Autumn Festival at Aramaki
—Aramaki, Tenri City, Nara Prefecture—

HASHIMOTO Hiroyuki

This paper is a report of an investigation into the autumn festival at Aramaki, Tenri City, Nara Prefecture. This festival seems to have maintained a fairly stable form, but in fact, it has changed to some degree in accordance with changes in the social and economic environment. The festival itself in no way stands out prominently, but we should pay a great deal of attention to the fact that history has been engraved on this festival at every turn. This paper reports on the autumn festival held in 1991, based on this perception.

The main interest is focused on the recording of the present autumn festival. In other words, by preparing the report of the investigation as of "the present", that is, in 1991, I aim to describe the present autumn festival, which has surely experienced various transitions, this is done microscopically, referring to various phases of its transition.

As a result, perhaps we will be able to observe the present situation of the village of Aramaki as it is exposed to the process of modernization.

Now, of the many rites handed down in Aramaki, the autumn festival is one of the best maintained, and seems to be an important medium in bringing into the open the residents' consciousness. Therefore, this paper describes the changes in consciousness of the people involved in this autumn festival. Specifically, based on the strange manners regarding laughter incorporated into this autumn festival, and explanations given (or not given) concerning the manner, I emphasize the possibility of mobilizing various kinds of knowledge to explain a laughter which was not originally verbalized, or which resists being collected into meaning. I also point out the present situation in which explanation of laughter is rapidly being secularized.

In any case, an explanation of formal actions in the form of a rite still continues to be subtly shifting. Therefore, even if the autumn festival at Aramaki before us does maintain a fairly stable style, I could not ignore it in silence.