in making a study on Yanagita within the realm of the North American social sciences where he has a limited appeal? Finally, why is his presence in North America minimal?

There are at least four historical considerations in explaining Yanagita's limited appeal in North America. First, as Richard Dorson, an American folklorist, pointed out there is a language barrier in examining works by Japanese folklorists, among whom Yanagita was identified as the patriarchy of the discipline (1963, p. 5). Similarly works by other scholars on Yanagita and his ideology are "locked up" in Japanese, which can be penetrated through only a limited number of North American researchers with a command of the language and culture.

Second, as Edward Said eloquently pointed out in *Orientalism* (1978), the representations of non-Western societies in the West have traditionally been created without giving a regard to the worldview of those who are living in the societies. In *Orientalism*, Said criticized the unbalanced power structure in ethnographic representations of non-Western societies. For example, he pointed out the authority of Western writers of ethnographic works, in contrast to the passivity of the subjects who

are assumed lacking in ability to represent themselves. In such a power structure, the cultural others' worldviews are often seen as irrelevant or inferior. As Marcus and Fischer stated; "Their own views were of interest only in the same way as was a child's whom one wished to educate" (1986, p. 2).

Third, social frameworks formulated by cultural others, such as that of Yanagita, are often seen as incomprehensible.[1] In such views, language and other symbol systems of a culture are seen as determinants of what and how people experience the culture. Consequently, non-natives of the culture are trapped in their own symbol systems so that "there is no way of knowing how distorted one's perceptions are" when looking at cultural symbols of others (D'Andrade, 1995, p. 149). Hence, worldviews of those in cultures other than one's own are seen as locked in their systems, thus incomprehensible.

Fourth, the question of whether Yanagita's work belongs in the realm of Western social sciences slowed scholars' examination of the work. As shall be reviewed in a later section, some of these scholars have concluded that Yanagita did not fit in the specific

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[1] In reaction to the universal laws of grand theories which dominated prior to the 1970s, claims for 'multiplicity of reality' and 'intersubjectivity' have been valued as a "vehicle for the empowerment of silenced and the oppressed" (Goodson, 1995, p. 98). As a result, 'specifics and particulars' of personal and local are seen as a solution to represent voices silenced by such grand theories (Anderson, 1989; Denzin, 1997; Foltz and Griffin, 1996; Fox, 1996; Goodson, 1995; Marcus and Fischer, 1986; Poewe, 1996; Tedlock, 1992; Watson, 1992). Karla Poewe (1996) has pointed out that a single-minded emphasis on particularities caused the researchers to be "locked-in" within the isolated instances of particularities. Poewe calls this operation "ideological lock-in" (p. 186), which results from a conviction that 'multiplicity of reality' of personal and local would hinder meaningful interpretations by others. Ivor Goodson echoes that this trend in particularities obstructs cultural and social analysis, as a result, it "mystifies whilst reproducing" the same biases it intends to overcome (p. 89).

context. Consequently, their examinations did not promote a further exploration into

Yanagita's thoughts.

Notwithstanding the previous views on Yanagita in North America, I argue that

an examination of Yanagita and his ideology in the context of Western intellectualism is

both feasible and appropriate. I base my argument on three assumptions. First, as the

researcher's mother tongue is Japanese, language is not a barrier in carrying out the

examination. Second, regardless of criticisms, Yanagita's impact on the Japanese

intellectualism, particularly in relation to its search for identity in the twentieth century,

cannot be ignored. Third, previous negative views on Yanagita can be understood as

expressions of "negative empathy" Poewe (which will be reviewed in the following

section) as proposed by anthropologist, Karla. Therefore, they are not necessarily seen as

negating further explorations in Yanagita's ideology within the realm of the North

American social sciences.

As regards to the third point, the concept of 'negative empathy' is based on

Poewe's contention that human beings make sense of different ideas using shared human

faculties for empathy, such as thoughts, feelings, intuition and imagination. Poewe

described such an operation as an "empathetic process," which starts from "being open

to disclosure, insights and creativity" (1996, p. 197). Importantly, Poewe elaborated her

view that this process need not be positive to be called empathetic:

> Positive empathy refers to *agreement* between the stimulus
> derived from interaction with the other and one's inner
> activity. Negative empathy occurs when the suggestions

implied in the interaction *conflict* with one's inner self (p. 197).

Hence, negative empathy based on shared humanity is "about experiencing oneself with others, of knowing we are all different, yet recognizing the bonds among us rather than reifying the difference to make Others exotic or inferior" (Blackwood as quoted by Poewe, p. 200).

Therefore, when one shifts his or her point of view from 'looking at a impenetrable or exotic system of thought formulated by the cultural others' to 'embracing it as a part of the global process of living in this world,' as postulated by Poewe, the worldview of the cultural others becomes penetrable to even those who are not part of the culture. Furthermore, one's negative reactions in association with new ideas could be considered a key to understanding both the differences and similarities of living in the world. This could, then, lead to expansion of one's horizon of reality.

With these assumptions in mind, this examination of Kunio Yanagita looks at the worldview of an individual who lived through the vibrant events of the modernization period of Japan.

Research Contributions

Examining Yanagita's framework within the socio-cultural context of the time is meaningful in the following three ways. First, the information on Yanagita is limited in North American social sciences, while it is abundant and prominent in the Japanese

counterpart. Thus, it is valuable to examine Yanagita and his thoughts as a way of filling the information gap.

Second, Yanagita's works have been assessed as "untranslatable" and "very Japanese" by both Japanese and non-Japanese scholars exploring Yanagita's works (Oiwa, 1985b, p. vi - vii). Moreover, statements such as "a subtle joy of Yanagita can only be appreciated by native Japanese" (as cited by Oiwa, p. vi) have been made by proponents of Yanagita in reaction to the neglect and sometimes blunt rejections of Yanagita as a serious scholar outside Japan. Understanding such reciprocal negative reactions among the scholars is enhanced when "empathetic processes" based on shared humanities are assumed within this examination of Yanagita.

Third, Yanagita's thought can be situated in the particularities of the socio-cultural context. As a result, his thought and its development can not only "be located" within power structures and social milieus of Japan and the global system, they could in turn "interrogate" the structures in which they are embedded (Goodson, 1995, p. 98).[2] Consequently, this examination can contribute to an improved understanding of the Japanese and global social systems.

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[2] This echoes an assertion by a group of experiential anthropologists which states that ethnographic theories should be shaped by the "thoughtworld" of the people being studied (Goulet, 1994, Goulet and Young, 1994; 1994b; Guedon, 1994; Ridington, 1990).

Hence this study makes a unique contribution to Yanagita scholarship, cultural studies of Japanese society, studies related to intercultural interactions, and ultimately the reservoir of knowledge of humanity.

Literature Review

While there are numerous studies related to Yanagita in Japanese, those available in English are limited in number. The aim of this review is to assess the current state of knowledge related to Yanagita which is available in English, and to identify the issues and limitations of such knowledge.

The works related to Yanagita in English can be divided into three categories: historical as well as biographical works, analytical and applied works of Yanagita's framework, and works written by Yanagita which have been translated into English.

Historical and biographical works

One of the key works in this category is a doctoral dissertation *Yanagita Kunio and the Folklore Movement* written by Ronald A. Morse in 1974, which was subsequently published in 1990. Morse examined Yanagita's life, thoughts and methodology from a historian's point of view. He specifically focused on Yanagita's undertaking in founding *minzokugaku* or Japanese folklore studies. Morse called this "Yanagita studies" in another article (1985, p. 11).

Morse conducted thorough research and related Yanagita's ideological development to the times and conditions of Japanese society. However, due to his focus on the development of folklore studies as a scientific discipline, his observation of Yanagita's quest was generally limited to comparing Yanagita's methodology against "the principal components of scientific theory" (1990, p. 171). As a result, specific themes Yanagita dealt with, such as women's status in the Japanese history, were largely neglected.

Richard Dorson, an American folklorist, has also explored the development of Japanese folklore studies in his article, "Bridges between Japanese and American Folklorists" (1963). In the article, Yanagita's achievements were listed chronologically, however, comments were limited to praises of Yanagita as a "patriarch" of the discipline.

Analytical and applied works of Yanagita's framework

This category includes works by Kazuko Tsurumi, whom Ronald Morse described as "the only sociologist working on Yanagita who is trained to develop Yanagita's assumptions about social change beyond their present limits" (1990, p. 183). Having studied under Marion J. Levy Jr. at Princeton University, Tsurumi brought Yanagita to the attention of non-Japanese scholars. Based on Yanagita's premises, she worked towards easing the tension between the Japanese interpretations of modernization and theoretical systems of Western social sciences.

She has developed social models based on Yanagita since the early 1970s. Her models, under the theme of endogenous development, evolved from the model of endogenous modernization (1979b; 1979c; 1975b; 1974) to models based on animism and ecology (1996; 1992; 1979a; 1977). Her earlier models were created in reaction to the grand social theories in the line of Talcott Parsons.[3] In these models, Yanagita's concepts about time, forms of change and agent of social change were elaborated based on his conviction that academic investigations must produce socially useful knowledge.

In the latter models, Tsurumi linked animistic beliefs, illustrated in Yanagita's work with beliefs of patients at Minamata Bay, where the notorious mercury poisoning broke out in the 1950s (1996, 1992, 1979a; 1977).[4] This revealed the animistic and "pre-modern" beliefs in contemporary peoples' struggles with their surrounding and themselves in their daily living. Tsurumi proposed to consider animistic and ecological notions in folk beliefs as a basis for developing more holistic approaches to nature and humanity (1992). Consequently, it is argued that what seemed like contradictions in the conventional modern sciences can then be embraced within such paradigms (1992).

Under the second category of analytical works of Yanagita's framework, there was also a group of social scientists from Cornell and McGill Universities, which

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[3] They assumed that non-Western latecomers to the modernization process would follow the stages of development the Western countries have taken (Tsurumi, 1979b; 1975b).

[4] In the case of Minamata pollution, a plastic company contaminated the water of the bay with mercury-containing industrial waste which caused Minamata disease, a degenerative neurological disorder.

included three Japanese visiting scholars, in the early 1980s. The group held weekly meetings and one workshop in Montreal in 1982, which was entitled, "International Perspectives on Yanagita Kunio and Japanese Folklore Studies". The papers presented at the workshop have been published under the title of the workshop.

As J. Victor Koschmann stated in the introduction to the collection of papers, despite the limitation of the topic the images which emerged were "fractured" (1985, p. 1). He explained that there were two major controversies in the papers. The first one involved methodological issues, which entailed what should be considered as normative sciences and whether or not Yanagita's framework can be located within the boundary. The second point of argument was related to the political significance of Yanagita, whether he was a rebel against the academic, religious and political establishments or dogmatic and nationalistic.

With reference to the first issue, Bernard Bernier concluded that Yanagita's urge to go beyond modern objectivity through "emotional participation" (1985, p. 93) was unscientific and could lead to a claim of absolute truth. Thus, he rejected Yanagita's framework as a valid means of perceiving social reality. In contrast, Michitaro Tada from Kyoto University, one of the three Japanese scholars at the conference, provided an opposing view. He argued that Yanagita saw that "the true feelings are hidden; they lie in the shadow and are indiscernible and unknown to anyone unless that person places himself in a situation where he can share such an experience" (1985, p. 98). Therefore, "an evocation of experience" and "situational understandings" of behavior (p. 110)

through total participation were required in order to understand the hidden meanings. Tada called this approach a process of "abduction" as opposed to deduction or induction (p. 120).

Echoing Tada, Shinji Yamashita from Hiroshima University focused on Yanagita's search for traditions that were unconscious and nonverbal. Since Yanagita focused on such traditions expressed in behavior rather than in written texts, "the unconscious deed that reveals belief" (1985, P. 60) was seen as the central theme of Yanagita's framework. Keibo Oiwa, a Japanese graduate student at Cornell University, also pointed out Yanagita's implicit preference for nonverbal expression, such as wailing and dancing (1985a). Oiwa explained that this was an approach to penetrate the silence and invisibility of *jomin*, the rural, ordinary folk. Oiwa highlighted Yanagita's pursuit of living concepts of the past that lie hidden in the everyday life of *jomin* with the use of etymology and dialectological reductions (1985a, p. 129).

As for the second issue of Yanagita's relation to nationalism, Toshinao Yoneyama, an anthropologist from Kyoto University, defined Yanagita's discipline of *minzokugaku* in German as a "Völkskunde fur Japanischen," the study of Japan by Japanese (1985, p. 51). Despite the nationalistic overtone of the concept, Yoneyama's usage was in contrast to the state nationalism controlled by the centre. Yoneyama argued that Yanagita saw local traditions and folk beliefs as components of national culture, which were in danger of being overwhelmed by state nationalism. Hence, Yanagita's

view was nationalistic, however, quite contrary to the nationalism which venerated the

central authority.

On the other hand, Bernier's paper argued that Yanagita's "emotional appeal" to

the Japanese people, which was paralleled to Nazism,[5] was potentially dangerous (1985,

p. 92). He identified Yanagita's view of kinship and cultural uniqueness as the official

pre-war ideology of the "family state" under the patriarch of the emperor with the

unbroken imperial line of *kokutai*.

Concentrating on Yanagita's earlier work, *The Legends of Tono*, Ronald Morse

on the other hand suggested that the work be regarded as literature, while acknowledging

the work's nationalistic impact on some of the readers (1985). He argued that the Meiji

literary tradition of "naturalism"[6] would offer an appropriate framework for the work,

since the literary movement acted as channels for a sense of political purpose for creative

writers like Yanagita at the time.

Koschmann's paper also proposed a different perspective on Yanagita's political

significance. Instead of questioning whether Yanagita was a nationalist or not,

[5] It is argued by Bernier that: "Yanagita's popularity among intellectuals in Japan is not a guarantee that his conclusions are right or even that his works is important as an analysis of Japanese society.... One fairly recent and rather disquieting example is the overwhelming support of the German intellectuals for Nazism" (1985, p. 92).

[6] The term "naturalism" was introduced by Katai Tayama to the Japanese literary world around the turn of the twentieth century (Morse, 1985). It was interpreted by Tayama and his literary group, to which Yanagita belonged, as devotion to individualism, in opposition to the oppressive conventions of society. The naturalists employed realistic depiction of an individual in his environment with a single character's point of view (Morse, 1985, p. 20).

Koschmann focused on the fact that *minzokugaku* was developed as a "counter discipline" which "contravene(d) the tenets of scholarship and the definition of truth upon which the modern Japanese establishment relied" (1985, p. 7). Koschmann contended that Yanagita's stance of "counter discipline" wilted as the aspects of pre-war regimes were restructured after World War II. Therefore, Koschmann explained that by the time Yanagita died in 1962, Yanagita had lost a sense of unity or focus in the discipline of *minzokugaku* he was leading. Consequently Koschmann argued that it is more meaningful to examine Yanagita as "counter discipline" than to question whether or not Yanagita was nationalistic.

In a relatively recent article entitled "The Theory of 'Native Faith' Set Forth by Yanagita Kunio" in 1992, Minoru Kawada outlined 'native faith' as Yanagita's's central theme. He defined it as a "faith unique to Japanese behind their customs and folkways" (p. 23). He then further stated that Yanagita's pursuit for a 'native faith' was to "rescue their (Japanese) racial pride (= national identity)" as "the source of the Japanese sense of value" (p. 44). However, like Yoneyama, Kawada cautioned that Yanagita's usage of 'racial pride' was not nationalistic from an international or spiritual point of view. Rather it was seen as a basis for achieving a balance between the inevitable Westernization of the twentieth century and Japanese ethical standards and outlooks on life (p. 44).

Yanagita's works translated into English

There are nine articles, six books and two editorial works by Yanagita which have been translated into English. (A list is found in the appendix). The articles were translated mostly in the 1930s and 40s in journals such as *Contemporary Japan* and *Travel Japan*. One exception is "Opportunities for Folklore Research in Japan" written in the 1960s as an introductory essay for the aforementioned work by Richard Dorson (1963), which briefly summarized the uniqueness of Japanese folklore studies.

Yanagita's other works available in English are: *About Our Ancestors* (1989), *Japanese Folktales* (1983), *Japanese Manners and Customs in the Meiji Era* (1957), *Studies in Fishing Village Life* (1983), *Studies in Mountain Village Life* (1983) and *The Legends of Tono* (1975). In addition, the *Japanese Folklore Dictionary* (1958) was compiled by the Folklore Institute of Japan under the editorial direction of Yanagita and George Brady. Finally, *The Yanagita Kunio Guide to the Japanese Folk Tale*, which was edited by Nihon Hoso Kyokai under the supervision of Yanagita, was translated and published posthumously in 1986. Considering that Yanagita published approximately one hundred books and over one thousand articles in Japanese, it is clear that only a small fraction of his works have been translated into English.

In summary, works related to Yanagita exist in English; however, they are limited. As pointed out by Morse, Bernier and Oiwa, reasons for Yanagita's limited appeal outside Japan can be linked to the criticisms of Yanagita as "unsystematic, unscientific and arbitrary"(Tada, 1985, p. 10), which are characteristics traditionally

considered non-scientific, thus non-academic. Consequently, the majority of works on

Yanagita, both biographical and analytical, have not passed the question of whether it is

meaningful to examine Yanagita in the context of Western social sciences. This is

evident in a question once asked by Yamashita, "Can Yanagita cross the border?" (as

quoted by Oiwa, 1985, p. vii).

Due to this emphasis on appropriateness in the North American social sciences,

particular themes in Yanagita's frameworks and the issues he examined (such as

marriage and family systems) have been dislocated or neglected. Furthermore, efforts to

bring Yanagita pass this stage, such as Tsurumi's works, are rare, and their claims for

scientific methodology have been greeted with skepticism (Oiwa, p. vii). The present

study, therefore, is an attempt to bridge the gap in information available in English on

Yanagita. By focusing on Yanagita's intellectual development with an international

perspective, this study situates and examines Yanagita and his ideology within the global

system.

Methodology

This study utilizes the method of historical investigation as a research framework.

As defined by Gary Anderson, historical research is "past oriented research which seeks

to illuminate a question of current interest by an intensive study of material that already

exists" (1990, p. 113).

When writing about the life and thought of a historical person, a great degree of dependence is often placed upon the subject's own evaluation of himself. Yanagita, however, maintained a certain degree of disdain for writing about his own life, particularly his involvement with literary movements in his formative years. Moreover, his private manuscripts and unpublished essays have been largely inaccessible to the public. The only exception is *Kokyo nanajyunen* (Hometown, Seventy Years, 1992a) that Yanagita dictated at the age of 84. This was recorded and summarized by Koichi Kaji. However, its chronological inaccuracy and silence on certain events have provoked some to question its validity (Hashikawa, 1978).

Gail Lee Bernstein wrote, in the preface of a biographical work on a Japanese contemporary of Yanagita, that an autobiography which was written in the last stage of the subject's life must be "treated not as an exact image of the man, but as a portrait of the man he wanted his many readers, at the end of his life, to remember" (1976, p. xiii). Similarly, in this study, *Kokyo nanajyunen* is considered not as a sole source, but in collaboration with his other published works and secondary sources by other scholars who have done works related to Yanagita.

The main approach of this study, then, is to provide an examination of Yanagita's framework by using Japanese texts written by Yanagita and secondary information by other scholars in both Japanese and English. This examination is situated within the context of his life in relation to the socio-cultural situations of Japan and its surroundings. Consequently, historical and analytical information on socio-political

situations of Japan and the world during and beyond Yanagita's life is also employed.

CHAPTER TWO

FORMATIVE YEARS

Japan and the West: The Meiji Restoration

Japan under the rule of the Tokugawa shogunate had exercised its seclusion policy for two and a half centuries when world events forced the regime to sign a Treaty of Friendship with the United States in 1854. This brought an end to Japan's seclusion policy and marked the beginning of Japan's obsession to modernize itself so that it could revise this unequal treaty. Consequently, a series of momentous political events were sparked which led to the overthrow of the Tokugawa shogunate in 1867 leading to the Meiji Restoration.

The Meiji Restoration, which was named after the Emperor Meiji (1852 - 1912) was a political revolution carried out by younger members of Japan's ruling samurai class drawn from the Tokugawa hierarchical social structure. Unsatisfied with the shogunate's handling of foreign affairs, they called for a return to the spirit and ways of the past under the rightful ruling powers of the emperor and for removal of the foreign influences. However, having recognized the material superiority of the West, the leaders quickly abandoned the idea of recapturing the past with isolation from the world in the new era of Meiji. Instead, this period up to 1880s became what Paul Varley called the time when "the Japanese unabashedly pursued the fruits of Western 'civilization and enlightenment' (*bunmei-kaika*)" (1984, p. 206).

The Meiji leaders shared overriding concern for the territorial independence of Japan and saw modernization as essential to protect their country against possible future threats from outside. As a result, while it was clearly in the government's intention to create "a nation of subjects united in their devotion to the principles of imperial loyalty and filial piety" (Smith, 1983, p. 71), the efforts used often modeled those of the West for the emulation of the Western modernization. Such efforts, and the abandonment of the seclusion policy, were reflected in the Emperor's Charter Oath of 1868 which stated that: "knowledge shall be sought for throughout the world so that the welfare of the Empire may be promoted" (Adachi, 1976, p. 1).

The sentiment of this period can be also inferred in an edict by Emperor in 1871:

> My country is now undergoing a complete change for the
> old to the new ideas.... Therefore, I call upon all the wise
> and strong minded to appear and become good guides to
> the government. During youth time, it is positively
> necessary to view foreign countries, so as to become
> enlightened as to the ideas of the world; and boys as well as
> girls, who will themselves become men and women, should
> be allowed to go abroad (Adachi, 1975, p. 8).

Together with the Charter Oath of 1868, this edict advocated a policy of encouraging the Japanese to seek knowledge abroad, to which many young men eagerly responded. In addition, feeling that educated mothers were required for the rearing of civilized subjects, the government sent five young girls to the United States for them to learn the "essentials of civilization and methods of child rearing" (Rose, 1991, p. 10). This idea of educating

women to be 'good wives and wise mothers' underlined arguments for women's

education in the early modern Japanese society (Rose, p. 10).

During this time, going to the United States or Europe to study, usually by means

of government sponsorship, became the surest way for advancement in the Meiji society.

For those who could not make it abroad, government sponsored foreign teachers and

technical advisors became the alternative source of guidance for Westernization, thus,

"civilization." As a result of this pursuit of "the fruits of the Western civilization and

enlightenment," concepts such as freedom, independence, and individual rights based on

British liberal democracy were introduced and discussed in intellectual circles.

