The History of the Study of Folk Craft

Hiromi Iwai

The paper studies the history of the study of folk craft. This study has become popular, attracting considerable public attention. Future development of the field is to be desired, and the review aims to function as a guideline.

First, the characteristics of the pioneer days of the study of folk craft are presented. Next, the views of Yanagita Kunio, the founder of Japanese Folklore Studies in Japan, on folk craft are examined; these views served as the foundation for early study. Then a presentation is given of the methodology of Hayakawa Kōtarō and the focus of the study of folk craft that still remains today. Though Hayakawa studied under Yanagita, later on he observed a standpoint that criticized Yanagita's methodology, and completed "Hanamatsuri" (Flower Festival), which was the first monograph to appear in Japanese Folklore Studies. Next, another pioneer in the field, Shibusawa Keizō, is introduced. Descriptions are given of the aims and methodology that he devised for the study of folk craft, and his definition of folk craft adopted during the process of research conducted in the Attic Museum established by Hayakawa. The paper also presents the trends in the study of folk craft after World War II, an analysis of the definition and methodology of Miyamoto Tsuneich's "Advocation of the field of folk craft", a review of the recent trends in the field, and finally a proposition on a suggested definition of folk craft and "ideal" methodology.