GOMME's Methodology and Folklore Study

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A "double verification method" advanced by the late YANAGITA Kunio, the founding father of the Japanese folklore, is one of the most important methodologies in the folklore study in Japan. The variations of a certain custom, in this double verification method, are regarded as the chronological orders of the past human behaviors and regarded as historical documents. However, a lot of questions have been called in his method because of its arbitrariness in analyzing the variations of custom.

This double verification method is sometimes explained by using the GOMME's methodology. GOMME seeks the customs remaining unchanged among the various variations of the specified customs and use them to reconstruct the world before the Christian era. His methodology does not aim to explain the historical process of the individual variations of each custom. Archaeology that tries to reconstruct the human past uses a method to clarify the transition process in history with the archaeological materials. If the folklore study asserts its rights to exist as a study of history in a broad sense, it is necessary to clarify the historical orders and regions by elucidating the relations with these material evidences.

Today, through the interpretation by the folklore study based upon the archaeological materials, the life of the people in medieval and modern times has been described more vividly than in the past. This fact indicates that a closer cooperation between the two studies will be needed in the future.