Committed to modernizing the country, the government carried out a series of

steps for reforming the society. These efforts included the abolition of the hierarchical

social class system of samurai, peasants, crafts men, merchants and *eta*, and of the feudal

han system of controlling the regions of the country. As a result of these reforms, basic

legal equalities for all citizens were introduced, at least theoretically, and a centrally

administrated system based on prefectures was installed.

With the Education Act of 1872, the Meiji government also inaugurated a new

policy of universal primary education. This code declared that learning was important in

self-advancement which would promote national progress (Rose, 1991, p. 12). In the first

decade of universal education, the Western style of individualistic thinking was

encouraged along with emphasis on practical curriculums. However, it should be noted

that this encouragement for the enlightenment of the masses was limited to the purpose

of advancing the nation to the level of the Western countries.

As the Meiji government consisted almost entirely of persons from the samurai

class, they inevitably preserved the feudalistic attitude toward the citizenry despite their

rejection of Tokugawa feudalism. This was clear in the government's manoeuvre in the

1880s to incorporate native values of the samurai class, such as Shinto-Confucian

concepts, into the norms and ideology of the commoners through universal education and

political propaganda. For example, moral training based on Shinto-Confucian ethics was

installed in the central constitutions of the schools. Similarly, aim of the education in the

1880s shifted to serving the state from the former emphasis on individuals. This was

clearly reflected in the Imperial Rescript on Education which was issued in 1890:

> Know ye, Our Subjects! Our Imperial Ancestors have
> founded Our Empire on a basis broad and everlasting, and
> have deeply and firmly implanted virtue; Our subjects ever
> united in loyalty and filial piety have from generation to
> generation illustrated the beauty thereof. This is the glory
> of the fundamental character of Our Empire, and herein
> also lies the source of Our education (Varley, 1984, p.
> 215).

This shift in the 1880s has been explained with what seems to be two opposing

views. One view analyzes it as an attempt to regulate, or civilize, the behaviour of the

Japanese citizens (Smith, 1983, p. 72 - 77), thus a continuation of the earlier efforts to be

accepted as a civilized state. The second view interprets it as a conservative backlash to

the national efforts for Westernization, thus it is seen as a result of the reassessment of

the earlier decade (Rose, 1991, p. 52). Either way, the hierarchical values based on Confucian ethics of the *samurai* class, such as loyalty and filial piety, were reinstated at the centre of the morality prescribed by the state at this time for all strata of the society.

Furthermore, despite the fact that the imperial household had held no political power for centuries, the line of sovereigns of the imperial household was described as sacred and inviolable, and "unbroken for ages eternal," in the newly introduced Meiji Constitutions (Varley, 1984, p. 222). As a result, the concept of *kokutai*, which prescribed the Japanese state as a Confucian family under the patriarchy of the emperor in the line of a supreme deity of Shinto, became accepted as socio-political orthodoxy and contributed to the glorification of the sovereignty of the imperial household in the 1890s.

It should be noted, however, that the movement toward Westernization was not completely reversed in the 1880s. Many prominent figures were still committed to Westernization, and those who called for a reassessment could not ignore the conspicuous imperialistic influence of the West in the world. What the reassessment sought for, however, was a feeling of self-worth after going through humbling experiences of fundamental reforms of the society in pursuing the mighty West. There was a surge of renewed interest in Japan's classical literature, while a vital literary movement under the influence of the Western literature, as shall be reviewed later, was being undertaken simultaneously. Hence it was in this period of rapid changes, when Japan faced the many dilemmas of modernization, that Kunio Yanagita was born.

Childhood (1875 - 1890)

Yanagita was born as Kunio Matsuoka on July 31, 1875 in Tsujikawa, Hyogo

prefecture, Japan. Tsujikawa is located in the fertile lowlands along Setonaikai (the

Japanese Inland Sea) in the south-western part of Honshu, the main island of Japan (Map

1). The area has a mild but humid monsoon climate. When Yanagita was born, the

village had about hundred and twenty households, and it had enjoyed its greatest

prosperity during the Tokugawa Period (1603 - 1868).

The impacts of the Meiji restoration, which occurred seven years before

Yanagita's birth, reached even a small town like Tsujikawa, and it affected Yanagita's

family, the Matsuokas. His father, Misao was a teacher who lost his job when a structural

reform took place in the educational system. As a result, the family was financially

strained, and his father was emotionally troubled.

The Matsuoka family had a tradition of scholarship in Confucian studies and

Chinese herbal medicine. Men of the household also had a strong interest in the Shinto

elements of Japanese faith, while the women were dominantly Buddhists. The tradition

of scholarship in the family goes back at least as far as Kunio's great-grandfather, Sachu

who was a Chinese herbal doctor.

Sachu's eldest daughter, Kozuru married Toan, who was adopted into the family

and took the Matsuoka family name. However, Toan was not well liked by Sachu. When

"he was unreasonable while recovering from typhoid" (Yanagita, 1992a, p. 429), the

marriage was dissolved and Toan was disowned by the family (Tsurumi, 1975a, p. 437-8). This happened when their son, Misao was seven years old.

Kozuru, whom along with his mother Tsurumi called "the other great woman" in Yanagita's life (1975a, p. 437 - 8), had studied medicine, Chinese studies and higher math. She also had a gift for writing. Refusing to remarry, she opened her own elementary (*terakoya*) school to instruct neighbourhood children. Later she sent her son Misao to study medicine with a doctor in a neighbouring village. After his talent for Chinese poetry was recognized at the doctor's, Misao was sent to study Confucianism at private academies and official han (domain) schools (Yanagita, 1992a).

In 1859, Misao settled back in Tsujikawa and became a doctor. He married Take from the nearby town of Hojo. However, due to difficulty with his chosen profession, he became a teacher at the nearby han school in Yusen in 1863. He taught there until 1868 when the new Meiji school system was introduced and han schools were eliminated. After losing his teaching job at the han school, he taught at a number of schools in the new system. He then became a priest at a Shinto shrine in Tsujikawa (Tsurumi, 1975a, p. 437).

Yanagita recalled his father's nervous breakdown during this period. Although Yanagita fully acknowledged his father's depth of knowledge, which earned him the respect of the community, he was somewhat critical of his father's lack of practical knowledge. He described him as "sealed off from the changes around him" (as cited by Morse, 1990, p. 6). Bunzo Hashikawa called Misao an "unfortunate feudalistic intellect =

reader" in reference to Yanagita's later argument against intellectualism based solely on written texts (1978, p. 19).

In contrast ton his feelings for his father, Yanagita had a great respect for his mother. Though she was a woman with little education, Yanagita described her as a woman of outstanding memory, strong leadership skills and remarkable insight based on real life experiences (Tsurumi, 1975a, p. 437). Yanagita recalled it was Take who held the family together in the difficult times when her husband could not cope with the changes which accompanied the Meiji restoration. Yanagita also commented that much of his personality can be traced to his mother (Tsurumi, 1975, p. 437). In the preface of *Kokyo nanajyunen*, Yanagita recollected her memories and described a scene where Take capably mediated a quarrel between a couple and was eventually thanked by both parties.

Yanagita also described in *Kokyo nanajyunen* his house in Tsujikawa, where Take's strong personality and the smallness of the house brought tragedy to his oldest brother's marriage (1992a). Yanagita wrote:

> My oldest brother took a bride from a neighbouring village
> when he was twenty. However, my house did not have
> space for two couples to live together harmoniously. The
> fact that my mother was a strong and scrupulous person
> made it worse for them, as the saying goes, "two suns hold
> not their courses in one sphere." Moreover, in those days,
> the mother-in-law would always have her way over the
> daughter-in-law in family disputes. After about a year, my
> sister-in-law escaped back to her parental home. My
> brother begun to drink and caused family unsettlement.
> Since the Matsuoka family had a tradition in the medical
> profession, my parents sold some land and a house to send
> him to a medical school. After graduating the school at

twenty six, he had no intention of returning to his home
town for he would need money to open a medical practice,
and there were several doctors who were related to him
back home. He then married a woman from an established
house in Ibaraki prefecture, and through help of a friend
succeeded to a house of a doctor, who had died young, in a
town called Fukawa. He only went back to Tsujikawa for
visit thirty years after he left. By then, he had lost his local
dialect and acquired that of Fukawa (translated by the
author, 1992a, p. 418-9).

Yanagita was about six years old when his brother's marriage fell apart.

However, he recalled the event left him with a strong impression and considered it a

factor in his future scholarly interest:

I feel that his [my brother's] misfortune was due to the
Japanese family organization which existed without critical
reflections on how it works and how it could be
improved... It is possible to attribute to this smallness of
my home and its fate the source of my interest in folklore
studies (translated by the author, 1992a, p. 419).

In *Kokyo nanajyunen*, Yanagita also recalled being sickly and demanding much

attention in his childhood. Due to his weak physical condition, he was spoiled and

mischievous. Since he had a very good memory, Buddhist temples recruited Yanagita to

become a temple-assistant. Consequently, the family often threatened to send him to a

temple for being disobedient (Yanagita, 1992a, p. 434).

In 1884, the family moved to the nearby village of Hojo, where Take was from. It

was there that Yanagita experienced a famine as a ten year old. He recalled in *Kokyo*

nanajyunen that this experience shaped his later interest in agricultural politics (Yanagita,

1992a, p. 426 - 7). By this time, Yanagita had began writing Chinese style poems. He was proficient in the difficult *kanbun* prose style by eleven.

While he excelled in his studies, Yanagita continued to be a demanding child. Since the family was still going through difficult times, Yanagita's father asked the head of an established family in Hojo, who was a friend of his, to take care of Yanagita. Consequently, Yanagita lived with the Miki family for a year when he was eleven. Such casual shuffling of children from one family to another was a common practice in the Meiji period, as many well-known figures, such as Hirobumi Ito, a politician, and Soseki Natsume, a novelist, experienced similar adoptions (Bernstein, 1976, p. 8).

While later mental disturbances of Soseki, whose lifelong theme was isolation and loneliness (Varley, 1984, p. 249), have been linked to his childhood experience as an "unwanted child" (Bernstein, p. 1976, p. 8), Yanagita recalled the year with the Miki family fondly and with gratitude. He identified the year as the first phase of his reading fixation, and the Miki family encouraged his intellectual curiosity by allowing him access to the great collection of books the residence contained.

In 1887, when Yanagita was thirteen, he edited his own collection of poems under the title *Chikubayashi* (Kamata, 1978). Included in the collection was a Chinese style poem Yanagita composed with encouragement from his father. It was written for the occasion of his departure from his parental home to live with his two older brothers in the Tokyo area. Hashikawa observed that Yanagita's Eastern classical taste was greatly influenced by his father as seen in this instance (1978, p. 26).

This decision for Yanagita to leave his natal home was made due to his frail health. He went to live with his eldest brother, Kanae, who was taking care of his younger brothers financially and worked in the medical field in Fukawa in Ibaraki prefecture (see Map 1). Consequently, the following years of Yanagita's schooling were guided by Kanae and Michiyasu, the second oldest brother who was a student in the Medical Department in the Tokyo Imperial University at this time.

Fukawa was a small port on the Tone River in Ibaraki prefecture. Since Yanagita's health prevented him from going to school, he spent numerous hours reading at a neighbour's house. Yanagita identified this period as the second phase of reading fixation (Hashikawa, 1978, p. 26). He recalled his loneliness in Fukawa, as his parents were back home and his brother was busy with his practice. He attributed his interest in studying differences between the locality and his home town to this loneliness (Yanagita, 1992a, p. 422).

Among many of his observations, he found it particularly interesting that children called each other by their first names without honorary terms of address. In his hometown in Hyogo, everyone attached honorary terms of address such as "han" or "yan" after their first names; exceptions were made only for very close relatives (Yanagita, 1992a, p. 422-3).

He also noticed that almost all households had only two children in Fukawa, hence people were surprised to find out he had seven brothers. They would exclaim, "What do you do with so many?" He recalled:

With a child's understanding, I realized why they had to take the two-child system. The area often suffered serious famines. When there is lack of food, the adjustment was made with the death: the population of Japan was maintained at about 30 million until around the Satsuma Rebellion (of 1877);[7] this was done by vulgar methods of birth control unlike the methods used now. This area was devastated by the famine of Tenmei. Then, though with little documentation of serious damages, it can be conjectured that the famine of Tenpo hit the people even before they had fully recovered from the previous one.

I was told that people of Fukawa had often come to my eldest brother to ask for a death certificate [for infanticide]. My brother, however, refused in most cases.

My clearest memory from the two years or so in the area by the Tone River is a small temple of Jizo[8] by the river. In the temple, there was a votive plaque of a woman who was pressing and murdering the infant right after giving birth. Her shadow on a screen behind her had horns on her head, and there was a Jizo standing nearby crying. I remember understanding the meaning of the painting even as a child and feeling a chill (translated by the author, Yanagita, 1992a, p. 424).

Between Hyogo (in the south-western part of Japan) and Ibaraki (in the north-eastern part), there are significant differences in climate, and consequently the crop yields in farming. The milder climate of the former locale allowed two crops or more in a year, where the latter could produce only once. Moreover, in Ibaraki, even the one crop, which was usually rice, was often very unstable.

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[7] The Satsuma Rebellion in 1877 was a revolt against the Meiji government which was led by a group of discontent samurais who continued to pursue the feudal privilege and ideals of the samurai class.

[8] Jizo is a Buddhist patron deity of children.

In the agricultural sector in general, industrial modernization brought about little improvement in economic status. The agricultural population was not only neglected in state policies, but it was also the peasants who were forced to bear high taxation for the industrialization and modernization of the country. For example when the samurai class was abolished, "stipends" were paid to ex-samurai to compensate for the privileges they had enjoyed before, and the brunt of this expenditure was provided by peasants (Chan, 1991, p. 9).

Moreover, a new centrally-administered land tax in cash meant that a fixed sum of tax had to be paid annually regardless of a good or bad harvest. As a result, many land owning peasants were forced to sell their lands and to become tenants who paid very high rent in kind to their landlords (Adachi, 1976, p. 14 - 5). Thus, ownership of land was progressively falling into fewer hands, and there were many impoverished peasants when Yanagita was living in Fukawa. He lived in Fukawa until he moved to Tokyo to stay with Michiyasu, the second brother in 1890 at age fifteen.

The Literary Context

Yanagita's youth coincided with a period of great literary excitement. Yanagita was greatly involved with and influenced by various literary movements, which would play a profound role in his formulation of folklore studies in the later stages of his life. During the previous Tokugawa period (1603 - 1868), with the exception of some forms of poetry, literature was seen as a frivolous mode of entertainment or means of moral

education, not as an art form. The moralizing nature of writing continued into the early

Meiji period with *"gesaku"*, which were largely trite satires of the changes brought about

in society as a result of the Westernization process of the Meiji Restoration (Henshall,

1987, p. 6). However, it was the same Westernization process that eventually elevated the

literary standards in Japanese society (Henshall, 1987).

Initially, Western literature was brought into society for its functional value. It

provided models for the ways Japanese should behave in Western-dominated

international scenes: Samuel Smiles' *Self Help*, which was translated into Japanese in

1871 as a guide to becoming a gentleman, is a good example (Henshall, 1987). Then, as

the interest and curiosity in the West grew, a wider range of works were translated. For

example, reflecting the political movement for parliamentary government in the 1880s,

politically oriented novels such as those by Disraeli became popular.

In the 1890s, just when Japan was entering into the new era of parliamentary

government and imperialist expansion with the victory in the Sino-Japan War (1894 -

95), the literary world saw a rise of various ideas and movements. While the outlooks of

the movements and their activities differed greatly, one pressing question which

underpinned them all was the question of the relationship between individual and society

in the rapidly changing Japan in the early stages of modernization (Varley, 1984, p. 244).

It was particularly in this period that a vast body of Western literature, such as works by

Rousseau, Nietzsche, Tolstoi and Ibsen, influenced the development of individualism in

Japan.

Those who were at the centre of these movements had been encouraged through the early stage of universal education assert qualities of individualism that "presumably accounted for the strength of the 'civilized' nations of the West" (Bernstein, 1976, p. 13). While only a few understood the meaning of individualism (which became associated with selfishness), still many youth at the time were preoccupied with the Western ideal, in association with concepts of equality, personal fulfillment and political rights (Bernstein, p. 25). However, the political situation of the time, which was epitomized by the Meiji Constitution demanded subordination of individuals to the state. Hence, it offered a contradictory and frustrating socio-political environment for the young literary minded.

Among the literary movements, romanticism, which was largely fostered through *Bungakukai*, a literary journal, grew particularly strong by the mid 1880s. Despite its sentimental style, the movement aimed at replacing the "old fashioned" literature with the realistic psyche of individuals (Henshall, 1987, p. 10). Among the leading figures in the romantic movement was Ogai Mori, who was also known as an accomplished linguist, translator, writer, critic, and doctor - later Surgeon General. Based on his personal experience during a four year stay in Germany, he published *The Dancing Girl (Maihime)* in 1890. It was labeled as *Ich Roman* or I-novel, in which the psyche of an individual, particularly his loneliness, centred the scenes through his single character's point of view. In *The Dancing Girl*, the protagonist sacrificed his love for a German girl to get ahead in modernizing Japan.

Rising from romanticism, naturalism also held weight in Japanese literary

movements around the turn of the twentieth century. Naturalism was stimulated by its

European counterpart, particularly by the writings of Zola and Maupassant. However, the

movement in Japan lacked Zola's notion of determinism, in which an individual was

seen as devoid of free will and moral choice under the deterministic control of his or her

surroundings. Instead, the Japanese version focused on realistic portrayals characterized

by directness, bluntness and simplicity. Furthermore, the Japanese naturalistic writers

saw society and its rules, such as tradition and morality, as artificial, while an individual

who was free from the restraints of a social unit was freer and closer to his or her natural

existence.

Hence, those who were involved in the movement aspired to depict the "natural

individual" bluntly and truthfully. They admired those who showed courage to do so

even when they could be termed 'anti-social,' a label which could harm the writer's

reputation within the general public. For example, Toson Shimazaki's *The Broken*

Commandment (Hakai) published in 1906 (which is generally regarded as the first

naturalistic novel) situated a member of *eta*, Japan's pariah class, as its protagonist. Also,

Katai Tayama, another leading figure of the movement, revealed a personal intimate

extramarital affair with his young student in his novel, *The Quilt (Futon*, 1907*)*.

These writers of naturalism have been criticized for their extreme emphasis on the

individual with little attempt to relate him or her to larger societal concerns. Katai

Tayama, for example, became engrossed in exhaustive self-exposure and, later in similar analysis of his family members and friends. The movement, however, provided a medium of expression for the modern literary fascination with the Meiji individual's complex struggle in understanding himself and his surroundings in the rapidly changing modern world.

Much like the novel genre, poetry, which had been the "most 'serious' of Japanese literary pursuit(s)" (Varley, 1984, p. 229), received a strong impulse to relate its own tradition to newly introduced features of modern Western culture. First, there was an attempt to develop a new kind of verse based on Western poetry. The publication of the *Collection of Poems in the New Style (Shintaisho)* in 1882 was such an example. Then, paralleling the movement toward realism in the novel genre, a group of *tanka*[9] poets led by Shiki Masaoka[10] advocated "realistic depiction" and called for the use of modern language and freedom in poetic expression. The earliest *tanka* anthology, *Manyoshu* of mid-eighth century, enjoyed reinvigorated appreciation for its directness in expression and sincerity.

However, this renewed interest in *tanka* was also part of a larger movement in reaction to the prevalent Westernization efforts. It was argued by Setsurei Miyake, for example, that a modernization process did not have to be equated with the attainment of a

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[9] *Waka* or *tanka* are Japanese thirty-one-syllable poems.

[10] Yanagita's brother, Michiyasu, was one of such leading *Manyoshu* scholars.

set of universal characteristics. On the contrary, the unique qualities of a state, which distinguished it from others, served it best in competing among nations (Varley, 1984, p. 218). Therefore, from this point of view, the preservation of national cultures was seen as essential in the modernization process that Japan was going through. Consequently, while Western-inspired modern Japanese literature was being invigorated, Japanese classical literature, such as the prose of Saikaku and *haiku* of Basho, both from the Edo period, and *tanka* of *Manyoshu,* were being reprinted simultaneously.

Considering the fact that many of those who were active in the modern literary movements were also members of *tanka* classes, the tension between traditions and modern influences was not considered as a clear dualism. Nevertheless, it was this tension during the 1880s and 90s that gave the literary genres a political edge and captured many, particularly those who were coming of age, like Kunio Yanagita, during a time when literature was still seen as frivolous.

Yanagita and the literary world

In 1890, Yanagita moved to Tokyo to stay with Michiyasu. While Michiyasu was a reputable ophthalmologist, he associated with influential literally figures such as Ogai Mori and Arimoto Yamagata, who served as the Minister of Education. Besides his medical practice, Michiyasu taught poetry at the Imperial Household between 1909 and 1920, and he advised the Ministry of Education on various matters after 1910. In 1916, Michiyasu aided in the publication of a collection of poems by the Emperor Meiji.

Retiring from his medical practice in 1926, he devoted himself to the study of *Manyoshu* (Morse 1990, p. 8-12).

Soon after Yanagita moved in with Michiyasu, he joined the *tanka* class of Tatsuo Matsuura, whom Michiyasu and his poetry teacher had recommended. Matsuura was a member of Keien School of *tanka* in the tradition of Kageki Kagawa. The school favoured simplicity and truthfulness in depiction, and believed that the spirituality of nature can be found through one's simple feelings when associating with nature (Tayama, 1987, p. 100 - 1).

Despite some new approaches to *tanka* in the Keien School, Matsuura's approach was more classical. Tayama Katai, his student, commented: "His poetry was a little stiff and classical. As a result he tended to lack directness and spontaneity" (Tayama, 1987, p. 102). However, as a believer of Hirata Shinto,[11] Matsuura's *tanka* reflected his search for the realm of mystery. Tayama noted that "From Matsuura sensei I learned the wonder of other-worldliness and mysticism, the significance of experience, and the value of human character" (Tayama, p. 102 - 3). Hashikawa observed that Yanagita was also greatly influenced by Matsuura's world view which included *yugen*, a spiritual world in coexistence with the material world (1978).

Since Matsuura scorned fame, there were few who knew his name after his death. However, through his classes, he influenced budding literary figures such as Yanagita,

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[11] It is a part of the Neo-Shintoist movement which searched for a true national spirit with a great emphasis on the afterworld.

