

Summation of the NASSS International Graduate
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The morning session of the Social science section was led by Dr. Gary Laderman and presided by the author (Dr. Yamagishi Takakazu) with the help of other professors centered on several questions given by Dr. Laderman in advance. We really had a very active and valuable discussion. The participants had diverse academic backgrounds—religious studies, history, political science, and sociology—and diverse nationalities—American, Australian, Bulgarian Canadian, Japanese, and Korean. Therefore, we could approach questions of religion from many perspectives: we all especially tried to put American religions in comparative perspectives. Among various topics we covered, two were paid particular attention. First, we had a great discussion contrasting American (or Western) religions with Japanese religions. We talked about how Japanese imported the term religion (*shukyo*) in the Meiji Era and how Japanese religious studies were different from American religious studies. It was also pointed out that in Japanese the term religion acquired a negative image after the Sarin gas attack by Aum Shinrikyo in 1995. We learned that the nation's history largely influenced the concept of religion. Second, we had an interesting discussion about the differences between religion and spirituality. While people engage in religious activities in institutional settings, one indicated, people engage in spiritual activities at the individual level. Our discussion showed how important it is for us to continue interdisciplinary and intercultural discussion in order to understand what religion is and means to people.

Like the other sections, in the afternoon session, papers on work in progress were presented and discussed by the graduate students. There had been five applicants in advance. The first person, Mr. Fujioka Masaki of Kyoto University, presented his work, "Historical Study of the 'Cold War University, in the United States.'" His interest was how and why American research universities—especially Harvard and MIT—had financial supports from the federal government and private foundations, which promoted research on humanities and social studies. Questions from the floor included what kind of approach he was going to take in contrast to two existing approaches and to what extent he could generalize his argument to other cases. One suggestion was that he should look seriously at who were in the university side and what they were

trying to do.

Mr. Sato Natsuki of Kyoto University talked about his work, "Undocumented Immigrants and Latino/Mexican American Identity." He discussed how advocates of undocumented immigrants have developed since the 1950s and how they dealt with recent proposals for regulating undocumented immigrants. Questions included how smooth (or rough) making a coalition for undocumented immigrants had been, especially whether there had been generational changes among Latinos to deal with undocumented immigrants.

Mr. Yamashita Soki of Doshisha University presented his ongoing project, "West End of Atlanta and African-American New Religion." Being based on his own ethnographical observation, he showed religious orientation in the West End, an African American community of Atlanta, Georgia. His work, unique black studies from a Japanese perspective, inspired many participants. Some were highly impressed by Yamashita's work, which demonstrated the diverse religious orientations in the black American community. Questions included whether there were conflicts among black religious groups and how those who had foreign-born blacks were different from American-born blacks.

Ms. Mori Noriko of Nanzan University presented her work, "Relationship between African Americans and New Immigrant After 1965." By contrasting two riots, the Watts riot and the Los Angeles riot, she asked why many African Americans remained in the underclass. One asked whether the term riot might not be right for academic use, and some suggested terms such as upheaval, rebellion and others. Another pointed out that there were many African Americans who became middle-class after the 1960s. One suggestion was that in addition to her focus on the "New Immigrants," she should take an economic aspect into account.

The project of Mr. Sato Ikuo, another graduate student of Nanzan University was "The Establishment of the National Park System in the U.S." He pointed out social and political conditions behind the movement to create the National Park System at the beginning of the twentieth century. One from the floor pointed out that because national parks were seen as a sacred place he could look at his study from a religious perspective. Another suggested that he should study how people's perception to national parks changed, especially seeing the rise of tourism and environmental issues as important factors.