Information-Oriented Research of Historical Materials
with Studies on Clay Figurines Taken as an Example (1)
—— Concept, Process of Research and some Problems ——

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Information-oriented methodology has spread to many fields; in economics, distribution, and many other fields, it is becoming the nucleus of social activities. This activity has been going on in various fields concerning historical materials including academic research, these ten years or so. However, it cannot really be said that information-oriented methodology has established itself, or that it is ranked generally in these fields. However, with the consolidation of historical materials and academic information, and the spread of information machinery among the public, people are becoming more aware of the immediate necessity for these methodologies. In particular, archaeological material accumulated continues to grow steadily.

Therefore, information management and utilization are really urgent problems to be solved. The situation may be the same for materials in museums and for historical documents, to a greater or lesser extent.

For such a large problem, the establishment of a methodology for the formaton of information is basically important, but it is clear that a universal definition would be extremely difficult, because of the very wide range of fields and subjects to be covered. For this purpose, all we can do is clear the problems and present the methodologies by means of experimental research based on a number of examples. This paper, from this viewpoint, describes our studies using the examples of clay figurines of the Jōmon Period, for our experimental corroborative study on information-oriented methodology concerning historical materials. The basic concept of this study is not to simply stay at the level of data collection, but to push forward informationalization and ordering of academic data. Our study is still in progress; but we have already completed the basic stage, that is, data formation. In this paper, the authors describe the basic concept of the activities, methods and details of the process, and explain how problems concerning information-oriented arrangement of historical data were extracted and how they were solved, together with future problems and the directions the research will take.