Katai Tayama, Gyokumei Oota, Shoshi Miyazakiko, Toshiyuki Sakurai and Tsunayasu

Tsuchimoto. Through this class and the influence of Michiyasu, Yanagita became

acquainted with both leading and budding literary figures.

In literary circles, Yanagita was considered a "child genius" (Tayama, 1987, p.

20). Tayama recalled:

> Yanagita Kunio was still only about fourteen or
> fifteen in those days, but he was an extraordinary
> genius, so S (*sic*) and I paid him a visit - that winter, if
> I remember right - at the house in Okachimachi in
> Shitaya where he was living with his elder brother
> Inoue Michiyasu,[12] and made him a member of the
> group [a discussion group Tayama formed with his
> literary friends] (Tayama, p. 64).

As early as 1891, at the age of 17, Yanagita published his *tanka* alongside with

Michiyasu in literary journals such as *Shigarami Zoshi* and *Bungakukai*. Besides *tanka*,

Yanagita was immersed in the literary movements of the day. Every time new foreign

language editions of Western literature came in, Yanagita and his friends would rush off

to obtain the book, and they would debate into the night about new trends in literature.

Tayama Katai captured the excitement of the period in his work, *Thirty Years in

Tokyo*:

> It was thanks to the upstairs section of Maruzen[13] that the
> surging currents of thought of nineteenth century

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[12] Michiyasu had been adopted into the influential Inoue family at the age of twelve.

[13] A major bookstore in Japan.

continental Europe broke relentlessly through onto the shores of this remote Far Eastern Island. You'd encounter some young man walking along the streets of Marunouchi in the vicinity of the Palace, clutching the copy of 'Fathers and Sons' that he'd ordered some time before and looking as if he'd just met his sweetheart. You'd see some other young man spotting a copy of *Anna Karenina* on the second-floor shelves at Maruzen and emptying his month's allowance from his purse to buy it with a look of delight on his face. The favourite reading matter of such young men included Alphonse Daudet, with his cheerful sympathy, Pierre Loti, with his impressionism, and, among American writers, the short works of the Californian poet Bret Harte, who wrote about life in the mines.

Balzac was also popular. Young literature students were often to be seen with cheap copies of *Père Goriot* and *Eugénie Grandet*.

When it came to German writers, people like Paul Heyse and Gottfried Keller were amongst those read. Nietzsche and Ibsen were introduced a little later. The arrival of the great waves of European thought was an interesting phenomenon. It was a grand sight to see such things as Nietzsche's fire and Ibsen's defiance, and Tolstoi's 'self', and Zola's analytical approach enter into the midst of a set national character formed by three thousand years of insularity - a calm little world of chivalry and Confucianism, Buddhism and superstition, duty and humanity, humiliating self-sacrifice and forbearance, compromise and social etiquette. Of course, it is hard to say to just what extent these new things were understood, or whether they were introduced correctly and without distortion in the first place. But at any rate it is a fact that they did arrive, full of fearsome energy and might, upon the Japanese literary world, which had nothing but Chikamatsu and Saikaku. Young people were all attracted to the new arrivals... Yanagita and I were always talking about Ibsen, and Nietzshe, and Daudet, and Turgenev. We couldn't carry on as we were. We couldn't carry on dilly-dallying. We had to do something to emerge as the champions of a new society. We talked over and over again about such things (Tayama, 1987, p. 167).

In the late 1890s, Yanagita found *jojoshi* (lyrical poem) with its *shintai* (free style) suited to his romantic inclinations and often published his poems in *Bungakukai* (Hashikawa, 1978). In 1897, he and his friends including Katai Tayama published an anthology of *jojoshi*. In its foreword, Yanagita wrote that the works in the collection were an extension of *mudai no uta* (title-less poem) which was a *tanka* tradition. He further stated that he happened to notice the similarity of *mudai no uta* and *shintai-shi* (free-style poem), which were inspired by Western free-style poems. Since *shintai-shi* was thought to be influenced exclusively by Western and to some degree Chinese poems (Hashikawa, p. 39-40), his comment was atypical in the context of the time. He pointed out later in his life that there had not been any study done on the influence of *tanka* on the *shintai-shi* (Hashikawa, p. 40).

Kijima, who has analyzed Yanagita's work in this period, found the romantic terminology of the time in his work (Morse, 1990). In addition, he found that Yanagita used more images of death than his contemporaries. This could be attributed to the loss of his parents in 1896 when he was in the last year of the First Higher School. As a result, he was said to have lost "all desire to do anything" (Yanagita as quoted by Hashikawa, 1978, p. 43).

Kijima further stated that his poetry was filled with traditional images of the Japanese landscape along with the contemporary romanticism inspired by the Western literature of the time (Morse, 1990). Hashikawa echoed Kijima by saying that Yanagita's

use of *tanka* methods created fascinating effects within the overall contemporary style of Western influences (1978). Interestingly, despite this use of traditional methods, his works were considered among his literary group as "most successful in achieving the impression of Burns, Wordsworth and Heine, for whom the contemporary poets in Japan aspired" (Hashikawa, p.32). Hashikawa explained that Yanagita's works achieved a sensitive balance between the traditional literary tradition of the Japanese courtyard and Western romanticism, in which shadows of the otherworldly consciousness of Japan and imaginations of the Western poetry overlapped.

Kijima considered that Yanagita's style aimed to capture "the spiritual, often dreary, world that extends behind mere surface appearances" (Morse, 1990, p. 20-1). For Yanagita, Kijima contended, while poetry was to convey a verbal impression, it was not "the vehicle for expressing one's feelings or inner life 'directly'" (Morse, p. 20). Yanagita's such approach to poetry, contrary to the literary trend for realistic depiction, was greatly influenced by Matsuura. Furthermore, it has been conjectured that Matsuura's view on *yugen* played an important role in Yanagita's understanding of Japanese belief systems in the later stage of his life (Morse, 1990). Even after he was occupied with scholastic writing and abandoned other poetry forms, Yanagita continued to find *tanka* a satisfying mode of poetic expression (Morse, 1990). Overall, one could see a parallelism in Yanagita's approach toward *tanka* and his scholarship, which attempted to go beyond obvious appearance.

Studying Agricultural Politics

In 1887, Yanagita entered the law department of Tokyo Imperial University.

Suffering from mental anguish from losing his parents and being seriously ill in the

previous year, he directed his energy to his literary interest and to travels to the Japanese

countryside in his first two years in university. In his third year, he chose to study

agricultural politics under Kuranosuke Matsuzaki, an economist who had just returned

from Germany and France. He attributed his decision to the death of his parents:

> I entered into the faculty of law at the university. However,
> I lost all desire to do anything, and started dreaming
> romantically about going into the mountains by majoring in
> forestry. At the time, forestry was the most difficult
> actuarial science and needed a high level of math. Since my
> talent for math was not sufficient, I decided to do
> agriculture. After losing my parents, I did not mind living
> in the country side (translated by the author, Hashikawa,
> 1978, p. 43-4).

Nakamura argued that Yanagita's decisions to study agriculture and to enter the ministry

of agriculture after graduation were atypical among his university classmates. Not only

was agricultural politics a new and minor field but the ministry of agriculture and

commerce was not regarded highly among government postings (1977b).[14]

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[14] In the biography of Kijuro Kashiwabara, who later became a diplomat, Kashiwabara noted that: "when a university graduate was appreciated by the general public as if there was a halo around him, it (the ministry of agriculture) did not look good at all as a profession to enter into" (translated by the author, as quoted by Nakamura, 1977b, p. 35). Since Yanagita graduated around the same time, the climate around his decision was similar to that of Kashiwabara.

At a time when an individual's political ambition was combined with patriotic idealism, as seen in the state slogan *risshin shussei* (rise in the world as an individual, thus advancing the nation), a government office was seen as a moral vocation. Graduates from Tokyo Imperial University were almost guaranteed their positions in the government, and most of them preferred to be placed in sections related to internal affairs. The tie between the two institutions were so close that the salaries of graduates were determined by the order of academic achievements in the university. Varley called this system "further proof of the degree to which Japanese society and the aspirations of its members were subjected to state manipulation in the middle and late Meiji period" (1984, p. 223).

When Yanagita graduated from the university, he was ranked ninth out of his graduating class of fifty five in the Division of Political Science under the Department of Law. Considering this fair achievement, Yanagita made a conscious decision against a mainstream career in the more popular areas related to internal affairs. This was one of the first evidences of Yanagita's "anti-disciplinary" stance, which became prevalent in the later stages of his life.

During his university years, Yanagita continued to take part in literary activities. He published many *tanka* and *jojoshi* in several literary journals under the names of Matsuo and Matsuhiko Nogami. He also traveled extensively with his literary friends to various parts of Japan. At the same time, however, he was going through a transition from a young poet to a student of the more practical study of agricultural politics.

Tayama's novel, *Tsuma* (Wife, 1909) depicted a scene where Nishi, the main character

who was modeled on Yanagita against his will, became dissatisfied with the artificiality

and irrelevance of poetry. In the scene, Nishi says:

> "I cannot be content with poetry any more. I am going into
> the real world now. I am going to fight as hard as
> possible.... What is the point in writing love poems? If I
> have the time, I would rather read another page on the
> theory of agricultural politics" (translated by the author, as
> quoted by Hashikawa, 1978, p.43).

Doppo Kunikida also wrote in *Azamukazaru no ki*, that:

> Last night, I was very inspired by talking to Matsuoka
> [Yanagita]. Matsuoka talked with love of the god and
> responsibility of mankind in mind.
> Life is solemn. It is joy and sorrow in the
> solemness.... A human's life exists in "today". Wake up,
> dreams for tomorrow. Wake up, dreams of youth.
> Disappear, naïve dreams. There is tomorrow in today, and
> yesterday in today. We are only today's beings. We of
> today are the true value of our life. Don't moan by
> comparing oneself to a fantasy (translated by the author, as
> quoted by Hashikawa, 1978, p. 47).

Nakamura theorized that instead of pursuing both literary and more practical

career interests, Yanagita chose a profession which could satisfy his intellectual curiosity

(1977b). His dilemma between a literary career and a more practical one was not

uncommon among the Meiji youths. In an age of undisguised enthusiasm for political

and utilitarian ambitions, Meiji writers, including Katai Tayama, often felt "out of step

with times" (Bernstein, 1976, p. 16).

Nakamura also theorized that Yanagita was hesitant to call himself a writer since "it was the common sentiment of the time that the writer was not a lifetime profession of a man" (translated by the author, Nakamura, 1977b, p. 13). Considering Yanagita's refusal to include his earlier literary works in his collected works in the later stage of his life, Nakamura further speculated that the Yanagita family members, with whom Yanagita became acquainted around this time, and who adopted him in 1901, did not appreciate his literary activity (p. 13 - 4). Nonetheless it is apparent that while literature influenced him throughout his life, particularly in his scholarly views and writing, he consciously moved away from it in the last two years of university.

The Yanagita Family

It was said that ever since Yanagita was a high school student, the Yanagita family was interested in adopting him into the family (Hashikawa, 1978). It was a common practice for a certain class of society to adopt a promising young man as a *yoshi*, an adopted son, to ensure continuation of the lineage. This was usually done by providing a girl of the family as his spouse. In the case of Yanagita, the adoption took place in 1901, which was three years before his marriage to the Yanagitas' fourth daughter, Ko in 1904.

The Yanagita family was prominent: Naohei, the father-in-law, was a justice in the higher court. Naohei's brother was granted the title of baron after the Russo-Japanese War, and later became the governor-general of Taiwan and Naohei's second daughter

was married to Yasutsuma Kikoshi who was a minister of Army in the Katsura cabinet.

Taking the Yanagita name meant his acceptance into influential political circles.

However, his literary friends expressed their regrets for Yanagita's decision. Doppo

stated, "As smart as he is, he can do well independently after graduation. He doesn't have

to go willingly under the confinement" (translated by the author, as quoted by

Hashikawa, 1978, p. 48). Tayama also wrote, "I wonder if it was really because he

wanted to have the warmth of the family. We also questioned whether there was an

appeal to his ambition" (translated by the author, as quoted by Hashikawa, p. 49).

Yanagita himself wrote that at one stage in life he had ambitions in politics

(1992a). It was also noted by Nakamura and Henshall that those in Yanagita's literary

circle also had strong political aspirations as did many of the generation (Nakamura,

1977b; Henshall, 1987). Since the abolition of the hierarchical social class system

theoretically allowed for greater social mobility, and individual advancements were

encouraged for building a strong nation, political ambition was a laudable spirit in the

Meiji period. Hence, when Yanagita's decision for adoption is seen in the context of the

time along with the fact that his influential older brother, Michiyasu had also been

adopted, his decision was not so "hard to understand" as Tayama wrote (Hashikawa,

1978, p. 49).

While Yanagita's adoption into the family meant easier access to a successful

career in the bureaucracy, it did not mean total acceptance by the family. It has been

noted by the scholars of Yanagita that within the Yanagita household, Yanagita was

treated as an outsider. Morse contended that the small room which became his study was suggestive of his low status within the family (Morse, 1990). In addition, Tokutaro Sakurai, who has done many studies on Yanagita, echoed the sentiment that Yanagita experienced "profound torments" in the Yanagita household. He noted that it was almost a taboo among Yanagita's students to talk about the fact that Yanagita was an adopted son of the Yanagita family (Sakurai, 1975, p. 410). One of his daughters also wrote that her father advised her to "Marry someone with love and feeling. No one has understood your father's life" (as quoted by Morse, 1990, p. 91). This dissatisfaction with his family life can be a factor contributing to his fondness and vigour for traveling and his later interest in marriage and family systems.

CHAPTER THREE

EARLY BUREAUCRATIC YEARS

Agricultural Sector

Under Matsuzaki's guidance, Yanagita produced a study on the management of food in preparation for famines. When Yanagita graduated in 1900, Matsuzaki recommended him for lectureships at Waseda and Chuo Universities on the subject of agricultural politics (Hashikawa, 1978; Henshall, 1987). Yanagita lectured at these universities in the evenings while working in the agricultural section of the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce.

By this time, Japan was gaining international prestige through the expansion of its military force, proven with the victory in the war with China in 1895. Furthermore, when Japan defeated Russia in East Asia in 1905, Japan achieved the status of world power, which had been its national obsession since the Meiji Restoration.

However, in the economic sector, the emerging industries created new problems, such as the radical expansion of the urban population and industrial pollution. The agricultural sector, which still employed a majority of the population, also faced a complex situation. The industrialization and modernization process of the Meiji Regime not only brought little improvement in the economic status of the agricultural workers, but it brought that sector high taxation. As mentioned earlier, this was due to "stipends," compensations paid to ex-samurai, and the new land tax (Chan, 1991, p. 9). Particularly

after the Russo-Japanese war, when the developments of the industrial sectors were enhanced by the war, the gap between the industrial and agricultural sectors in the productivity and standard of living worsened significantly (Bernstein, 1976, p. 56).

While government policies concentrated on the promotion of manufacturing and trade to the neglect of farmers, there was also a small group of leaders in society who were alerted by the deteriorating agricultural sector. Some also expressed their "sentimental attachment to the undisturbed countryside" (Bernstein, 1976, p. 57) with their reluctance to part with the past for a modernized society. Some scholars of Yanagita expressed their view that Yanagita too was afflicted with this nostalgia in his concern for agricultural sector (Morse, 1990; Nakamura, 1977b).

Yanagita's View on Agriculture

At the beginning of his bureaucratic career, Yanagita was generally dissatisfied with his fellow bureaucrats. This was a common sentiment among many bright individuals with political aspirations (Bernstein, 1976, p. 28). He felt that prevailing literary movements, which aimed at critical investigations of the social realities, did not have any significance to the civil servants with whom he worked. In an essay entitled "The Fiction Civil Servants Read," he directly pointed out how mono-dimensional civil servants were. He described how most officials were fixed on old ideas and afraid to venture into the new ideas in the literary criticism of the time. Thus, he lamented the fact

that "there was no contact or interaction between politics and literature" in Japan (Morse, 1990, p. 28).

It was during the period that Tayama depicted Yanagita, in his work *Tsuma*, as taking business trips to provinces in order to escape the dissatisfaction he felt in his bureaucratic and personal life (Tayama, 1987). Yanagita's first business trip was an inspection tour of silk factories in Gumma prefecture situated north of Tokyo (Map 1) in 1901. He then became a traveling expert who lectured on industrial unions, agricultural co-operatives and new agricultural techniques in rural districts (Kamata, 1978).

In 1902, Yanagita published *Saishin sangyou kumiai tsukai* (The Newest Analysis of Co-operative Unions). In the work, Yanagita documented the situation of the small farms in Japan. Along an analysis of the situation and predictions of the future challenges the small farms would face, Yanagita shed light on the working and potential of the co-operative unions (Hashikawa, 1978 p. 55). Hashikawa commented that the work illustrated Yanagita's rich knowledge and his amazing transformation from a *jojoshi* poet to an agricultural specialist (p. 54).

In the work, Yanagita declared that:

> This work is intended for local public officials, people of
> property, and of power, school teachers, doctors, monks
> etc., who have some extra time to address issues in this
> book to those around them with a righteous intention
> (translated by the author, 1970c, p. 6).

Hence, he defined the intended audience as the privileged class of farming communities. This was noteworthy since the work dealt with the problems of how agricultural co-operatives tended to serve the privileged class instead of those who were in need (Hashikawa, 1978, p. 54). By appealing to narrowly defined audiences who had to be conscientiously compelled by the cause of the needy, Yanagita was revealing his humanistic sense of purpose in the work (Hashikawa, p. 55).

In *Saishin sangyou kumiai tsukai,* Yanagita also expressed concerns about the tenant system, which was considered the backbone of the agricultural structure of Japan at the time. Yanagita has been identified as the first person to question the system which was sponsored by the mainstream ideology of the Meiji government (Hashikawa, 1978, p. 59). Such mainstream views of the system were evident in an essay by Tokiyoshi Yokoi, an agricultural politics scholar at Tokyo Imperial University, in 1927. He wrote: "there is a lack of evidence that the tenant system is not working sufficiently. Instead, in certain areas, there are tenants whose income surpasses those of the middle class landowners" (as quoted by Hashikawa, translated by the author, p. 61).

Being skeptical about the mainstream agricultural theories and policies of the day, Yanagita based his argument on his observations of the peasants made during his travels. He argued in essays and lectures that the policy makers must search for criteria which went beyond the practicality of administration. Another issue which he faced was the difficulty of assessing the goals and methods of agriculture. He maintained that unlike an

increase in the productivity, the improvement of the welfare of the people can not be

measured objectively in numbers:

> (If we are compelled to do so), we may be able to see it
> (the welfare of the people) in the numbers of the social
> evils and calamities: What I mean by this is an increase or
> decrease of the number of people in poverty, of the death
> rate, especially that of suicide, of crime rate and number of
> bankruptcies. A decrease in these phenomena is a sign
> which accompanies ease of personal lives, so that we could
> see it as an improvement in the distribution of wealth
> (translated by the author, 1970c, p. 343).

Yanagita further elaborated his view that the improvement of productivity did not

necessarily contribute to the betterment of life of ordinary people. He declared boldly

that such an improvement was "not worthwhile" (1970c, p. 342):

> Though the wealth of the nation doubles every year, it falls
> into only a few hands, and the majority does not have the
> ability to improve their living. Instead, they feel that their
> status has worsened in relation to those who have improved
> their life style. If this is the case, there is no reason for
> desiring an increase in productivity (translated by the
> author, 1970c, p. 342).

He elaborated the above point by situating it within a larger time frame:

> Some say if the majority profit from a policy, that is
> national betterment. However, it is difficult to know
> whether it is desired by the majority or not. Furthermore, it
> is not reasonable to ignore the interests of the minority.
> Moreover, a nation consists not only of those who are
> living now, but also of those who have been dead and those
> who are yet to be born. Therefore, we also need to consider
> the wills of those in the past generations and to protect the

welfare of the future generations (translated by the author,
1970c, p. 384-5).

Yanagita, thus, presented an idea that the nation is an entity which includes people of

many classes in the existing generation, along with past and future generations. Hence he

urged policy makers to seek their political criteria beyond the interests of a particular

person, collective or even generation. This perspective revealed Yanagita's awareness of

multidimensionality of a phenomenon. Furthermore, it is evident that he saw a nation as

a continuing entity in which the past, present and future generations reciprocate for the

nation's development (Tsurumi, 1992).

Yanagita also saw agriculture as the continuous partnership between nature and

generations of peasants. He acknowledged that there were two sides to the relationship.

One was where nature was a helpful partner, and the other was where human

interventions was necessary to subdue nature. He stated in a lecture:

> Since the purpose of agriculture is to nurture organisms
> which live in nature, its methods must follow those of
> nature. One could say that agriculture is to operate its
> production in partnership with nature, at the same time,
> nature is not necessarily our co-operator all the time. It
> could cause droughts, floods, wind and frost damages, and
> breed pests and weeds, which human must defend against.
> Therefore, agriculture can sometimes have nature as a
> partner, and sometimes as an enemy. It is no doubt that the
> relationship which agriculture has with nature is closer than
> that of other industries such as manufacturing (translated
> by the author, 1970c, p. 300).

Yanagita viewed the key issues in agricultural operations as knowing where to intervene. He also claimed that this should be determined through critical investigation of past and present practices, with particular attention to the regenerative element of agricultural operations. His view of agricultural practice, which was based on the idea of the regenerative practice of ecology, was remarkably similar to his idea on national policies. It was also upon these ideas of politics and ecology that Yanagita founded his argument against the Imperial Ordinance of 1906 which will be examined in the following section.

Protest against the Amalgamation of Shrines

As a part of efforts to centralize and organize regional governments, the Meiji government planned to merge villages and towns in 1888. Their plan was to reduce their total number of townships to one thirtieth of the number in the previous Edo period. Prior to the mergers, each village contained at least one shrine. Subsequently, with mergers, many villages and towns contained more than one shrine. The Imperial Ordinance of 1906 ordered the amalgamation or destruction of shrines so that each village would have one village shrine.

By 1911, five years after the decree, over 80,000 shrines all over Japan had been either eradicated or merged. In 1912 it was declared that the unification of rites and rituals, which previously had been celebrated at those shrines, was completed. In Wakayama prefecture, where Kumagusu Minakata, another opponent of the ordinance

lived, eighty-seven percent of the shrines were demolished between 1907 and 1909. Minakata was a microbiologist, and he protested the destruction of shrines on the basis of environmental disruption. He argued that the destruction of the shrines not only meant the devastation of the local customs, it also destroyed the ecology of the villages. He maintained that since people revered the local deities and respected taboos related to them, the ecology of those vital locations, usually at the water sources, was sanctified.

