This paper is an attempt to review the methods of the folklore in Japan, especially the folklore methodology of Yanagita Kunio focusing on the methodologies the sociology and anthropology have accumulated so far. For some time past, various reviews have been made on the methodology of the folklore in Japan, but in this paper, considerations are made on the Japanese folklore methodology in accordance with the sociology and anthropology. In the considerations, priority is given to the issues of the relations between the subjective conditions and objective conditions which have antimonic meanings in understanding the social phenomena. In other words, the point is, in understanding the social phenomena, whether a great importance should be attached to the logic of the people living in the region, a way of thinking by the people, or they should be understood mainly in conjunction with the objective conditions. It is the purpose of this paper to consider the folklore methodology in Japan in the historical point of view, comparing it with the methodologies of Durkheim, E. and Weber, M.

The goal of the Japanese folklore study by Yanagita Kunio was to make clear the changes of the forms of living and further to elucidate the "mind" of the common people as the subjective conditions, by examining the folklors of the people. Now that if the methodological stance of Weber in which a great importance is given to the subjective conditions selecting the primitive social conducts as the subject of study is called as "voluntaristic individualism" and the methodological stance of Durkheim, like his "sociologism" in which they try to understand the social phenomena, examining the collective social phenomena that are the actual being different from the individuals and conducting mainly the interrelational analyses is called as "Objective holism", the Japanese folklore methodology of Yanagita Kunio should be called as "voluntaristic holism" that
is different from those of Weber and Durkheim, because this methodology examines the collective phenomena called folklores but uses the mind as the subjective conditions for its means or purposes. As such, the methodologies of Weber, Durkheim and the Japanese folklore construct a triangle intertwining with each other.

The principal method of Yanagita Kunio’s folklore study of voluntaristic holism is to collect the folk vocabulary and to study the folklore making comparisons. Through the studies, Yanagita Kunio tried to make clear the mind of the people reflected on the folk vocabulary. This methodology enabled Yanagita Kunio to study the folklore without making any field researches himself. However, this methodology is not based on the comparison of facts and too much emphasis is made on the comparison of vocabulary. In conclusion, Yanagita Kunio opened up a methodology totally new to the methodology of the conventional social sciences, but still it has several defective points.