Brief Study on Narazaka Slope, or Concerning the Memory of the Scene

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Once there were two Narazaka Slopes. There are two passes passing through Narayama Mountain (though it is only small hill) that extends from the east to the west on the frontier between the Province of Yamato and that of Yamashiro, one on the western ridge is called Utahime Pass and another on the east, Hannya Pass; they are both important roads connecting Yamato with Yamashiro. In this paper, I wish to pay attention to Narazaka Slope on the Hannya Pass.

After passing the period when Heiankyo was the capital, in the Middle Ages when the center of Nara moved to the east, and even in the present time, the image of Narazaka Slope seems to be always spun from the bundle of the collective memory twining about this region. Such Narazaka seems to offer a very effective clue for someone who seek for circumstances of how the new memories about the scene are being born. This paper has a character of, so to speak, a preliminary study for the matters mentioned above.

Thus, the interest of this paper is directed first to elucidate the character of the border given to Narazaka. While we continue to try to grasp the meaning of various messages about a peculiar “scene” called Narazaka, it is certain that the external image buried in Narazaka as the border will gradually surface to our eyes.

However, the memory about the scene is not single. This paper seeks for the circumstances about the generation of various memories traveling through Narazaka in history from the antiquity to the contemporary period, by being led by the clue that gave us a strong impression, out of various memories that must have been accumulated in Narazaka, of its being as the border.

Perspective that obtained in this paper wakes up our interest in the performing arts in wider sense of the word, played once around the Narazaka. The separate article entitled “Salvation as the performing art” will be elaborated for discussing such a subject.