Since Japanese agriculture is primarily based on wet-rice cultivation, in which water supply is vital and considered sacred, the village shrines were usually located at the water source of the village. The trees in the vicinities were also protected, since it was believed that the guardian deities would come to the village through trees around the shrines. Therefore, Minakata asserted that village shrines and the folk beliefs associated with them had the effect of sustaining the sources of water of the village. As a result, the destruction of the shrines, which in turn meant the devastation of the sacred trees, demolished the ecology of the villages.

Minakata had a wide range of interests including folklore. Yanagita started corresponding with Minakata after the latter published his paper on *yama no kami*, mountain gods, in an anthropological journal in 1911. In 1913, Yanagita visited Minakata in his isolated residence in Wakayama prefecture. Supporting Minakata's cause against the Imperial Ordinance, Yanagita had two documents by Minakata printed and distributed among men of political influence. However, it was only 1920 that the Imperial Household Agency decided to cancel the ordinance.

It is interesting to note in addition that the Ordinance was not inspired solely from

the administrative practicality of having a smaller number of townships. It was also

motivated by the eminence of Western religious architectures. Takejiro Tokonami, who

was the Chief of the Bureau of Local Affairs and was responsible for the merger, was

quoted as follows:

> During my recent trip to Europe and America, I was most
> deeply impressed by the fact that religion was the
> foundation for their civilization. This endorsed my
> previously held opinions. I was overwhelmed by the
> magnificent appearance of churches and temples. I felt that
> their architectural grandeur was responsible for the
> cultivation of noble spirit (as quoted by Tsurumi, 1975b, p.
> 35)

Therefore, he felt what Japan needed for the advancement of the nation was fewer, but

larger, shrines.

Tokonami was one of the leading bureaucrats of the day, and the Imperial

Ordinance of 1906 reflected political visions of mainstream bureaucrats such as

Tokonami. Among such bureaucrats, Yanagita stood as a maverick. He himself expressed

his increasing feeling of isolation:

> People tend to mistake politics for a sequence of quick
> solutions. Unless I feel strongly that there is a need for a
> study which shifts one's point of view from the usual
> location to one which allows a wider angle, why should I
> invest my limited efforts to deal with these exhausting
> topics while being ridiculed as old fashioned (translated by
> the author, Hashikawa, 1978, p. 64).

Yanagita acknowledged that his arguments were not seen as immediately relevant to the political and social events of the day by his colleagues with revisionist ideas. He was regarded as "hard to understand" (Hashikawa, 1978, p. 63), and his writings were seen as casting problems without giving solutions (Morse, 1990, p. 53). Consequently his stance as a policy maker was sometimes described as "passive" (Hashikawa, p. 59) or remaining in the "uncertain terrain of the middle ground" (Morse, p.53).

However, considering his protest against the amalgamation of shrines and convictions on the tenant system, one could hardly describe him as "passive." Instead, his awareness of the multiple dimensions of these issues restrained him from simply taking a side without careful thought. This hesitation was accentuated by the fact that his idea of politics sought to get at an holistic view without representing only one interest group or generation. Furthermore, one could speculate that his peripheral stance did not go well with the Yanagita family members who were prominent in the political and military circles. Therefore, it is overly simplistic to brand him as "passive" because of the ambivalence in his writings. In the following section, the influence on Yanagita's world view in the early part of his bureaucratic life will be examined.

Anatole France and Henrik Ibsen

In 1904, the year Yanagita married Ko, the Russo-Japanese War (1904 - 1905) started. During the war years, Yanagita was appointed to compile laws for dealing with captured war material. In October 1912, he was decorated the Second Order of St. Anna

by the Tsar for this work "in recognition of the service rendered in the way of settlement of questions between Russia and Japan since the late War" (Morse, p. 29). Morse argued that, it was through this experience that Yanagita came to be aware of social and political concerns on an international scale, and found *Sur la Pierre Blanche* (1904) by Anatole France of particular interest (1990, p. 29).

In this utopian fantasy, France explored the historical meaning of the victory by Japan, a nation of the 'yellow peril,' over Russia. France approached this task by uncovering the assumptions of white Christian civilization, which did not give any regard to cultures other than its own. France did on this by unearthing the pre-Christian elements (or 'primitive' elements) in European Christian culture, in which France argued Christianity was uncritically assumed as the foundation of the civilization. He then claimed Japan's victory gave an opportunity to examine the history of European civilizations on an equal level with those of others in Africa, Asia and South America (France, 1910).

Morse argued that a stone tablet erected by Yanagita and others, which was in memory of Japan's conquest over the Russians, demonstrated Yanagita's basic agreement with France that the victory of the 'yellow peril' over the 'white peril' held a special significance. (Morse, 1990, p. 29). Yanagita listed France, who blended issues of the past, present and future of the 'white race' in a global scope, as a most influential foreign writer (Morse, p. 28):

> I have been extremely influenced by him. When I was in France, I read his work very often in order to learn French. Anatole France is probably the only author whose novels and other writings I have read over and over. In fact, I have read some of his books three or four times. For instance, *Sur la Pierre Blanche*, I read it in English translation, then in French and then again in Japanese translation (Morse, p. 46).

Though France is not much celebrated today, he was greatly admired around the turn of

the century. It is said that his limited creativity is the reason for his neglected status

today: he relied mainly on reporting current or historical socio-political issues

(Hashikawa, 1978). France, therefore, relied on peculiarities of pre-Christian cultural

remnants and social satire involving an "exotic" country like Japan in his work *Sur la*

Pierre Blanche.

Another foreign writer in whom Yanagita was keenly interested was Henrik

Ibsen. In 1907, Yanagita instigated the formation of the Ibsen Society, which included

Tayama and Shimazaki.

Tayama recalled:

> "All we ever do at the Ryudokai [literary meetings] is eat," said Y [Yanagita]. "If we're going to have meetings, we should at least have meaningful ones." So it was that the Ibsen Society was formed, its first meeting being held at the Gakushikai in Hitotsubashi. We discussed 'Ghosts', 'The Wild Duck', 'Little Eyolf', and two or three other works. Y's refined, self-confident features stood out clearly in the gentle rays of the afternoon sun as it came slanting into that Western-style room (Tayama, 1987, p. 228).

By 1907, the group, particularly Tayama, was concerned with naturalism. Those who were involved in the movement aspired to depict the "natural individual" bluntly and truthfully. It is for this reason that those in the Ibsen Society admired Ibsen's works, such as *Ghosts* and *The Wild Duck*, which portrayed the subjects as defiant individuals facing restrictive social conventions. Yanagita, however, felt that it was more important to deal with reality than with fiction. He commented that "the naturalists were interested in ordinary things and how these could develop into peculiarities. They were happy about writing them 'naturally'" (Nakamura, 1977a, p. 31). Yanagita felt that though naturalism would be significant as a stage in literary history, its "peculiarities" were not comparable to atrocities seen in the real world (Nakamura, p. 31). Nakamura suggested that Yanagita applied the observational techniques of naturalism to historical and social observation, instead of working strictly within the literary sense of naturalism (1977a). Nonetheless, through his association using naturalism Yanagita came to define his interest in reality with naturalism's spirit of defying society.

Nochino Karikotoba no ki (Hunting Terminology)

It has been said that Yanagita's involvement in and awareness of literary movements both in Japan and in the West led him to the publication of *Nochino Karikotoba no ki* (Hunting Terminology) in 1909 (Yoneyama, 1985, p. 38). It is a glossary of terms used by hunters in Shiba-mura in the Miyazaki prefecture (Map 1), where Yanagita traveled for five months in 1908. Shielded by the Kyushu hills in south-

western Japan, people in Shiba-mura made their living with hunting and slash-and-burn agriculture. In the work, Yanagita reconstructed the hunters' physical and mental world by describing living conditions, religious practices, beliefs, and differences from the lives of those in the lowlands.

Yanagita recorded his amazement in the work stating that the "ancient customs still function opportunely in the civilization of cars and radiotelegraphy" (translated by the author, 1970b, p. 6). In a comment made in 1949, Yanagita identified the work as his first folk cultural interest and attributed his receptivity to his parents:

> I entered into the mountains with a head of the village who
> liked hunting. It was at this time that he told me about the
> beliefs in the mountain gods, and I found them very strange
> and interesting. I felt, "I should do some research on
> them." For such reasons, I entered into this field [of
> recording the folk culture]. Looking back, there were my
> parents' influence working behind [my decision]. What I
> mean is that my father was a very scholarly type and my
> mother was a typical transmitter of culture (translated by
> the author, Hashikawa, 1978, p. 66).

One may interpret his comment as indicative of his awareness of the importance of transmitting folk culture. This derived from the intuitive cultural sensitivity he had inherited from his mother and took academic shape due to his father's influence. This comment, combined with the fact that Yanagita formed Kyodo kai (Province Meeting) with influential policy makers around this time, demonstrated that his intention in writing *Nochino karikotoba no ki* was more than a literary one.

In 1910, the year after the publication of *Nochino Karikotoba no ki*, he started

contributing many travel logs in journals such as *Rekishi Chiri* (History and Geography)

and *Kokokai* (Archeology World). He also published *Ishigami mondo*, which consisted of

thirty four letters between Yanagita and several scholars on the substance of *Ishigami*,

stone gods.

Ishigami are "small deities" in comparison to the formal *"ujigami."*[15] Not only

was the work original in its structure, which consisted of letters, its nonconformity was

highlighted by its ending. Yanagita concluded by saying that "it is a clownish writing

which, unlike German books, cannot be concluded" (Hashikawa, 1978, p. 61).

Furthermore, its topic distinguished the work from other literature. Hashikawa

commented that "probably nobody thought it was worth speculating on" (Hashikawa, p.

67). Yanagita himself commented in a promotional paragraph of the book that:

> It is a collection of letters which studied the origins of
> *Ishigami*... etc. to locate their place in the civilization. The
> topics are those which everybody could be interested in
> some ways. However, it is rare to find those who address
> these topics as this writer, who studied them with the
> enthusiasm of a child. Since it would be annoying if
> Western scholars study them first, this work is an act of
> patenting the topic (translated by the author, as quoted by
> Hashikawa, p. 69).

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[15] While originally a guardian for a clan, ujigami later became a guardian for a village which contained
more than one clan.

What is interesting about these two quotations of Yanagita is that he was conscious of the possible interest by Western scholars. First, Yanagita expressed their possible assessment of his work in comparison to "German books," and second, their interest in the topics. While it is not known if Yanagita was familiar with the developments of folklore studies and ethnology overseas at the time, from his research in the foreign language books of Yanagita, Morse found that sometime around the turn of the century Yanagita became acquainted with folklore studies by Sir James Frazer, Laurence Gomme and the Grimm brothers. Therefore, it can be conjectured that Yanagita was aware the significance of his interest in a global sense, and protective about it.

Tono Monogatari (Tales of Tono)

An awareness of 'being a part of the world' was also apparent in *Tono Monogatari* (*Tales of Tono*), which was published one months after *Ishigami mondo*. The work was dedicated to "those who reside in foreign countries" (1992b, p. 26). Regarding this dedication, he later commented that "many of my friends were away in Western countries or were just going away. It was for this reason I thought of dedicating the book to them" (1974, p. 9).

Tono Monogatari is a collection of stories Yanagita heard from Kyoseki Sasaki, a native of Tono in Iwate Prefecture in the north-eastern part of Honshu, the main island (Map 1). Yanagita was first introduced to Sasaki, who was aspiring to become a writer, by Yoshu Mizuno, a poet and writer, in 1908 (Tsurumi, 1975a, p. 443). Yanagita had

traveled to the Miyazaki Prefecture earlier in the year, and found similar stories about

yamabito (mountain people), who were believed to live in mountains away from ordinary

people and to possess mythical power, and *yama no kami* (mountain gods). Since these

two areas are geographically distant, Yanagita was intrigued by the similarities (Tsurumi,

1975a).

Yanagita, then, asked Sasaki to come by his residence and tell stories about Tono.

Yanagita compiled them under the title, *Tono monogatari*. The stories contained both

geographical facts about the remote mountainous region and legends of the old days and

the present. Yanagita wrote in the preface of the work:

> These stories were told by Kyoseki Sasaki, a native of
> Tono. Since February 1909, I have recorded the stories told
> by him who visited me some nights. Though he is not a
> good story teller, Sasaki is a very sincere person. I wrote
> these stories as how I received them and did not edit them
> afterward. I believe that there are hundreds of stories like
> these in the Tono region. We sincerely hope to hear many
> more stories. In more isolated mountain villages in Japan,
> there must be numerous legends on *yama no kami*
> (mountain gods) and *yamabito* (mountain people). I hope
> to hear and share these stories with those of us in the
> lowlands and to inspire them.... This work is only a
> beginning. I realize that this type of work is going against
> the present day trend. Some may criticize me for forcing
> such a work onto others just because it is easy to publish a
> book now a days. However, I would then ask: is there
> anybody who would not tell others about these stories after
> hearing them. Such a silent and humble person does not
> exist, at least in my circle of friends.
> Unlike the case of the nine hundred year old
> *Konjyaku monogatari* (Tales of Long Ago), which tales
> had been old when they were written, the Tales of Tono are
> events existing before our eyes. I do not say that these

tales are superior to those in the *Tales of Konjyaku* for their sincerity and piety. However, the fact that they have not been heard by many, nor recited nor written down at all, would make it worthwhile for the candid and innocent author of Konjyaku Monogatari to come and listen to the tales. As for *The Hundred Tales of Otogi* written in the Edo period, the stories had deteriorated and they have questionable authenticity. It would be unfortunate if the tales existing today are grouped with those older ones. This work is a fact of the present day, and this alone gives it a valid claim for this work's existence.

Kyoseki is only twenty four or five, and I am merely ten years older than him. With the present day challenges, it is difficult to comprehend the size of the existing problems. I am defenseless if some criticize me for using my energy in a wrong place. Others may also reprove me for straining my ears too sharp and eyes too round, like an eared-owl of Mt. Myojin. Though I cannot say anything in reply to them, I have to take on this responsibility (of recording these tales).

Pretending to be old
Motionless and quiet
in the far away forest
I wonder
the owl is laughing
(translated by the author, 1976, p. 5-7).

The themes of *Tono monogatari* included festivals, animals, mythical creatures, mythical incidents and death. These themes are not presented in an orderly way, but likely in the order that Sasaki told Yanagita. All the tales are very short and concise, and they are numbered from 1 to 119. The fact that the work is not neatly arranged gives a hint to the chain of thought followed by Sasaki and Yanagita: how one story provoked images for the next story. This conveys an authentic feel of how the stories were communicated among the locals.

What is also interesting about the legends is that they do not reflect a homogeneous world view, rather they illustrate a multitudous reality (Tsurumi, 1975a). There are multiple layers existing in a person, god or mythical being in these legends of Tono. *Yamabito* can be portrayed as human or divine-like, and they can be a helper to the people or harmful and devilish. This multitude sets *Tono monogatari* off from other Japanese tale literature (Tsurumi, 1975a).

Moreover, there is no conventional uniformed moralizing about how people should behave in the community (Tsurumi, 1975a). Instead, there is discord, unfilial behaviour, fraud, self-interest, protest, arrogance and distrust. A mother who was harsh to her daughter-in-law is killed by her son; old folks over sixty years old are chased away to die; a girl kills her older sister thinking that the sister took the tasty part of a yam; a man who courageously fought off wolves is deserted by his friends; and a woman who was taken away by *Yamabito* cried to a hunter that every time she bore him a child he ate it with rage, blaming her for infidelity; and there was a family with two generations of women who were impregnated by a *kappa*, an ugly water creature. In *Tono monogatari*, these seemingly negative emotions are present as a part of daily struggles with one's surroundings.

Yanagita's writing in *Tono monogatari* has been described as "sharp, hard and thin, as if he was engraving it on a stone"(translated by the author, Tanikawa as quoted by Tsurumi, 1975a, p. 444). He used a writing style which excluded 'I, the narrator,' and let the observed tell the stories themselves. By this, Yanagita aimed to preserve the

stories and to keep the stories' temporal and spatial senses alive (Tanikawa as cited by

Tsurumi, p. 444). Yanagita recorded these stories in a concise and unemotional manner.

The fact that this was intentional can be seen in a letter addressed to Sasaki in 1919 in

which Yanagita is advising Sasaki on his writing for his own work on legends:

> We should now concentrate on the faithful recording rather
> than on an immature conjecture. Your collection is very
> important in this sense, so that you should be contented
> with your effort in providing society with the information
> for now. Your writing includes too many affective
> sentences and it is too sentimental. I recommend keeping
> the sentences extremely concise. You should avoid words
> that ordinary locals wouldn't use. Please correct them and
> try to use words that came out directly from the mouths of
> the people in the village (translated by the author, Tsurumi,
> 1975, p. 444).

While Yanagita focused on the faithful recording of the stories, his fascination

with the legends was apparent. Tsurumi and Hashikawa argued that this was supported

by his affective understanding of the tales. In *Kokyo nanajyunen*, Yanagita recalled that

the stories about *Kappa* reminded him of a story he heard in Tsujikawa, in which a child

died when a *Kappa* stole a gut from the child's bottom (1992a). Similarly the stories

about revenge by animals and on omens of death were associated with his experience in

Fukawa, where Yanagita had a strange encounter with two foxes after a neighbour filled

up a fox hole, and he found the next day that the neighbour went crazy and murdered his

wife (Tsurumi, 1975a).

Furthermore, Tsurumi and Hashikawa pointed to Yanagita's childhood

experiences of *kami kakushi*, divine hiding, which are the theme of many tales in *Tono*

monogatari (1975a; 1978). In *kami kakushi*, an individual disappears and reappears after

a period of time, which could range from one hour to several years. When the individual

reappears, he or she either recalls strange events or has no memory. These

disappearances were understood as the doing of a mythical power. Yanagita related his

childhood stories, such as disappearing during a nap as a four year old, to *kami kakushi*

and later analyzed it as a phenomenon related to a state of trance (1992a). Such

childhood experiences provided him with a good basis for appreciating the legends, not

only as an observer, but also as a subject of the relationships between people and nature

described in the legends. It can be conjectured that this affective understanding of the

tales was a factor in his interest in the stories, his awareness of their value and his

perceptiveness about the similarities between the cultural elements of Tono and the

counterparts in Shiba.

Evaluations of *Tono monogatari* have shifted from period to period. Initially,

most of those who read the work thought it strange because it did not belong to either

history or literature (Masuda, 1976). Many thought that his other work published in the

same year, *Josei to nosei* (Agricultural Policy and Our Times), was more revealing of

Yanagita's future career. *Josei to nosei* was a collective essay on contemporary policies

regarding tenants and landlords, the family farm system, co-operative associations and

other agricultural management issues (Yoneyama, 1985, p. 40). By 1910, many people

had come to know Yanagita only as one of the principal young bureaucrats and experts on agricultural policies (Masuda, 1976, p. 441). This was despite his long involvement with the literary world.

From the three works, *Nochi no karikotoba no ki, Tono monogatari* and *Josei to nosei*, one could speculate that Yanagita focused his attention on Japan's rural and agricultural areas through a combination of his literary and folklore interests and his work in the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce. Yoneyama argued that Yanagita initially had the intention to help the rural population by application and enforcement of agricultural policy. However, by the time he wrote *Tono monogatari* and *Josei to nosei*, his focus had shifted to investigating the situation of the rural areas closely with wider frames of analysis, which included both agricultural practices and cultures (1985).

About two decades later, Yanagita wrote three works on similar topics as *those in Josei to nosei*. They were *Toshi to noson* (The City and Agrarian Villages, 1929), *Meiji-Taisho shi: seso-hen* (A History of the Meiji and Taisho Periods: Social Affairs, 1931), and *Nihon nomin-shi* (A History of Japanese Agriculturists, 1931). As in *Josei to nosei*, these works show Yanagita's deep concern for rural people and their welfare. However, Yoneyama observed that the emphasis had shifted from implementing 'ideas' to examining local traditions.

While the two works published in 1910 seem to be the products of divergent areas of interest in traditions and modern issues, they are suggestive of Yanagita's future. In his later stages, he attempted to build a bridge between these two seemingly different

worlds by the development of folklore studies which focused on the meanings of

traditions for the present and future direction of the society.

CHAPTER FOUR

DEVELOPMENT OF YANAGITA FOLKLORE STUDIES

Focus on Rural Societies

While the victory over Russia in 1905 brought Japan the status of a world power, it signified the beginning of ideological divisions in determining the state's new national goals. The victory gave rise to a more aggressively nationalistic attitude in many Japanese, while others were appalled by the concession grabbing in East Asia and took on varying degrees of pacifism (Varley, p. 238-9).

In the years following the Russo-Japanese War, the domestic economy experienced a boom and then a bust, which culminated in a series of riots against the inflation of rice prices across the country in 1918. Such outbursts, combined with a prolonged period of labour strikes in the following year, reflected general social discontent and brought new attention to the socialist movement (Morse, 1990, p. 51-2; Rose, p. 125; Varley, p. 238-40). Recognizing the need for stronger social control after the Russo-Japanese War, the government, particularly the Ministry of Home Affairs, implemented a series of social programs. In 1906, the Hotoku Society, a government sponsored movement for rural economic and ethical improvement, was introduced. In 1908, the Emperor appealed for industriousness, frugality and social harmony in the Rescript on Thrift and Diligence. In the following year, the Ministry of Home Affairs initiated the Local Improvement Movement for the purposes of strengthening economies

and government administration at the local level. The aforementioned amalgamations of

shrines was launched as a part of this movement. It aimed at instilling eminence of the

shrines, thus, deepening the people's reverence for their ancestors and ultimately for the

imperial family. Furthermore, in 1910, the Ministry of Education's edict announced the

instruction of *shushin*, morals and ethics, as the central purpose of primary education.

Subsequently, school textbooks and curricula were revised to emphasize filial piety and

emperor-centred ethics (Varley, 1984).

One example of the areas affected by the state's efforts for increased control was

the position of women in the society. By this time, women were heavily involved in the

textile industry, which produced forty percent of the gross national product and sixty

percent of the foreign exchange (Notle and Hastings, 1991, p. 53). Despite the fact that at

the beginning of the Meiji period essentially the entire female labour force was engaged

in family agriculture by 1910, women had become an essential pillar of Japanese industry

outnumbering men in the textile industry (Smith, 1983, p. 71).

