Memorial Monuments to the War Dead and the "Home Front" Society: The Movement to Build Monuments to the Loyal War Dead in Ishikawa Prefecture

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In recent years, there has been some progress in studies that look on war monuments as "non-bibliographic material" representing the "monumentalism" characteristic to modern society and the academic significance of such studies has gradually come to be understood. In this regard, it has been pointed out that war memorials "were not only symbols representing the act of "healing" but also played an important role in the "historicization and re-historicization of war."

In other words, war memorials have become the focus of debate with regard to the issue of how war should be remembered and who should be remembered.

In light of this situation, this paper first surveys the war monuments in Ishikawa Prefecture (Prewar times) as a whole, and then addresses the circumstances surrounding the building of the Seinan War memorial, i.e., the statue of Prince Yamatotakeru in Kenroku-en Garden, Kanazawa.

In addition, attention should be given to the fact that from the latter half of the Meiji Period, the shokonsai (memorial service for the war dead), which had previously been held in a shrine dedicated to the spirits of the war dead (shokonsha) in "Udatsuyama," on the outskirts of the castle town, was held in Kenroku-en Park, at the center of the castle town, especially in front of this Meiji Memorial Monument. Since then it became usual for the memorial service of Kanazawa to be held on a large scale in the vicinity of Kenroku-en Park and, from around the time of the Sino-Japanese War, a "Society for the Preservation of the Shokonsai" was also organized.

On the other hand, keeping in mind the circumstances surrounding the establishment of the memorial monuments, memorial signs, and cenotaphs, this paper discusses the movement to build the "Kaetsu-no Memorial Monument for Loyalty to the Emperor" which occurred in the first part of the Showa Period and also the movement to build a memorial for the war dead (chureito). With the formation of a "home front" society as a backdrop, this paper introduces the characteristics of these movements (making comparisons with other prefectures) and their actual activities in Ishikawa Prefecture.