Contrary to a popular belief that these female workers in the industry were

coerced into working against their will, Molony found that they actually played a major

role in initiating and implementing the economic decision to leave the family to go to

work "often against parent wishes" (Molony, 1991, p. 224). Furthermore, a large number

of the new hires in textile factories were older, more skilled transfer workers who already

had experienced in several jobs (Molony, p. 224). This suggests that these women were

consciously exercising an economic decision by transferring to a new factory. In

addition, not all female workers in the textile industry quietly accepted unhealthy labour conditions. By 1910, as in other industrial sectors, textile workers were effecting labour strikes for improved conditions (Molony, p. 224).

However, as the state exercised stronger control over the social conduct and ethics of citizens, the Ministry of Home Affairs also attempted to define women's place in the society with slogans such as *ryosai kenbo* (good wife, wise mother). As a part of the Local Improvement Movement in 1907, a *fujinkai*, women's association, and a *shojokai*, young women's association, along with a *seinenkai*, young men's association, were installed in every village (Smith, 1983, p. 76). The activities of these associations were planned by the Ministry and communicated through descending levels of administration to the village headman, in the case of *fujinkai*, and to the local school principal with *shojokai* and *seinenkai* (Smith, p. 76). Furthermore, through magazines and motion pictures, the ideals of *ryosai kenbo* were often presented by contrasting 'good women,' who were truly Japanese with 'traditional' values, and 'bad women,' who were modern and badly infected by foreign ways of liberal thinking that made them disobedient and selfish (Smith, p. 76). The government, therefore, was increasing its domination over people's life, particularly in the rural areas, at this time.

Through his interest in social issues, and his traveling, Yanagita was aware of, and concerned with, the relationships between the social policies and situations of agrarian communities. Soon after leaving university, he became a regular member of *Shakai Seisaku Gakkai*, a social policy association. Through this association, he became

involved in the Ashio Copper incident, which brought three hundred thousand peasants to destitution after poisonous water from the Ashio mine was dumped into near-by rivers (Bernstein, 1976, p. 31). In addition to his aforementioned protest against the amalgamations of shrines, Yanagita, around the same time, founded *Kyodo kai* (province meeting). The meetings were attended by influential politicians and scholars from various disciplines. It was also during this time when the government was strengthening its control over rural societies, that Yanagita's interest became focused on village life, customs, folk tales, and women as transmitter of folk culture.

Forms of Resistance

A particular interest of Yanagita in the Taisho period (1912 - 25) was in *yamabito*, the mythic mountain people. Tsurumi speculated that this interest was sparked by writing *Tono monogatari*, in which the stories illustrated how villagers acknowledged and understood the existence of *yamabito* (Tsurumi, 1975a, p. 447). Between 1913 and 1926, Yanagita wrote and lectured frequently on the topic. For example, *Sanjin gaiden shiryo*, (Material on Stories about *Yamabito*, 1975c) was a collection of articles Yanagita published in *Kyodo kenkyu* (Journal for Local Studies) from 1913 to 1917; *Sanjin ko* (Theories about *Yamabito*) was a lecture at the Japanese History and Geography Conference in 1917; and *Yama no jinsei* (Lives in Mountains) was published in 1926.

In *Sanjin gaiden shiryo* and *Sanjin ko*, Yanagita speculated on the origin of the legends about *yamabito*. From abundant examples throughout Japan, Yanagita theorized

that *yamabito* were actual humans, rather than imagined beings. He also hypothesized that they were the original inhabitants of Japan, while the Japanese were latecomers who conquered and dominated them. He developed this theory in reference to mythology and historical documents from the early stage of Japan as a nation.

Referring to several early historical records such as *Kojiki* (Record of Ancient Matters, 712) and *Nihon shoki* (Chronicles of Japan, 720), Yanagita pointed out that there were early inhabitants called *Kunitsukami*, the gods of the land, when *Amatsukami*, the god of heaven, the ancestor of the imperial family, reached the land of Japan. While generally agreeing with the conventional historical view that those "aboriginal enemies" (Varley, 1984, p. 12) were destroyed by *Amatsukami*, Yanagita proposed six courses which *Kunitsukami* might have taken: some may have surrendered and became assimilated; some may have been killed in battles; some families may have experienced natural discontinuity in line; some may have conquered some newcomers and extended dominance, but became integrated into the society over time; and some may have left their communities and gone into isolated living in the mountains. Yanagita then hypothesized that the last group gave birth to *yamabito* stories by their presence in the remote mountains.

Yanagita also maintained that the majority assimilated into the new society over a course of time. However, they did so on a superficial level. Not only did they keep their own belief system, they gradually influenced their oppressors from the bottom layer of the social hierarchy. He argued that this was reflected in the fact that there were two

layers of belief systems in Shinto. They were State Shinto, which is associated with the mythology of Japan's creation and the heavenly ancestors of Japan's imperial line, and Folk Shinto, which is concerned with the spirituality found in nature and the observance of festivals and taboos for not offending such spirituality. Yanagita argued that the latter type of Shinto reflected the religion of the oppressed which sought "commonplace happiness every day in every season, by avoiding the elements of most ordinary anxiety" through "reverence of gods of mountains, prairies or oceans and rivers" (translated by the author, 1975e, p. 131). Yanagita, thus, identified the *yamabito*'s withdrawal from the community as resistance against oppression which enabled the survival of their own belief system.

Yanagita pointed out the possible relationships between the Ainus, one of indigenous groups of Japan now located mainly in Hokkaido, and *yamabito*. In *Sanjin ko* and *Sanjin gaiden shiryo*, Yanagita pointed to historical records about wars between the Ainus and the *Yamato* (the Japanese). In *Tono monogatari*, he explained names of places associated with *yamabito* and their origin in the Ainu language. Developing this thesis, a group of scholars now argue that Japanese culture received a strong cultural influence from the Ainus.

In addition to discussing the early inhabitants of Japan, in *Yama no jinsei*, Yanagita illustrated contemporary ordinary or elite people's decisions to lead a life in isolation, away from the community, which was called *yamairi*. The examples included those who left community living for a number of reasons including extreme poverty, not

being accepted by the communities, as an alternative to death imposed for protesting authority, as a "way of life" for ordinary individuals who had reached a certain stage in life, mental disorders, and for no clear reason. With this apparent lack of categorization based on time in Yanagita's examples of *yamairi*, it was argued by Kazuko Tsurumi that, Yanagita did not perceive a clear distinction between the itinerant existence of *yamabito* and the *yamairi* of contemporaries. Similarly, Tsurumi argued that Yanagita did not clearly define the division between ordinary people and elites. Instead, he believed that there was a certain degree of fluidity between itinerant existence and permanent dwelling, and elites and ordinary people (1975a).

Tsurumi further argued that "Yanagita was critical of the Imperial Rescript and compulsory moral education" (translated by the author, 1975a, p. 447) in *Tono monogatari*, *Sanjin ko*, *Sanjin gaiden shiryo*, and *Yama no jinsei*, the four works related to *yamabito*. Yanagita maintained in these works that the Folk Shinto (the belief system of the oppressed) persisted as "subterranean layers in the minds of the common people" whom Yanagita called *jomin*. He did so by elaborating how Folk Shinto was distinct from State Shinto (the religion of the oppressors) in spite the government's effort to make Folk Shinto assimilate to the state counterpart. This tenacity existed despite people's docile recitation of the *shushin* and respectful bowing to the portrait of the Emperor. Tsurumi, hence, identified Yanagita's efforts in the four works as a "protest" against the imposition of the state religion through studying the belief system and ways

of the common people and informing the public about how different their own culture was from the one imposed upon them (Tsurumi, 1975b, p. 36).

Through the study on *yamabito*, Tsurumi speculated that Yanagita became interested in the itinerant living of *yamabito*, traveling shamans, priests, entertainers, beggars etc. It was by studying the origin of a group of traveling priests that Yanagita came across the issues of *buraku*, segregated communities of the 'non-human' class of the Edo hierarchy (Hendry, p. 75). In 1913, he wrote, *Iwayuru tokushu buraku no shurui* (Types of So Called '*Buraku*,' 1970a). In the paper, he characterized the communities as having relatively small lands compared to other communities of commoners. He then speculated that ancestors of the *buraku* came to fixed dwelling relatively later than *jomin*, and were given inferior land. He argued that it was particularly those who took on defiling occupations such as burying dead and tanning animal hides who were allocated land of poor quality and became discriminated against. Thus, he associated the origin of the discriminated class with itinerant existence.

Furthermore, in a study on *kebozu*, a group of traveling priests, he grouped together those who did not have landed communities for dwelling. He did so in order to "illustrate that discrimination was often associated with a drifting life style and to show how invalid it was" (1975a, p. 451). Combined with illustrations in *Yama no jinsei*, which showed that there were those who became drifters from *positions as jomin* or even elite, *Kebozu ko* (1975b) demonstrated Yanagita's contention that some of those in *buraku* were once *jomin* and elite. Therefore, he believed that the solution for *buraku*

mondai, issues of *buraku*, which were starting to demand national attention with rising

political awareness in the Taisho period, was to return members of the *buraku* to the class

of *jomin* (1975a, p. 451). Tsurumi argued that this simplistic and optimistic solution,

despite its earnest concerns, reflected Yanagita's elitist status, which will be reviewed in

the following section (1975a, p. 451).

Elite Bureaucrat

Between 1910, the year Yanagita wrote *Tono Monogatari*, and 1919, when he

ended his life as a bureaucrat, Yanagita successively held influential posts in the

government. In 1910, he became the chief of the Records Section of the Cabinet. He was

responsible for re-organizing the Cabinet Library, which had been a repository of a vast

number of books and manuscripts from the Tokugawa period, private collections, the

Geographical Bureau of the Home Ministry and others. He later recalled that at the time

he incorrectly believed that he could understand a nation through reading arduously

(1982, p. 5). During this time, he also dealt with legal problems related to the annexation

of Korea (Morse, 1990, p. 57).

In 1913, he was appointed to Councilor of the Legislative Bureau. In the same

year, he served at the funeral of the Emperor Meiji, and was decorated with the Order of

St. Olav by the Norwegian government for his work in the 1911 Commercial and

Navigation Treaty between Japan and Norway. In the following April, he landed the

prestigious post of Secretary General of the House of Peers, which was one level of the

parliament. At this post Yanagita served as the Master of Imperial Ceremonies for the

Kyoto coronation of the Taisho Emperor. At the start of the Taisho era, which began in

1912 after the Meiji Emperor's death, Yanagita's career as a bureaucrat was promising.

Around this time, Yanagita became interested in Chinese affairs, as they were a

major concern of Japanese foreign policy in the Taisho period. He read Chinese literature

and historical works avidly. In 1917, having been invited by an old friend, Murahiro

Tomoshita who was a Secretary of State for Taiwan, Yanagita took a two-month trip to

Taiwan, China, and Korea. At the time, his father-in-law's brother was the Governor

General of Taiwan, and Yanagita also visited him.

During this trip, Yanagita had meetings in Shanghai with Sun Yat-sen (1866-

1928), who was the provisional president of the Republic of China, and in Nanking with

Li Yuan-hung (1864-1928), who was the other president of the Republic. After

returning from this trip, Yanagita called for the creation of a Sino-Japanese Relations

Society. He aimed at stabilizing the Chinese domestic political situation by establishing

a mediator between the divided governments. However, despite Yanagita's efforts, this

society was never actualized (Morse, 1990, p. 61).

During the time when his attention was directed toward East Asia, Yanagita also

became interested in the Dutch colonies of the South Seas. In 1918, he started learning

Dutch (1975a, p. 439) and became a frequent visitor to the Dutch Transport Survey

Association. The association was established by his brother, Shizuo, who was three years

younger than Yanagita and serving in the Navy.[16] Compilation of a Dutch-Japanese

dictionary was also planned by Yanagita and his brother.

It is often speculated by scholars of Yanagita that his interest in the South Seas

stemmed from an incident in 1898, when Yanagita traveled to Cape Irako in Aichi

Prefecture with his friends. There he found a coconut on the beach and speculated that it

came from as an island in the South Seas. He theorized that it had been carried to Japan

by the ocean current. Yanagita discussed his theory with his friends, and later one of the

friends, Toson Shimazaki wrote a poem entitled "The Coconut."

From a nameless island far away,
A coconut floated ashore

Since leaving your native land,
How many months have you been on the waves?

Is the mother tree still green,
With shade beneath her branches?

I, too, have been on the waves,
Sleeping alone, always drifting

As I press you to my heart,
You renew the sorrow of my wandering

I watch the sun setting over the sea
My tears falling on this foreign land

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[16] Shizuo was a naval captain who had been decorated for his role in the Russo-Japanese War. He later compiled the history of a war, and also produced many works on the linguistics and cultures of the South Seas (1975a, p. 439). He left the navy, and later served as the first Japanese administrator to the German colonies in the South Seas after World War I, when Japan obtained their mandate.

> Now my thoughts leap the many-fold waves.
> Ah, when will I return to my native land
> (As quoted by Morse, 1990, p. 24).

As suggested by the poem, Yanagita's interest in the South Seas was related to his inquiry into the racial origins of the Japanese people and their path to their current state. Though he was familiar with Edward S. Morse, the pioneer of Japanese archeology, and his findings at the Omori shell mounds, he was not satisfied with Morse's archaeological theory of the origins of Japanese (Morse, 1990). Instead, it was in the daily lives of people that he searched for remnants of earlier times. This approach is similar to the historical reconstructional method used by a British folklorist, Laurence Gomme (1853-1916) whose work was translated into Japanese in 1911.[17] It is known that Yanagita read his work, although exactly when is not known. It has also been suggested that Yanagita had read works by Sir James G. Frazer by this time, and was interested in Frazer's study on the relationship between agriculture and folk belief (Morse, 1990, p. 63).

In his own research, Yanagita found a close relationship between rice cultivation and Japanese religious rituals. From a comment by a British agrarian specialist and journalist, J. W. Robertson Scott, that the intensity of sunlight in Japan was "positively tropical" (Morse, 1990, p. 61), Yanagita linked the origin of rice cultivation to regions

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[17] Gomme argued that, with comparative models, one could analyze cultural survival and illuminate the historical sequences of earlier times.

south of Japan. In addition, he speculated that sunlight was the factor which allowed rice cultivation in the colder regions of Japan.

In 1919, Yanagita started writing a column entitled "Talks in the South Seas" for *Toho Jiron* (Eastern Review).[18] The column was on the islands of present-day Indonesia. He discussed their history, the effects of Dutch rule, and social issues surrounding the relationship between Dutch and natives on the islands. In the same year, Yanagita became acquainted with Fuyu Iha, a philologist in Okinawa, who claimed common ethnogenetic origins between Japan and the Ryukyu (Okinawa) Islands, although traditionally their cultures were seen as distinct. Yanagita started exchanging ideas with Iha, and this became the beginning of major research on the origins of the Japanese, which lasted until the last stage of his life. It was partially through this research that Yanagita came across the presence of female shamans in Okinawa and the surrounding islands, which, in turn, led him to study women's history and other issues concerning women in Japan.

Transformation

Just when Yanagita was intensifying his interest in different cultures and societies, he was facing problems in his post at the House of Peers. Tsurumi quoted from Yanagita's diary in September 1918:

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[18] The journal was a medium for the Toho kai (Society of the East) attended by politicians, scholars, intellectuals and military officers. The group met every month to discuss Asian affairs.

> After going to bed, I thought again about the advice to
> consider the feelings of the Head [of the House of Peers,
> Iesato Tokugawa]. Since I am intending to work for a long
> time, I have to think twice about behaving in a way which
> doesn't suit me. In addition, I need to lead a quiet life when
> the time is right [like *yamabito*?]. I already have the feeling
> of a prisoner who is looking at the moon from his prison
> cell (translated by the author, Tsurumi, 1996, p. 64).

The exact nature of the confrontations Yanagita had with Tokugawa, who was in direct line of the Tokugawa shogunal succession, is not known. Hashikawa explained that one reason for Tokugawa's animosity toward Yanagita was his trip to China, about which Tokugawa was not consulted (Hashikawa, 1978, p. 129 - 30). This, combined with the fact that the Governor General of Taiwan was related to Yanagita, was taken by Tokugawa as an expression of arrogance (Hashikawa, 1978). Furthermore, Yanagita was absent for another trip when a fire broke out in the official residence of the Lower House. This incident added to Tokugawa's bitterness toward what seemed Yanagita's neglect of his duties (Morse, 1990).

Masuda also cited a rumour circulating in the House of Peers, according to which Yanagita had refused to carry Tokugawa's luggage, as the reason for the abrupt end to Yanagita's career as a bureaucrat (1976). It was announced on the opening day of the 42nd Session of the Imperial Diet in 1919 that Yanagita resigned from his post as the Secretary General of the House of Peers.

Shortly after the resignation, Yanagita wrote two articles for *Toho Jiron*. These articles reflected Yanagita's personal dismay at the situation surrounding Japan. The first

article, "Society Viewed from the Second Story" was written in January, 1920. Yanagita

reflected on the events of 1919 in the article. He indicated that, on the international

scene, Japan's traditional modes of diplomacy, its attitude to simply imitate the West,

and its failure to correctly evaluate the current situation had resulted in Japan's failed

performance at the Paris Peace conference. Yanagita pointed out that Japan was

unsuccessful in defending China in racial issues at the conference (Morse, 1990, p. 64).

Domestically, Yanagita argued that merchants had extended their influence over

politics. Peasants who participated in constitutional politics for the first time went in with

the traditional attitude of subordination, and did not realize the consequence of voting

(Morse, 1990). Yanagita felt that the majority of the voters were without political

information or consciousness, and that they voted for political favours. Moreover, they

concentrated only on emotional and superficial issues such as land taxes and grain tariffs

(Morse, p. 65). Yanagita also strongly argued that the limited electoral system did not

deal with the question of who should decide the nation's course for the future. Yanagita

urged a reform for the sake of the majority. In order to do so, he concluded that new

methods were in order (Morse, p. 65).

In the second article, "A Musty Smelling Future," which appeared in June 1920,

Yanagita also expressed his disappointments with the present situation of Japan. He

described the political environment as the "sour flavour of pickled plums and the poor

quality of cheap rice-gruel" (Morse, 1990, p. 65). Yanagita expressed his dismay over the

situation half a century after the enthusiasm of the Meiji Restoration. Despite the earlier

ardour for democracy, the Diet was filled with the stagnant air of old men without the

vigour and innovation of younger peoples (Morse, p. 65). He argued that politicians were

not dealing with real issues, and the importance of careful assessment of Japan's position

in the volatile international politics had been neglected. Yanagita cited a story in a

magazine which asked people to express their view on the nation's future. Among those

who responded, there was only one man who had a positive view. Yanagita closed the

article urging people to think and act for the future so that there would be more positive

views.

In the above two articles, Yanagita expressed his hope for political reforms

towards a more representative and politically conscious society. Recognizing Yanagita's

socio-political concerns, his experience with the cabinet and knowledge in agri-politics

and social policies, Asahi Shinbun, a leading liberal newspaper, recruited Yanagita to

their editorial staff. The Yanagita family opposed the idea, due to the status of the family

(Morse, 1990, p. 68; Nakamura, 1977b, p. 13 - 4). Nonetheless, Yanagita negotiated with

the newspaper and accepted the position, with the condition that he would have three

years of freedom for traveling before assuming a permanent position.

Journalism in the Taisho era had gone through trials and errors since the Meiji

restoration. Initially, many of the newspapers were founded to serve specific political and

social views which were "almost invariably of an antigovernment tone" (Varley, 1984, p.

214). Hence, journalism in early modern Japan was distinctly journalism of protest.

Consequently, it was often the target of attack by the government with the issuance of

restrictive press laws. Asahi in particular boasted its liberal colour and hired those who were considered as authorities in their respective areas often regardless of their stance in relation to government policies (Morse, 1990, p. 68; Nakamura, 1977b, p. 26).

Based on Yanagita's intensive travel plans after his resignation from the government, Masuda concluded that Yanagita started devoting himself to the study of folklore when he left bureaucracy. After Yanagita accepted the offer from Asahi in July 1920, he traveled through the Tohoku area of the northern Honshu in August and September, the Kinki and Chugoku areas of the south-western Honshu in October and November, and Kyushu and Okinawa from December to the following February (Map 1).

Morse and others also cited Yanagita's decision to give his books on agri-politics away to the Imperial Agricultural Society as a conscious act of leaving behind his old life style and moving onto a new one. Whether Yanagita made a conscious move into folklore studies or not, the years following his resignation from the House of Peers saw his initial efforts toward founding folklore studies as an academic discipline. This was despite the fact that a turn of events made him unable to sever himself from public duties right away. He was called back to serve the government as a delegate to the League of Nation in 1921.

The League of Nations

The year after Yanagita left the bureaucracy, he started publishing a journal called *Minzokugaku*, folklore studies. It attracted a great variety of papers in "anthropology, archeology, linguistics, religious studies and different disciplines of the world" (Hashikawa, 1978, p. 90). As Joichi Miyamoto, who wrote a book on folklore studies, recalled, the journal had a "dazzling authority" and "it seemed as if folklore studies would achieve a healthy development hand in hand with other related disciplines" (Hashikawa, p. 90).

However, when Yanagita was lecturing on the importance of empathy and doubt in studying a locality during his trip to Kyushu and Okinawa in the beginning of 1921, he received a telegram. It stated that Inazo Nitobe, who was an influential politician and a co-founder of *Kyodo kai*, had recommended him for a post with the Japanese delegation at the League of Nations. Nitobe was appointing delegates whom he thought capable to represent Japan in the Permanent Commission on the Mandate. Nitobe believed that the missions of the Mandate Commission were crucial as it discussed new guidelines on colonization. In his article, "What the League of Nations Has Done and Is Doing," he expressed his opinion that the result he hoped for from the commission was that "the backward races will no longer be exploited as victims of imperialism. They will be treated as weaker brethren in the family of nations" (as quoted by Morse, 1990, p. 67).

Though Yanagita shared Nitobe's enthusiasm about the Mandate Commission, he was hesitant in accepting the post, possibly due to his experience with the government.

However, after he was convinced that this was for Japan, Yanagita accepted the

assignment (Morse, 1990). He returned to Tokyo in March and left for Europe in May.

Yanagita participated in the October meeting of the commission and went back to Japan

in December of the same year. He returned to Geneva in the following May and stayed

there until November 1923.

The official records showed that Yanagita represented his government's position

on equal opportunities for trade and commerce, and outlined the responsibilities and new

attitude toward the mandated territories.[19] Yanagita endorsed a new respect for the native

people in the Pacific and other regions as presented by the Mandates Commission.

However, it was argued by Morse that there was a lack of content in the Japanese

delegate's participation to the commission. Despite Nitobe's hope for staging the

Japanese presence in international politics, Morse stated that what marked the Japanese

delegation was silence (Morse, 1990, p. 66).

When Yanagita went back to Geneva in May 1922, he started traveling within

Europe. He visited museums and universities, and called on scholars. During this period

with the League of Nations, Yanagita developed sensitivity to cultures and races which

would affect the course of his thought. Serving with the League of Nations and being

aware of the "Yellow Peril" debates, Yanagita realized the important roles that race and

culture played in international relations. He also realized the lack of information, thus

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[19] Japan had received the mandates on the German possessions in the Pacific Ocean.

understanding, of Japan and other island cultures in the Pacific. In addition, he observed

that the group behaviour patterns of the Japanese stood out as distinctive when detached

from the Japanese context (Morse, 1990).

In September 1923, while in London, Yanagita received the news about the Great

Kanto Earthquake in Japan. Immediately he tried to leave England for Japan. After many

failed efforts, he got on a small ship and arrived in Japan on November 8th. He later

recalled that:

> Seeing the destruction [by the earthquake], I felt urgently
> that I could not keep on doing what I had been doing. I
> made up my mind to found a real discipline and started
> working on it (translated by the author, Hashikawa, 1978,
> p. 135).

He officially resigned from the League of Nations delegation in December 1923.

In the following April, Yanagita started giving lectures on folklore studies at Keio

University, which lasted until 1929. In June 1924, he also commenced his responsibilities

as the editorial staff at Asahi Shinbun. He traveled to various parts of Japan for public

lectures sponsored by Asahi Shinbun.

Yanagita had a relatively smooth beginning of his folklore studies, which he

called *minzokugaku*. However, people who knew Yanagita around this time stated that

Yanagita did not treat his work at Asahi Shinbun as secondary in importance. For

example, Nakamura, who lived in Yanagita's neighbourhood, witnessed that he put his

"heart and soul" into the work (Nakamura, 1977b, p. 26). From the time Yanagita joined

the paper in July 1924 to his retirement in January 1932, he produced approximately

three hundred and eighty articles. In these articles, Yanagita dealt mainly with socio-

political and agricultural issues, rather than the cultural questions he was dealing with in

his efforts to establish folklore studies. In the following section, the topics of the articles

Yanagita wrote for the newspaper are reviewed.

As a Journalist

The articles Yanagita wrote extended over a great range of topics such as national

education policies, general elections, the House of Peers' affairs, considerations on the

Imperial Household's position in the society, ideological control by the government

through the Peace Preservation Law of 1925, etc. It is difficult to extract Yanagita's

personal opinions and attitudes from these articles. In order to do so, one has to take into

account the influences of Asahi's editorial policies, their mandate to report up to date

news, space limitations and so on.

Despite such limitations, his unique style was apparent in his essays. He was

highly critical of the government's neglect of the ordinary people in contrast to the elite

in its socio-political policies. He pleaded for educational policies to develop an intelligent

and informed citizenry who could determine their own course of development and called

for government restructuring and universal suffrage for informed political decisions by

the citizens.

Analyzing Yanagita's articles for Asahi, Morse stated that Yanagita "was critical of the government's false definition of a common good" and called it "a camouflage of vested interests" (Morse, 1990, p. 69). This was because Yanagita saw individual initiatives as the key to navigating the country in what seemed the "uncontrolled drift of events" (Morse, p. 68) of the day. He, thus, felt that reforms must come from each individual.

Another topic that Yanagita dealt with was "demystifying" the emperor (Tsurumi, 1975a, p. 442). He wrote two articles on the Daijo-sai, a paramount religious ceremony associated with the coronation of a new emperor, when it was held for the new Showa emperor in 1928 (Nakamura, 1977b, p. 18 - 9). He criticized the fact that the government had mystified the imperial household through their interpretation of State Shinto since the beginning of the Meiji period. He, instead, emphasized the continuity between the emotional and symbolic aspects of rural festivals and those of the imperial ceremonies. Yanagita pointed out that village festivals in Japan were closely interwoven with the worldview of the people, which was also fundamental to some of the imperial ceremonies. Yanagita compared the Daijo-sai, which literally means harvest festival, with village festivals, and found many correspondences between them.

In the two articles, Yanagita denounced the simplistic conservatism which neglected the historical circumstances of earlier times and tried to uphold the ritual forms rigidly. Yanagita argued that imperial ceremonies, like village festivals, should be recognized for their history of transformation and be allowed to change their forms while

maintaining a particular respect for the collective consciousness of the society behind the rituals.

Although this seems to be a moderate argument in the present day context, Yanagita was asked to rewrite the two articles by the chief editor, Taketora Ogata, because they contained "critical" elements toward the imperial family (Nakamura, 1977b, p. 19-35). However, Yanagita was unwavering about his views that the imperial family per se was not the symbol of individual Japanese (Morse, 1990, p. 70). It is recorded in Ogata's autobiography that Yanagita at first stubbornly resisted the editorial request and later revised the articles only minimally (Nakamura, 1977b, p. 35).

Tsurumi and Nakamura argued that Yanagita's criticism targeted government policies which consciously put distance between the imperial family and the citizens, and not against the existence of the imperials in society. Nakamura even argued that Yanagita's history as a bureaucrat in the Meiji government, which was founded upon the restoration of power by the emperor, limited his view toward an imperial system (Nakamura, 1977b).

However, when comparing his arguments on Daijo-sai with those on *yamabito*, it can be argued that Yanagita did not feel that the imperial system held supreme power in Japan. If Yanagita argued that the original state religion was closer to Folk Shinto, which was influenced by the belief system of the conquered rather than the state counterpart (which had been imposed upon the citizens by the governments since the Meiji Restoration), Yanagita might be indicating the *yamabito*'s influence on the official and

central religion of the state. This influence from the marginalized to the central authority

suggested a completely opposite direction of power from that which the government was

attempting to portray through its various social programs. While it is difficult to

determine if Yanagita was consciously developing his argument for the influence of the

marginalized, his articles characterized his empathy towards those on the periphery of

society.

CHAPTER FIVE

DEVELOPMENT OF FOLKLORE STUDIES

A Liberal's Predicament

Yanagita retired from the Asahi Newspaper at the age of fifty-seven in January 1932. He subsequently retreated from the public life of a journalist to an academic life of quieter and more private existence by concentrating on folklore research. Morse observed that Yanagita's retirement was not merely a personal act, but rather a political act of withdrawal, not unlike *yamairi*, an act of going into the mountain for isolated living (Morse, 1990, p. 71).

Yanagita and other liberals of the day had been disillusioned by the international and domestic events of the day. A particular setback experienced by those who still had a hope in the new ideologies of the West was the passage of a law in the United States prohibiting immigration from Japan (Morse, 1990, p. 71). This was in reaction to the intensifying argument against the 'yellow peril' in Europe and North America. Domestically, the increasingly militaristic government was tightening its control over freedom of thought. In particular the government strengthened its suppression of socialism, as the specific developments after World War I (1914 - 1918), such as worsening labour conditions and inflation, fostered socialist ideologies. As a result, liberals like Yanagita found themselves caught between the increasingly militant government and the leftists (Morse, p. 71).

Furthermore, as the army strengthened on its aggressive policies abroad, epitomized by the outbreak of the Manchurian Affair in 1931, the right-wing ultra-nationalist group began expanding its control over national politics. This culminated in the assassination of the prime minister by a group of young naval officers in May 1932. Then a fascist government quickly replaced the party government.

In the years following the military take over, there were strenuous governmental efforts to identify the military as the "highest repository of the traditional Japanese spirit"which had its highest purpose in serving the emperor (Varley, 1984, p. 262). Such efforts simultaneously directed the people against the socio-political doctrines and ideologies that had been introduced from the West since the Meiji Restoration. In the government's view, these ideologies were "the enemy that had led the people astray" (Varley, p. 262).

The suppression of the freedom of thought in the 1930s was not only aimed at social activists and proletarian authors, but also at scholarly views that were deemed incompatible with the national policy (Varley, p. 263). The academic and literary worlds were effectively muted as a result. Morse concluded that when Yanagita retired from Asahi Newspaper, he took on a new pragmatism which reflected the political developments in the 1930s (1990, p. 50). His new attitude (in which he claimed that studying the *jomin* culture was necessary to understand present day issues) was reflected in his emphasis on examining the details of reality rather than developing theories.

His pragmatic approach, combined with his earlier elite status in the bureaucracy, enabled Yanagita to continue his philosophical pursuit of folklore culture in an increasingly unstable political situation (Nakamura, 1977b). Consequently, he attracted progressive intellectuals who turned to Yanagita for "shelter and guidance" in their efforts to sustain their ideology and morality under the oppressive political control (Morse, 1990, p. 50). In 1934, Yanagita started holding regular meetings with them on Thursday mornings, which were called *Mokuyo kai*, or the Thursday Club. These meetings were also called the Rural Life Studies Group (*Kyodo seikatsu kenkyujo*). Working with the group, much of Yanagita's writing became a co-operative effort in this period, while bearing the name of Yanagita. Such examples are *Minkan denshoron* (Theories on Folk Culture, 1934), *The Studies in Mountain Village Life* (1937) and *Minzokugaku jiten* (Dictionary of Japanese Folklore, 1951).

In these works, Yanagita's students recorded his lectures and edited, researched and classified, or categorized, his vast collection of terminology into glossaries. Those with a command of foreign languages were also asked to translate and report on foreign research. Morse remarked that Yanagita and his group made "the scholarly advances that have sustained Japanese folklore down to the present" (1990, p. 107).

Parameters of Yanagita Folklore

In the 1930s, a wide range of people, which included members of the Communist Party, came to Yanagita. However, Yanagita's scholarship had not been formally

systematized by this time. He prided himself in starting with questions from his life, or in his observations from extensive traveling, and answering with actual experience and comparative methods of observation. As a result, Yanagita was faced with a need to establish his own system of folklore research in order to instruct his followers. Consequently, his writings and lectures during the decade aimed at answering this need. *Minkan densho ron*, (Theories on Folk Culture) and *Kokushi to minzokugaku*, (National History and Folklore Studies, 1935) are such examples.

In the former work, Yanagita defined the theories of folk culture as the "study for tomorrow" (1980, p. 1). He intentionally avoided the use of the term, *minzokugaku* (folklore studies) in this work. This was because the term had not achieved a unified publicly accepted definition, and some had used it to mean a branch of historical studies. He also attributed his preference for 'theories of folk culture' instead of 'folklore studies' to confusion with another term, ethnology, which is also rendered as *minzokugaku* in Japanese. While those two terms, folklore studies and ethnology, are phonetically identical, the term for ethnology is written with a different phonogram for 'zoku'.

He stated in *Minkan densho ron* that until the term 'folklore studies' had clearly accepted objectives in the society, use of the term should be avoided. In place of folklore studies, Yanagita used *Minkan densho ron*, and advanced "a thesis which claims that folklore is not something to be brushed aside" (translated by the author, 1980, p. 18). In order to make such a claim, Yanagita listed three contentions about studying folklore in the preface of the work. First, the cultural history of humanity as a whole was the object

and beneficiary of folklore studies. This was because academic curiosity usually came from one's real life, and answers had to be based on one's present reality in consultation with one's past development. As a result, when one expanded the target of curiosity to a culture, investigations must involve the history of the culture and its present condition, which would inevitably contribute to knowledge of humanity as a whole.

Second, since all learning had to ultimately serve the betterment of humanity, various disciplines relating to understanding humanity, such as history, ethnology, anthropology and geography, must stress their common goal and work together. Although these disciplines were stressing their own uniqueness at the time, they had to shed this territoriality. Folklore studies embraced such interdisciplinary approaches.

Third, having realized that the attempts in folklore studies were part of a larger learning about the humanity, they became distinct from dilettantism. A clear and formal classification system of the elements of folklore studies was useful for such an awareness. Yanagita defined this classification system to include three categories, material, oral and mental and emotional. The first category, material folklore, included expressions of daily life which were tangible, such as housing, clothing, food, village structure, etc. The oral category included words, riddles, proverbs, folk songs, narratives, tales and legends. The third category contained phenomena such as knowledge, social outlook, morality and superstitions. The third category was identified by Yanagita as the most difficult for a foreign ethnographer to penetrate. This provided a strong reason for folklore studies, which necessitated native eyes to investigate inner phenomena (1980).

Elaborating on many of the points above, Yanagita defined folklore studies in
relation to historical studies and ethnology in *Kokushi to minzokugaku* (1935). Notably,
Yanagita was critical of historical studies based solely on written documents. He felt that
by doing so, they neglected the doings and feelings of the common people who did not
record their lives. Yanagita argued that by studying history, one was studying elites who
kept recording themselves for control of power and posterity. He felt that this was the
reason historical changes seemed as if they had been achieved by the elite class alone.

Another criticism by Yanagita of historical studies was the underlying assumption
about the concept of time. Since Japanese history was usually organized according to the
shift in political regimes, its history was considered as stages of development. However,
he argued that the history of ordinary people cannot be divided into stages. He wrote in
Kokushi to minzokugaku:

> Even in a region which is supposed to be advanced, one
> can find many stages of development at a point in time. In
> a place where it is considered modern to paint a house blue,
> when one goes to the back, the roof is made of straws....
> Clothing is supposed to be one of the easiest to change,
> however, when they take off the outer layer, they would be
> wearing a loin cloth.... Furthermore, individuals have
> different dispositions which contribute to receiving external
> influences differently, thus outputs are different. How
> could one then generalize and call certain things in society
> the 'spirit of the time' (translated by the author, 1978, p. 39
> - 40).

Hence, instead of the conventional historical assumption of time, Yanagita stressed a
cross-sectional view of a society in which the patterns of life of past periods coexisted

with those of the most recent time. He contended that by collecting data from all the

different localities of Japan, by observing, interviewing people, and recording dialects,

folk tales and songs, the evolutionary process of people's life styles, social structures,

beliefs, ideas and feelings could be traced. Yanagita, therefore, maintained that the

transformation of mental and emotional phenomena can be illuminated through the

material and oral cultures found in present day society.

In *Kokushi to minzokugaku*, Yanagita also compared his approach with that of

ethnology, *minzokugaku*. The fundamental difference between the two disciplines was

that the latter involved comparative elements of foreign cultures. Yanagita pointed out

that this was often carried out through an emphasis on the peculiarities found at a point in

time, rather than on what was ordinary and how that could change over time. Yanagita,

hence, felt that a deep understanding of the culture, particularly of its dynamic nature

with temporal and spatial factors, was difficult to be grasped in ethnology.

Nonetheless, Yanagita felt that the trials and mistakes of the ethnology of the

West, which branded the Japanese as "primitives" in their studies after the Meiji

Restoration, gave the Japanese "unlimited inspirations and guidance" (1980, p. 52). It not

only provided some valuable information about global cultural history, it demonstrated

that those who were native to the society must participate in such investigations for

successful understanding of the culture.

Yanagita instigated the need for Japanese folklore studies to concentrate on

documenting the disappearing cultures within the boundaries of the country which was

going through a drastic transformation. However, he contended that when the time came

the data collected should be put side by side with those from other countries for

investigations of wider scale for the ultimate purpose of learning, which was the

betterment of humanity.

Yanagita's determination to document folklore in Japan was seen in his group's

nation-wide survey of mountain villages which commenced in 1934, the year *Minkan*

densho ron was published, and lasted until 1937. The main objective of the survey was

to investigate the degree of change in the belief system of rural cultures as a result of the

government edicts and programs of the time (Morse, 1990, p. 170). Fifty locations in

remote areas, usually one in each prefecture, were selected for the purpose. As a starting

point, the researchers were instructed to use a 'handbook for fieldwork', which was

compiled by the group under Yanagita's direction. It identified relevant topics

researchers could target in illuminating the "psychological attitudes" of the people. There

were almost one hundred topics covering a wide range of rural folk life from the village

structure to taboos. (This list is found in the appendix). In addition to the researchers

belonging to the group, the handbooks were distributed to all those who were interested

throughout the nation to undertake investigations themselves and to return the data to

Yanagita's group (Dorson, 1963; Hashikawa, 1978; Morse, 1990).

As for the procedure of the survey, one or two researchers visited one village and

spend at least eight consecutive days observing and interviewing the villagers. They were

required to repeat this procedure at least twice. Since this was the first time local cultures

were systematically studied in Japan, the police became suspicious of the researchers'

motives, and some were questioned upon returning to Tokyo. Once the results were

turned in, responses were classified into groups and associated with each other in motif

and character. The results of the survey were compiled and published in 1937 (Morse,

1990).

While the outcome of the research has been criticized as sacrificing depth for

breadth and generalization (Dorson, 1963), the survey gave Yanagita's group publicity

for their scholarship and activity. As a result, even elementary school and junior high

school students started collecting folklore (Hashikawa, 1978). This phenomenon,

combined with the fact that there were about one hundred twenty participants in an one-

week-long conference on folklore studies organized by Yanagita's group in 1935,

demonstrated folklore studies' healthy growth in the pre-war period.

Scholarship of the Folklore Studies

It has been generally accepted that Yanagita took an interest in the English

folklorists of the late nineteenth century, who were engaged in debates on 'survival,'

'superstitions' and 'cultural progress' (Hashikawa, 1978; Morse, 1990; Nakamura,

1977a). Although it is evident that Yanagita was familiar with the biologically and

racially oriented nineteenth century view of W. H. R. Riveres, Yanagita was more

interested in Sir James Frazer, whose orientation was somehow closer to the cultural

progressionism of the eighteenth century. Yanagita himself acknowledged that he

received his greatest influence from Frazer. In particular Yanagita's view toward history

was very close to that of Frazer who wrote:

> For the best fruit of knowledge is wisdom, and it may
> reasonably be hoped that a deeper and wider acquaintance
> with the past history of mankind will in time enable our
> statesman to mould the destiny of the race in fairer forms
> than we of this generation shall live to see (1913, p. 161).

Another figure that played an important role in the formation of Yanagita's

folklore studies was George Laurence Gomme, whom Richard Dorson described as

someone who "looked for the primitive past in his own island" (Morse, 1990, p. 148).

Gomme studied his own people in Britain and emphasized the need for supplementing

historical materials with the study of survivals. There is a close relationship between the

'historical reconstructional' method used by Gomme and analytical methods used by

Yanagita and his students (Morse, 1990).

Gomme considered that community beliefs, social development and agriculture

were all intimately related. Furthermore, there was a continuity between primitive and

modern cultures in their psychological and religious aspects. In order to study such

mental workings of a culture he emphasized studying a limited area in order to allow

"scientific comparison" of cultural survivals (Morse, 1990, p. 148). With the use of such

a comparative method, Gomme believed in reconstructing the historical sequence of the

past.

Gomme's comparative method was used for classifying similar and dissimilar

elements of customs:

> A given custom consists, say, of six elements, which by
> their constancy among the examples and by their special
> characteristics may be considered as primary elements, in
> the form in which the custom has survived. Let us call
> these primary elements by algebraical signs, a, b, c, d, e, f.
> A second example of the same custom has four of these
> elements, a, b, c, d, and two divergences, which may be
> considered as secondary elements, and which we will call
> by the signs, g, h. A third example has elements a, b, and
> divergences g, h, i, l, m. Then the statement of the case is
> reduced to the following:-

$$1 = a, b, c, d, e, f.$$
$$2 = \quad a, b, c, d + g, h.$$
$$3 = \quad\quad a, b + g, h, i, k.$$
$$4 = \quad\quad\quad + g, h, i, l, m.$$

> The first conclusion to be drawn from this is that the
> overlapping of the several examples (No. 1 overlapping
> No. 2 at a, b, c, d, No. 2 overlapping No. 3 at a , b+g, h,
> No. 3 overlapping No. 4 at +g, h, i) shows all these several
> examples to be but variations of one original custom,
> example No. 4, through possessing none of the elements of
> No.1, being the same custom as example No. 1. Secondly,
> the divergences g to m mark the line of decay which a
> particular custom has undergone since it ceased to belong
> to the dominant culture of the people, and dropped back
> into the position of a survival from a former culture
> preserved only by a fragment of the people (Gomme, 1910,
> p. 167 - 8).

Yanagita's idea about social change was close to that of Gomme. Taking

Gomme's idea further, Yanagita equated processes of change in tradition and way of life

with a history of dissipation and transformation of beliefs which upheld these traditions

(Noguchi, 1976, p. 319). Therefore, the tangible phenomena, such as buildings, food, religious objects and annual observances, in combination with the oral phenomena of tales, dialects, ballads and poetry, were seen as means to explore the mental and emotional lives of the people, which consisted of the most essential part of Yanagita's three categories for the folklore studies.

Such an approach was apparent in the numerous glossaries and lexicons Yanagita produced. Since he maintained that words were repositories for traditional symbols and value, words and dialects were collected and compared for keys to the history of dissipation of ideas. He also utilized both tangible materials and oral traditions in many of his works. For example, in *Momen izen no koto* (Things Prior to Cotton) (1976), which was a collection of essays on women's issues, Yanagita explored women's lives and their history through clothing, food, *hibuki* (a tool for cooking), interior lighting, smoking, agriculture, folk tales and *haiku*.

Takenori Noguchi examined this collection of essays. He pointed out that by starting his arguments from particularly familiar objects and customs of women, not only was Yanagita investigating their psyche in the past and present, he also expressed his belief in the urgency of women's participation in the discipline of women's history (*joseishi gaku*), which was instigated by Yanagita for the first time in the Japanese history (Noguchi, 1976).

Women's Studies

Since Yanagita related the transformation of traditions and way of life to belief systems, which were prevalent in human's struggle with self and nature, he repeatedly emphasized the importance of having each individual reconstruct history. He argued that this was important for the betterment of individual living as well as for determining humanity's future direction. Yanagita particularly felt, and expressed in his works (*Josei to Minkan densho* and *Momen izen no koto*) and lectures from the early stage of folklore studies, that women were more suited to this task than men. He also urged women to link the past, present and future of their gender in order to think critically of their current "unfairly restricted status" in society (1976, p. 315).

He explained the reason for his insistence in urging women to reconsider their position in the society, which he sometimes called "women's history" as follows:

> Some may criticize me for talking about women's issues
> despite being a man. However, I have four daughters, and
> all four grandchildren are girls as well. There have been
> occasions in the past when I had to think of the future with
> them or from their position, and I anticipate there will be
> such occasions in the future. If such a reflection was on
> issue concerning only one individual or family, then it can
> not be a topic of scholarship. However, fortunately, our
> situation seems to be representative of many of our
> contemporaries. When we look at our realities, we do not
> have to worry about simply disturbing others or leading
> them to a wrong path by talking about them. On the
> contrary, we have to share such reflections. We are not
> only ashamed of this scholarship which starts from one's
> own query, we scorn those professions which preach to
> others on issues which do not concern themselves. This is
> how I understand *the need for Japan to have its own*

scholarship (translated by the author, italic mine, 1976, p. 5).

While Yanagita does not make clear the exact relationship between women-centered scholarship and scholarship on Japan in the above quotation, he saw them as parallel on the basis of intellectual pursuit which starts from matters close to the investigator. Yanagita was also certain about the similarity in the purposes of these intellectual pursuits, which was to improve society as a whole. Following is an excerpt from *Momen izen no koto*, which further described his view on the "scholarship of women":

> Among ancient Japanese, women were seen as one step closer to divinity and ancestral spirits than men. While as a rule, the evidence of those women who inspired and guided men in doubt, either by their rational senses or their mystic senses, was not recorded in history, there are quite a few recordings about such incidents.... Based on today's practical sciences, these women's recommendations were explained by their sincere beneficent spirit and life experience, which unconsciously contributed to the navigation in life. Even when they spoke extraordinary words, their imagination was limited. It was impossible to leave the boundaries of knowledge and experiences of the society and the time. In order to give birth to good and new ideas, one has to increase knowledge as a preparation. Moreover, rather than as random inspirations, this preparation should be systematized for its liberal and conscious use. It would probably require practice in doing so. However, I would think that it is already a great advancement if women recognize their ancient position and responsibilities, and realize how unfairly their authority has been reduced. Today, the dawn of such scholarship has started. There have been many new findings of the *jomin*'s life style of the past. The knowledge of today is increasing.

> This is no longer the time when only women retreat into
> the back and moan of their unfortunate situations. One has
> to be freely involved in the learning of the day and to
> actively wander about in the atmosphere of today.
> Whichever *kenbo* (wise mother) or *kenfujin* (wise woman)
> of the current period, in my view, is only caring for her
> own child and family and is lacking in her love for life in
> general. It may not be so, but it seems this way (translated
> by author, 1976, p. 315).

In the above quotation, Yanagita was clear about his expectation of women and their role in guiding modern Japanese society along with his admiration for their past contributions. Feeling that the government's control over women (which defined women's ideal role to be 'good wife and wise mother' through the formal education and public propaganda in the modern era) was limiting women's historical capacity in the society, Yanagita encouraged them not only to learn about their own traditions but also to broaden their capability by seeking and systematizing knowledge for societal reforms. Therefore, Yanagita's insistence on women's scholarship was part of larger efforts to improve society, and it could be said that he turned to women, particularly of the *jomin* class, rather than the government in his effort.

Issues of Modern Women

Yanagita's views toward women were first expressed in his fascination with women's role in the mystic religion of the Ryukyu islands during his trip to Okinawa in 1922. His travel diary, *Kainan shoki* (Brief Notes on the South Sea, 1925) recorded many

of the themes Yanagita often dealt with in relation to women and folklore studies

thereafter, for example, women's religious role as intermediaries between gods and men,

their role in preparation of sake (rice wine) used in festivals, and their emotional

receptivity.

In the diary, he was particularly fascinated with the observation that all adult

women were considered divine on some islands (1968, p. 312). Following up this

spiritual superiority of women on these islands, Yanagita produced *Imoto no chikara*

(Power of the Sisters) in 1940. This work is a collection of essays on women's

shamanistic roles and their influence over politics throughout Japanese history. Yanagita

also examined how their influence was spread over Japan through female itinerant

entertainers. This can be considered an extension of his interest in itinerant existence

such as *yamabito*, which was discussed earlier.

Another element Yanagita often associated with women, which appeared in

Kainan shoki, Josei to minkan densho, and *Momen izen no koto*, was the making of *sake*,

the rice wine. Relating the origins of the word *toji*, which could mean both 'matron' and

those who are in the profession of making *sake*, Yanagita maintained that wine making

was one of the spiritual responsibilities of women. He explained that since *sake* was

originally only made for special religious observances with rice chewed by women, it

was believed that women were closely associated with divines. Furthermore, he argued

that the use of *toji* as the title for the head woman of the household reflected women's

importance in running the household (1969a, p. 443 - 7). This was because this title

originated in their spiritual occupation of making *sake*.

Yanagita then argued that women's spiritual power, that was believed to be

necessary in their responsibilities, intimidated men in control. As a result, women's

power became severely restricted by those in power for its potential threat to their

dominance. It was also argued that commercialization of the *sake* making and the

practices of samurai, particularly at war where women were usually not present, were

reasons for the gradual withdrawal of women from political and spiritual meetings where

sake was served (1970a, p. 184-7).

While Yanagita once described his efforts as "trying to locate such sources of the

gentle hidden power of women in the realm of religious system" (1969a, p. 441),

Yanagita also studied women in realms other than those related to spirituality. Through

his extensive survey in villages, he studied marriage customs, household structure,

clothing, cooking, agricultural responsibilities, smoking, drinking etc.. Particularly

regarding marriage customs and household structure, Yanagita repeatedly remarked on

the extent of change in the customs of the *jomin* class which was due to the expanding

dominance of the traditions of the *samurai* class.

While it was generally understood that traditional marriage was a contract

between two families, in which principles had little, if any, say in the matter (Kikumura,

1981, p. 123 - 4), Yanagita explained that this was a system of marriage particular to the

family system of the ruling class. Contrary to the popular perception that Japanese

households were based on the hierarchy and patriarchy of Confucian ethics, he found that such concepts were quite alien to the *jomin*, who were mostly peasants at the time (1976; 1949).

Instead of the patriarchy and hierarchy of the *samurai* class, in many villages throughout Japan, an age-group system extended control over community life. This system, which was based on sexually segregated communal living, was the basis of egalitarian communal solidarity among villagers, and it covered work exchanges, mating behaviours and marriage alliances. Young people moved to communal lodgings, usually the houses of village leaders, at the age of initiation: age 14 or 15 for boys, and at the time of the first menstruation for girls. These lodgings were called *wakamono yado* (lodge for young men) and *musume yado* (lodges for young women). In these lodges, youths entered into a fictitious kin relationship with their *yado oya*, or house parents. There, young people learned agricultural knowledge, survival skills, and craft making techniques, as well as social norms (Yanagita, 1949).

This system was also a social institution for sanctioning mating behaviour. Young people initiated courting when the men visited young women's lodging in the evenings to chat and sing while both men and women made crafts, wove and sewed. In this system, premarital promiscuity was not condemned but rather institutionalized by the system. When the couple decided to get married or the girl became pregnant, the house parent of the young men's lodge went to the parents of both parties to gain approval for marriage. Since the age-group set of young men was the most powerful labour collective in the

agricultural community and its threat to withhold labour cooperation was effective, the families did not have much say in such matters as mating behaviour or marriages of their sons or daughters (1949).

Furthermore, Yanagita listed many traditional conjugal systems in different places in Japan, which were quite unlike the family system based on Confucius ethics. He did so for the purpose of criticizing the system which was considered as traditional in the post-Meiji Japan, in which a bride is brought into the groom's household immediately after the marriage. Yanagita pointed out that this was the norm of the *samurai* class in the pre-Meiji period, and showed that many conflicts between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law (such as that of his mother and sister-in-law as mentioned earlier) were due to this system.

While Yanagita was critical of post-Meiji Restoration changes in traditions, he was not simply against transformation, as some have claimed. For example, Yanagita was supportive of the women's suffrage movement, which started in 1920 (1976, p. 272-3). He was optimistic about the realization of women's participation in politics. However, he was also cautious about the possibility that women would fail to make a difference, as men did when they attained universal suffrage in 1925. He wrote in 1934:

> As in the case of men's universal suffrage, we have to be
> cautious about not repeating the embarrassment, in which
> nothing changed due to the revision in the constitution in
> the political participation. While actual problems are
> drastically increasing, our current politics has not changed
> at all. There have been many serious concerns which are
> not manageable by old fashioned politicians. Moreover,

> many issues which had not existed earlier became issues of
> concerns. In many ways, it has become apparent that our
> general knowledge is not enough for solving such
> problems. Therefore, we have many reasons for pushing
> our learning ahead. Men have been involved with this
> struggle already, and it is not the time when women can
> only express their opinion in the back while observing what
> is happening (translated by the author, 1976, p. 273).

In addition to his support for women's suffrage, Yanagita also proposed a

transformation of the moral education of modern Japanese society, particularly that for

women, which was under the direct control of the government. In making this point,

Yanagita cited the increasing number of cases in which mothers took their children's life

when committing suicide out of despair (1976; 1971). In order to reduce such cases,

Yanagita argued that one has to re-evaluate the modern universal moral teachings in

which subservience was emphasized as a virtue of women. He suggested that, when

women felt they did not have any stake in their life except in their children, their courage

was expressed in the tragic decision of killing themselves and their children. He

criticized modern moral teaching, which endorsed such decisions, in *Momen izen no*

koto:

> In traditional teachings of old houses, there are often
> irrational principles which direct women's courage only
> toward death. Therefore, unless in tragedies ending in
> death, courageous women's names were not heard. As a
> result, the majority of the female protagonists of historical
> moral texts faced a sword in their death. I wonder if it is
> the result of inheriting such old texts without much
> consideration that we are directing those who are
> unassertive toward tragedies. If that is a case, it is an ill use

of women's courage. If one could not determine this causal
relationship for certain, both men and women should be
involved in an investigation of the root of the problem.
Once the relationship is found, we must rewrite the books
on moral education (translated by the author, 1976, p. 275).

Yanagita, hence, found the moral education by the central government and its

female ideals to be harmful to the welfare of the society. Yanagita's criticism of moral

education, along with his examination of the marriage system and family structure, was

sustained by his urgency in improving Japanese society. Therefore, contrary to the

popular image of Yanagita as backward-looking, he was by no means an opponent of

change. Instead, he was critical of those who rested their beliefs on relatively new

traditions as if these were fundamentally inherent to the country. Furthermore, his

interest in women's issues was a part of his pursuit, as an individual member of a society

and a father of four daughters, of a society which would offer improved living for its

citizens. Hence, his insistence on women's scholarship was a means, rather than an end,

to his objective of improving the society.

CHAPTER SIX

WAR YEARS AND BEYOND

In 1937, when shooting broke out between Chinese and Japanese troops at the Marco Polo Bridge in northern China, Japan embarked on a war with China. With the series of Japanese army's assaults, the Nationalist government of Chiang Kai-shek withdrew farther and farther into the Chinese countryside; however, fighting continued. As the war dragged on, the Japanese economy was falling into a distressing state. Nonetheless Japan plotted an even more grand plan of a New Order in East Asia in 1938. This proclaimed that China was an integral part of the Japanese sphere of influence. Moreover, in 1940 the New Order was expanded into a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere (*Dai Toa Kyoeiken*) which saw not only Southeast Asia but also Australia and New Zealand as part of an economically self-sufficient regional zone under Japan.

Believing that an alliance with Germany would aid Japan in her dominance in East Asia, Japan signed the tripartite pact with Germany and Italy in 1940. This, however, only stiffen the United States' anti-Japanese attitude. When Japan continued its aggression in Southeast Asia, the United States froze Japanese assets in America and imposed a trade embargo. Finally in 1941, the tension of the events led to the Japanese aggression on Pearl Harbour. This became a start of a long war which ended with Japan's defeat in 1945.

While folklore studies had gained public recognition by 1941, the outbreak of war

made things difficult for the discipline. Restrictions were imposed upon publications and

travel, and many folklorists were called to the nation's service. As a result, folklore

research was in effect brought to a halt. Yanagita, however, felt an even stronger urgency

to establish the system of folklore studies in order to understand the events of the period.

This urgency was reflected in his lecture in 1941 at the University of Tokyo:

> There are always some motivations in human behaviour,
> even of a psychopath. However, this has been forgotten in
> the modern era, and people explain with words such as
> 'ambiguous' or 'ignorant' without reflecting on their own
> analytical ability. ... If it was a peaceful time, this was
> acceptable. However, in a time like now, if unexplainable
> social conditions appear one after another, the country will
> surely end up in an helpless plight. It is this urgent situation
> we must be warned of (translated by the author,
> Hashikawa, 1978, p. 99).

Hashikawa concluded that Yanagita was concerned with the erratic string of events and

felt frustration toward those leaders who preached about 'the Japanese way' without

understanding what it was. After the war, Yanagita regretted his powerlessness and

inaction in making a difference in the society:

> It was the time when our queries about our lives were
> suppressed to the point that we could not voice them. Many
> of the important national issues were provided with ready
> made answers, and important questions about life, such as
> why we had to leave the family behind to go to battle and
> die, were supposed to be unquestionably clear and
> understood. Besides, one could not speak out disagreement
> with these answers. Since everybody else followed these
> given solutions, nobody dared to question them. Instead
> many started believing what was told and went to the battle

field without a single drop of tear. There were many things
at the time which restricted individual freedom. In the
midst of such situation, some may say it was brave of us to
insist on the purpose of folklore studies as starting from
real life and pursuing answers in reality. However, if I
could confess now, I was only indirectly demonstrating
examples of how questions can lead to answers outside the
sphere of real life. As a result, I was only giving the
impression that folklore studies were a breezy scholarship,
and we did not have any significant impact on national
politics. It was a cowardly attitude even for an old man. At
the time, unlike now, there were only one sided solutions
available and no common inquiry by the citizens (translated
by the author, 1975a, p. 391).

As reflected in the above quotation, instead of dealing with political issues, Yanagita

concentrated on the study of folk religion during the war years. This interest was in part

motivated by deaths in the family: Yanagita's brother Michiyasu died in 1941, then his

favourite daughter six months later (Morse, 1990). He published *Nihon no matsuri*

(Japanese Festivals, 1942) and *Shinto to minzokugaku* (Shinto and Folklore Studies,

1943), and lectured on related topics during the period. He also published *Senzo no*

hanashi (About Our Ancestors, 1946) immediately after the end of the war.

The end of the war was greeted by Yanagita with a sense of relief. He was

determined to take part in correcting the errors of the past which led the nation to war. In

his diary, he wrote "finally the time came when we start serious work" (Hashikawa,

1977. p. 101). In the preface of the published diary, Yanagita repeated his old belief and

trust in the discipline of folklore studies, and its method of learning from the past for the

future direction of the society:

> We cannot simply ignore our history which continued for
> hundreds or thousands of years and identify ourselves with
> other countries with completely different paths. In order to
> decide on laws and regulations for society, we have to
> discuss with many ordinary citizens to the point we can
> agree. If v. ʒ decided this was troublesome, and instead,
> force something on to them or demand submission, there is
> no change from the previous political way (translated by
> the author, Hashikawa, 1978, p. 103).

What Yanagita expressed in the diary, therefore, is his renewed optimism about what

folklore studies could achieve in the society. Yanagita started identifying folklore studies

as *shin kokugaku* (a new national learning), in contrast to the *kokugaku* of the Tokugawa

period, in which the intuitive and unique qualities of the Japanese heritage were

emphasized in the analysis of literary and poetic tradition.[20] By this identification,

Yanagita recognized the shared aim of folklore studies and *kokugaku*, as well as the

differences in his interest and methods by adding *shin*, which means new. In the

following section, Yanagita's intention of identifying folklore studies as *shin kokugaku*

and their relationship to nationalism is examined.

Yanagita and Nationalism

Kokugaku, or national learning arose in the eighteenth century as an antiquarian

literary movement in which ancient masterpieces such as *Manyoshu* were investigated in

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[20] Yanagita started a new series of publications entitled, *Shin kokugaku dan* (Discussions on the New National Learning) in 1947.

the search for an "original Japanese spirit untainted by those alien systems of thought and behaviour" including Buddhism and Confucianism (Varley, 1984, p. 187). While there were many differences between their approaches, Yanagita was attracted to the *kokugaku* trans-historical view in understanding Japanese society with empathy for those who had lived in the country in the past (Nakamura, 1977a, p. 75).

One of the major differences between Yanagita and *kokugaku* scholars was seen in *kokugaku* scholars' interest in elite literature, such as *Manyoshu*, *Tale of Genji*, a courtier literature of the eleventh century and *Shinkokinshu*, a collection of poems from the thirteenth century. Even when a notable *kokugaku* scholar, Norinaga Motoori, studied the *Kojiki*, his interest was in *Amatsukami*, the god of the heaven, and her unbroken line linked to Japan's imperial family (Morse, 1990, p. 130). On the other hand, Yanagita was interested in *Kunitsukami* and his earthly mythology with its reverence for nature.

This distinction between elite and commoner cultural layers made by Yanagita needs to be considered in the discussion on Yanagita's nationalistic tendency. As seen in the literature review, Yanagita's nationalistic tendency is sometimes discussed in relation to his pursuit of unique national characteristics. Minoru Kawada, for example, defined the central theme of Yanagita's work to be a search of a 'native faith' which he interpreted as "a faith in a clan god *(ujigami-shinko)*" and "the fundamental heart of the Japanese as a racial group" (Kawada, 1992, p. 23).

Interestingly, however, Yanagita in *Ujigami to ujiko* (Clan Gods and Clan Members, 1969b) maintained that the word *ujigami* has three denotations: first, the

ancestral spirits of each separate household; second, the ancestral spirits of one's clan; and third the ancestral spirits of a village as a whole. He further denoted that the original meaning of *ujigami* was *uchi gami*, the guardian gods of the group, which was in contrast to *soto gami*, the external gods. The guardian gods are worshipped by the villagers as their own, where the external gods are only invited in with the consent of the guardian gods or just tolerated with proper decorum (1969b, p. 400-424).

Considering Yanagita's stress on this distinction between *uchi gami* and *soto gami* in reference to his ideas about two kinds of Shinto, Folk Shinto and State Shinto, one could conjecture that the State Shinto which is organized around the worship of the Emperor and the Imperial ancestors was equated with *soto gami*, the external gods, by villagers. On the other hand, Folk Shinto was identified with *uchi gami*. Hence, Kawada's argument that Yanagita's interest in *ujigami* equaled his pursuit for native faith is based solely on Yanagita's view toward the commoner cultural layer, without taking into consideration his view toward the elite counterpart.

Moreover, when one considers the distinction between *uchi gami* and *soto gami*, the sense of nationalism that Kawada's article inevitably associate with Yanagita's work disappears. Rather the distinction proves to have an opposite effect, in which Yanagita was interested in folk beliefs in contrast to the state counterpart. Therefore, what results is an interpretation similar to that of Yoneyama, which was reviewed in the literature review. Despite the nationalistic overtone of many of Yanagita's concepts, Yanagita's

intent was to give a voice to local traditions and belief systems which were being

overwhelmed by the state imposed ideologies.

It is also interesting to find Morse's definition of *kunigara* as "national character"

(1990, p. 77). The term can indeed mean national characteristic when it is used in a

global sense. However, it is generally used to mean regional characteristic, since each

administrative region prior to the Meiji Restoration was called '*kuni*'. When one takes

kunigara as regional character, the sense of generalization or nationalism is eliminated

from the following paragraph by Morse:

> When considering peasant history, he [Yanagita]
> maintained, there were two important factors to keep in
> mind. First, was national character (*kunigara*), the
> configuration of life and customs that grew out of the
> interaction of man with his environment. Second, there
> were regional variations produced by time and situation.
> Having made these two general distinctions, he stated that
> the most important thing one could learn from history was
> that people 'have the potentiality for development
> (*shinten*)." Or stated differently, it is only with the
> confidence developed from historical experience that the
> ideals of the nation can be fostered (1990, p. 77).

When read with the interpretation of 'regional characteristics,' the above paragraph gains

a new understanding that Yanagita was interested in "the path of change" in the

commoner history for future development, *shinten*. This was, in Yanagita's eyes, made

clear by comparing a number of remains of the past which were found in the different

regions of present day Japan. As a result, Morse's explanation that Yanagita believed

"the ideals of the nation can be fostered" through historical experience becomes somehow misplaced.

The above examinations illustrate the ambiguity in Yanagita's terminology, which rendered an impression that Yanagita was solely interested in a set of universal Japanese characteristics. This in turn led some to conclude he was nationalistic. It is possibly due to such ambiguous terminology, and the relatively open framework of his theory, that Yanagita's ideology has allowed various interpretations which identify Yanagita with both the socialist and nationalist ideologies. During the war years Yanagita attracted many intellectuals from the left; however, in the post-war period, the right wing counterparts saw Yanagita as one who could possibly answer their nationalistic quest for a sense of national identity. Nationalists, hence, still claim that Yanagita supported their glorification of Japan's uniqueness and affirmation of Japan's search for a leadership role in the world (Morse, 1990. p. 148).

Not only can this nationalist claim of Yanagita be explained by Yanagita's interest in folk cultures, as in the above examination of Kawada's view, but also Yanagita's personal history as an elite bureaucrat is a factor which contributed to the nationalists' faith in him. This was despite the fact that Yanagita maintained his position as a critic of the government throughout his life. One cannot completely deny that Yanagita was not affected by his elitist standing and the forces of the time prior to Japan's defeat in World War II. Moreover, the influence of foreign literature, such as by Anatole France, and his experience abroad as a delegate to the League of Nations, gave

rise to Yanagita's racial awareness. This awareness was a response to the dominant world view toward the "yellow peril" in the inter-war period (Morse, 1990). This could have prompted Yanagita to seek something substantial within Japanese tradition as a national identity he could fall back on in dealing with the outer world. Even if this was the case, Yanagita was generally able to maintain his non-deterministic view based on observations of rural life, instead of pursuing a generalized, blanket view of *jomin*. Rather, one might say such awareness of prevalent racial stereotypes warned Yanagita of the danger of generalization.

Influence of the Japanese and Western Intellectual Traditions

As seen earlier, Yanagita's father, Misao was immersed in both Confucianism and *kokugaku* tradition. He first studied Confucianism and took up *kokugaku* after he lost his teaching position due to the Meiji educational reforms. As a result, Yanagita was well versed in both traditions, particularly the latter with its emphasis on literary and historical study. This was reflected not only in his early interest in literature, but throughout his scholarly career. For example, in the Confucian tradition, study had to have a practical end, such as improving one's own character so that one could improve society. This was not unlike what Yanagita preached as the purpose of scholarship. An implicit assumption behind this purpose was that "the morally refined man could correct social ills by the sheer power of his personal example" (Bernstein, 1976, p. 165). As a result, Japanese scholars, even of the present day, have a tendency to analyze social issues with "moral

platitudes," and reflecting the *kokugaku* tradition, argue on literary points (Bernstein, p. 165).

G. L. Bernstein demonstrated in her analysis of Yanagita's contemporary, Hajime Kawakami, who was a prominent Japanese Marxist during the war years, that many Japanese scholars were raised in a "holistic intellectual tradition" and could not compartmentalize their mental life into the academic and personal (1976, p. 165). This was also seen in Yanagita's insistence in starting an academic investigation from one's own personal queries for the betterment of society. In this sense, Yanagita's urging of women to look critically at their position in society from the trans-historical point of view in order to improve society was an extension of the moral and practical nature of the Japanese intellectual tradition.

It was also illustrated by Bernstein that eclectic approaches of mixing foreign and Japanese intellectualism, as Yanagita did with folklore studies, *kokugaku* and other Japanese intellectual traditions, in order to solve intellectual quandaries, were not only common among Kawakami and Yanagita's generation, but also a "distinctive feature of Japanese society" (1976, p. 165). Analyzing Kawakami's scholarship, Bernstein wrote the following which offers remarkable insights into understanding Yanagita's intellectual development:

> Kawakami's pragmatic approach to Marxism identified
> him as heir to a long history of Japanese cultural
> borrowing. He saw in Marxism a superior method of
> reform; he believed it was his privilege to select only that
> aspect of Marxism which Japan could fruitfully employ to

re-establish the harmony and well-being of the social order
(Bernstein, p. 166).

It could, then, also be said that Yanagita's allegiance to folklore studies was in the line with the Japanese intellectual tradition in its "cultural borrowing" of the folklore studies of the West. Hence, the basic tenets of his scholarship, such as the nature and purpose of knowledge, were in some degree fostered by the Japanese intellectual tradition. Therefore tolerance of Yanagita's scholarship for and its reconciliation between what was supposed to be the value-free modern social science of the West and the value-laden Japanese intellectual tradition, can also be located within the larger historical movement of the Japanese society with its 'pick-and-choose' approach to solving problems.

However, this is not to suggest that Japanese intellectual tradition exclusively determined the course of Yanagita's ideology. His counter-cultural and lonely stance against the mainstream politics of the time as a bureaucrat and agricultural administrator, and his empathy with those who were marginalized, can be related to the prevalent enthusiasm for individualism of the early Meiji period when statesmen were eagerly identifying themselves with the ideologies of the West. Therefore, Yanagita was influenced by the individualistic ideology in the societal current of the time which turned him away from the society's mainstream ideologies later. Hence, simple dichotomies between Japan and the West, or traditional and modern, cannot describe Yanagita's scholarship.

The difficulty of accepting easy distinctions between Japan and the West can also be seen in yet another contemporary of Yanagita, Kanzo Uchimura (1861 - 1930). Uchimura, who became a Christian while attending a Christian-influenced agricultural school on the northern island of Hokkaido, created a sensation when he refused to bow before a copy of the Imperial Rescript of Education as a teacher at a high school. He did so out of his respect for his faith. While he was branded a traitor, he did not view loyalty for the nation and Christianity as mutually exclusive. Instead, he proclaimed his devotion to the "two J's," Jesus and Japan, and wrote the following for his epitaph:

I for Japan
Japan for the World
The World for Christ;
And All for God
(Varley, 1984, p. 221).

Hence, in Uchimura's eyes, loyalty to Japan was a part of his faith in Christianity. This is not unlike Yanagita's counter-cultural stance which identified him with folklore studies and those in the periphery of the society, in order to create a new ethical ideal of the nation that preserved the cultural values of the marginalized.

While his trans-historical method of *kokugaku* made him look conservative and nationalistic, it was to find the way new and old values of the post-Meiji Restoration could be reconciled in the society wisely. He was particularly uncomfortable with those who suppressed new or old ideas without careful consideration. He was highly critical of those who resisted modernization by resting on their beliefs in relatively new traditions as if these were fundamentally inherent to the country. Similarly, he was unyielding

toward those who single-mindedly admired Western culture and believed that Japan should follow the same path to attain modernization. Therefore, like Kawakami in Bernstein's assessment, Yanagita tried to use "tradition to overcome traditionalism"(1976, p. 173) as well as simplistic Westernization.

This ambiguity in identifying modern and traditional forces in Yanagita's ideology is also seen in his progressive stance and eye-opening findings about women's status. As was argued, Yanagita's instigation of women's scholarship was a means to his objective of improving the society, and identified within the Japanese intellectual tradition with its mission in producing socially useful knowledge. This association questions the validity of the analytical opposition of traditional (thus, backward) to modern (thus, Western and progressive) (Sklair, 1991, p. 234). Instead, with findings about *jomin* women's relationship with men and family in pre-Meiji times, Yanagita demonstrated the danger of the prevalent assumption that modernization would inevitably be a positive influence on the emancipation of women.

All in all, this examination of Yanagita's intellectual development tells the story of a member of a society caught up in an unsettling sea of traditional and foreign ideas in a volatile world, in which efforts to make sense of the situation were made by learning from various lines of wisdom available to him. Similarly, his humanistic concern for women was an outcome of clashes among various ideologies which were, in turn, brought about by the Meiji Restoration and resulting international interactions during Yanagita's life. This examination of Kunio Yanagita's life and work demonstrated that

even the system of thought of an individual cannot be considered in isolation from the

currents of time on a global level.

Yanagita's Significance

After the end of the war in 1945, Yanagita resumed his public role once again. In

July 1946, he was elected to the Privy Council, which was a consultative body to the

emperor on the state affairs. In March 1947, he opened his *Minzokugaku Kenkyujo*

(Folklore Institute), and in the following July, Yanagita was selected to be a member of

Geijyutsuin (Japan Art Academy). He also testified before the Diet about drafting laws

related to marriage and family in the following month in August 1948. In 1949, he was

recommended as an honourary member of the American Anthropological Association,

and received the Order of Cultural Merit from the Japanese government in 1951. In 1957,

the NHK broadcasting awarded him for his efforts in recording Japanese dialects.

Concurrently, Yanagita published voraciously, and lectured regularly for the Women's

Folklore Studies Group and at other meetings. One year before his death in 1961,

Yanagita published *Kaijo no michi* (A Path on the Ocean), which condensed his interest

in the south seas and ethnogenic origin of the Japanese people.

Yanagita's last stage was described by Eiichiro Ishida, a long time associate of

Yanagita and an anthropologist, as follows:

> For the last ten years or so of his life, he was driven by the
> urge to embody in one volume a final systematization of
> his work, and he continually complained to us of the

> difficulty of realizing his plan. In the end, he passed away
> without having achieved his aim. This failure might again
> be attributed to the large number of different facets of his
> personality, which became entangled with each other even
> in the central work of his life, hindering its synthesis into
> one integral system. In this sense, it cannot be denied that
> Yanagita's science of folklore remained incomplete. Yet it
> is a magnificent incompleteness, a monument to the spirit
> of unceasing inquiry (As quoted by Morse, 1990, p. 116).

Since his death, folklore studies as a discipline has made little progress in Japan.

However, Yanagita's ideology has experienced periodical rushes of attention. In the

1960s, people turned to Yanagita for answers to the tensions resulting from the rapid

social and economic change that society was going through. In the 1970s, there was a

world wide reflection to modern technological life and the problems of environmental

pollution. This movement turned many individuals in Japan to the "introspection boom"

(Morse, 1990, p. 179), which in turn led some to Yanagita once again. By the beginning

of the 1980s, Yanagita, for better or worse, had become entrenched as an interpreter of

the Japanese identity to whom many people turned in hope of finding answers to the

meaning of life in modern society. While many continue to examine and re-examine

Yanagita's work to determine its worth today, opinions are still divided. Nonetheless,

Yanagita's prevailing influence has secured him an enduring position in the modern

Japanese intellectual tradition. His humanistic concerns could do the same internationally

in the future.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

Describing a scene of 'silent protest' against nuclear armament in Germany, Ivan Illich wrote, "the silence of such a group speaks with irrepressible loudness" (1992, p. 27). Illich further noted that "he who remains silent is ungovernable" (p. 31). In a similar way, Yanagita focused on non-verbal expressions of common people as well as unspoken and anti-demonstrative forms of resistance by *yamabito*.

In the intellectual tradition of Aristotle and Descartes, to which conventional western social sciences belong, arguments such as 'silence speaks loud' or 'one protests in acceptance of oppressors' are not valid. This is because Aristotle's Laws of Contradiction and Excluded Middles govern that 'A cannot be both B and not B' and 'A must be either B or not B.' As a result, the world is divided into 'black and white,' 'yes and no.' Vagueness, therefore, is identified with deviance and irrelevance. It was, however, in the grayness of ambiguity and contradiction that Yanagita searched for and found renewed awareness for *jomin* culture.

Yanagita explored the mental topology of *jomin's* thought in such grayness. For example, in the action of bowing to a portrait of an emperor, Yanagita questioned and found a complex intersection of belief systems from various layers of society, instead of simply taking the action as an expression of loyalty as the state presumed. He was confident that with such awareness of one's own cultural heritage as a commoner (which

in his view was a product of one's willingness to take part in searching for an appropriate

future direction by learning from the past), one could contribute to the betterment of

humanity.

This study on Yanagita has been meaningful in three ways. First, it challenged the

persistent image of the Japanese monolith, a society of people all conforming to a single

social identity, particularly in the years before Japan's defeat in the second world war.

Yanagita revealed the commoner layer of the society as an agent in the formation of

tradition and culture, which could influence the authoritative cultural and socio-political

layers, thus, also operate as an actor in social change. Furthermore, he transcended the

conventional elite-commoner dichotomy by classifying the society into those with fixed

dwellings and those with itinerant living. With this approach, he was able to consider

transiency among different segments of society over a lifetime and also across

generations. As a result, he revealed not only the multiple layers of society, but also its

dynamic nature.

Second, through the examination of Yanagita's thought development, sources of

influences on Yanagita were found to be diverse. Such influences, which were sometimes

overlapping or contradicting, intersected and interacted in both the public and private

dimensions of Yanagita's life. This cautions one not to take for granted the previous

evaluations of Yanagita's work as the homogeneous output of a 'nationalist' or a

'traditionalist.' This multidimensionality could also help researchers identify

commonalties between themselves and Yanagita in order to take his worldview seriously

with a sense of empathy. This is particularly important for those who are outside the

Japanese cultural context. It enables researchers to avoid "reifying difference to make

Others exotic or inferior" (Blackwood as quoted by Poewe, 1996, p. 200).

Third, through this investigation of Yanagita, I have come across contemporary

scholars who are establishing Yanagita's system of thought as a basis for understanding

societies and their people beyond the context of Japan at the time of Yanagita. Kazuko

Tsurumi, for example, is proposing Yanagita's approach as a new paradigm of social

change which is applicable to other societies. This paradigm aims to embrace conflicting

social forces and phenomena which have been identified as abnormalities in the modern

western intellectual tradition. Keibo Oiwa is another example of a scholar who has been

greatly influenced by Yanagita's scholarship. In 1996, he co-authored a book entitled *The*

Japan We Never Knew with David Suzuki. In the work, he and Suzuki interviewed

farmers, grocers, aboriginals and people of *buraku* in Japan to provide "new ways of

perceiving, thinking, and acting for all of us in the global village who strive to find ways

to achieve social, economic, and environmental balance" (1996, p. 104).

Interestingly about ten years earlier, Oiwa wrote:

> Even as I strove to appreciate the detached, "unfriendly"
> view toward Yanagita, I found myself becoming more and
> more involved in his works. They were enjoyable, and
> often exciting. But that could not be enough. I did not want
> to agree with those who consigned Yanagita entirely to the
> realm of literature. I wanted to express objectively--
> "academically," if necessary-- the sources of my
> excitement that had to be the only way a "translation" of

Yanagita from one context to another might be possible
(1985, p. vii).

Experiencing a similar excitement in Yanagita's work, I also realize the difficulty of
conveying Yanagita's message outside the Japanese cultural context. Shinji Yamashita
once wondered "Can Yanagita cross the border?" (as quoted by Oiwa, p. vii). Likewise, I
find it difficult to address Yanagita and his quite anti-Cartesian ideology academically.
This is my personal attempt to help Yanagita cross the border, so that, like Tsurumi and
Oiwa, I can also apply his analytical framework to understanding society, and thus,
ultimately, contributing to the reservoir of knowledge of humanity.

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APPENDIX

LIST OF ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF YANAGITA'S WORKS

Articles

"Opportunities for folklore Research in Japan." In *Studies in Japanese Folklore*, 50-3. Richard M. Dorson, New York: Arno Press, 1963.

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About Our Ancestors. New York: Greenwood, 1989.

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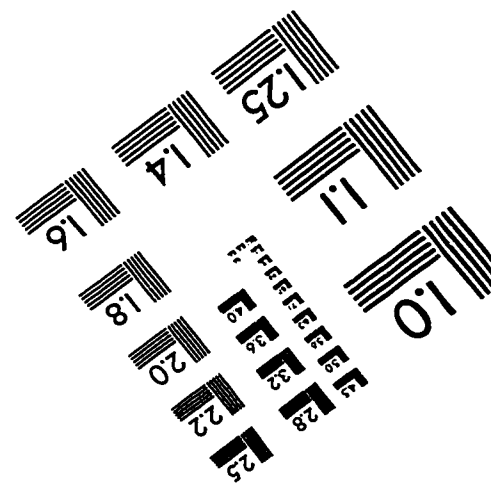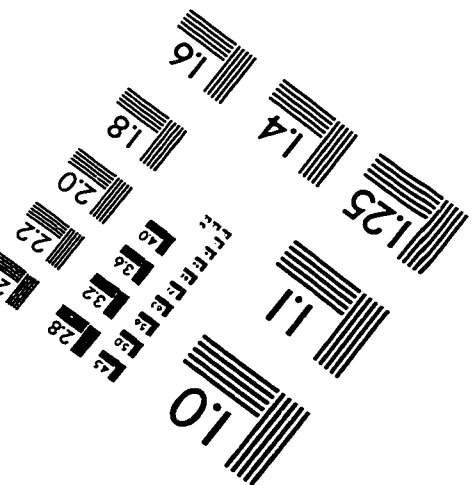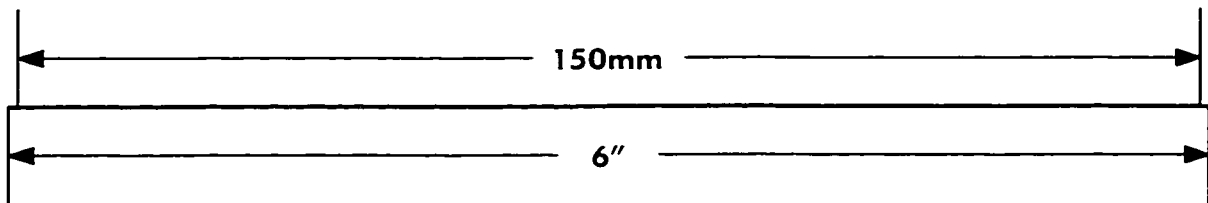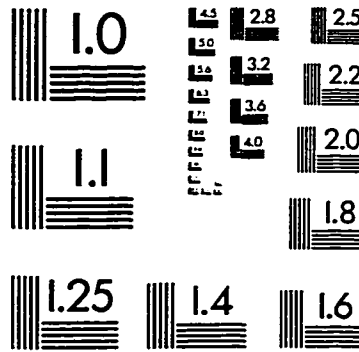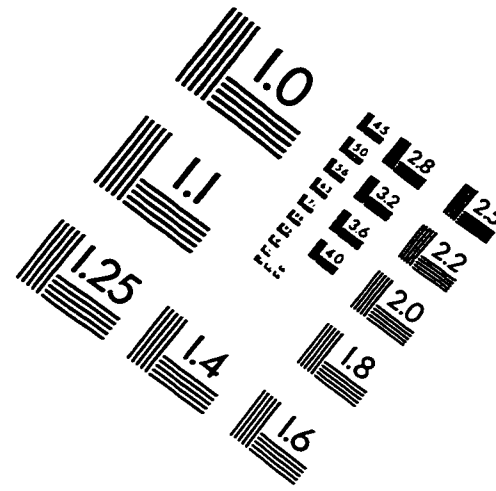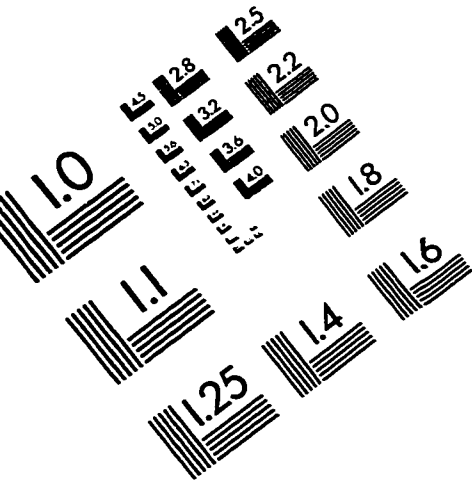
FOLKLORE SURVEY CHECK POINTS

1. Stories about village origins and old families.
2. Villagers who have distinguished themselves.
3. Great events in the village – fortune, misfortune.
4. Village life – material and spiritual. When was life best?
5. Reasons for rise and fall of households
6. Changes in jobs – new enterprises, disappearing work.
7. Slash and burn fields. What is grown?
8. Mountain huts – way of building, types of food, rules and prohibitions.
9. Things purchased from outside. Necessities from outside. What is sold to the outside?
10. Purchase location, markets.
11. What merchants visit villages and where do they come from?
12. Visitors other than merchants and entertainers.
13. Settlers after the Meiji Restoration – conditions and means for settling.
14. Finding jobs outside of the community. Where do people go?
15. Successful people living away from the community; their connection to the village.
16. Those returned to the community after a long absence; reaction of villagers toward them.
17. Village organization – change and leaders.
18. *Ko*; types of *ko*, relation to *kumi*.
19. Women's *ko*. Women's only *ko*.
20. Joint labour and labour exchange
21. Mutual assistance.
22. Assistance in case of emergency and relation to other village organizations.
23. Common lands – usage rules and special rights.
24. Common property and distribution.
25. Hunting customs.
26. Duties (*giri*) pertaining to social relations in the village – especially among non-relatives.
27. Changes in traditional village punishments against rule breakers.
28. "Public" and "private" in the village. How is it expressed in language?
29. Village rankings of families, households.
30. Family symbols or markings and other symbols for designating mountains, trees and houses.
31. The inheritance of property and its division.
32. Godparents and fictive child-adult relations.
33. Formation of *Dozoku* (local corporation group) relationships.
34. Duties among *Dozoku* members – annual events and their customs

35. Sense of duty (*giri*) and its variation among individuals and households
36. Villagers with extraordinary strength, eating ability, artistic talents, etc.
37. Laughing and its function.
38. Praiseworthy youth and criteria for election.
39. Youth associates and their customs.
40. Child association – activities and relation to other groups.
44. Childbirth and related customs.
45. Evening work – rules and customs
46. Work designated as women's jobs.
47. Inter-community marriages – selection and criteria.
48. Good and bad relations with neighboring villages – reasons.
49. Assistance from other communities – opportunities and manner.
50. Servants – their relation to households and their place of origin.
51. What families are liked or disliked by servants?
52. Daily foods.
53. Special foods – when are they made and by whom?
54. Drinking and parties.
55. Seating and age ranking in village meetings (*yoriai*).
56. The distribution of foods and related customs.
57. Gift giving.
58. Formal dress – terms, kinds and usage.
59. Everyday clothing – terms and kinds.
60. Seating order around the hearth.
61. Rooms of the house.
62. *Kadomatsu* – New Year's gate decoration.
63. The doorway brides enter through. Entrance-way customs.
64. The doorway a coffin is carried through.
65. Death taboos and pollution.
66. The entrance for receiving the spirits of the dead and obon customs.
67. The location for greeting the spirits of the dead. Graves, temples? Grave customs.
68. Customs of worshipping the dead.
69. Ancestor worship.
70. Deity of the *Dozoku*.
71. Household deities and their worship.
72. Taboo plants – customs about them.
73. Animals and plants that a tutelary deity dislikes.
74. Taboos in general.
75. Festivals and taboos.
76. Toya and other services at festivals.
77. Sacred fields – their administration and relation to tutelary deities.

78. Family status and age in relation to tutelary deities and festivals.
79. Village headmen and tutelary deity.
80. Mountain deities – time, place and manner of worship.
81. People worshipped as deities.
82. Pious young people
83. Buddhist and Shinto deities particularly worshipped in a particular locality.
84. Places and objects of worship.
85. Forbidden mountains; fear of cutting trees etc.
86. Divine punishment.
87. Divine beneficence.
88. Weird sounds or lights
89. Foxes and badgers.
90. Means for evading evil spirits and ghosts.
91. Omens and dreams.
92. Divination.
93. Therapeutic prayers and techniques.
94. The words in prayers.
95. Community rituals and prayers.
96. Community charms to ward off epidemics.
97. Passing spirits and meetings with demons.
98. Forebodings of death.
99. Households successful for generations.
100. Fortunate households and individuals.

(Ronald A. Morse, *Yanagita Kunio and the Folklore Movement: The Search for Japan's National Character and Distinctiveness*. New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1990).

MAP 1: Japan

OKHOTSK SEA

HOKKAIDO
HOKKAIDO

JAPAN SEA

PACIFIC OCEAN

Tono

Fukawa

AOMORI

AKITA
TOHOKU
IWATE

YAMAGATA
MIYAGI

FUKUSHIMA

NIIGATA

TOCHIGI
GUMMA
KANTO
IBARAKI
SAITAMA
TOKYO
CHIBA

NAGANO
CHOBU
YAMANASHI
KANAGAWA

Tsujkawa

ISHIKAWA

TOYAMA

GIFU
SHIZUOKA
FUKUI
AICHI

TOTTORI
KYOTO
MIE

CHOGOKU
OKAYAMA
HYOGO
OSAKA
NARA
KINKI

SHIMANE
Seto Naikai
KAGAWA
TOKUSHIMA
WAKAYAMA

HIROSHIMA
EHIME
SHIKOKU
KOCHI

YAMAGUCHI
OITA

FUKUOKA

SAGA
KUMAMOTO
Shiba

NAGASAKI
KYOSHO
MIYAZAKI

KAGOSHIMA

OKINAWA

KAGOSHIMA

IMAGE EVALUATION
TEST TARGET (QA-3)

150mm

6"