Formation and Development of Travel Guidebooks

YAMAMOTO Mitsumasa

While the study of the history of travel is diversified, that of travel guidebooks has stagnated, despite the existence of basic historical materials. This article classifies travel guidebooks and describes their formation and transformation. This article defines the transfer on foot in the early modern period, midway through the Meiji Period as walking, the transfer via transportation in the same period as traveling, and both of them together as traveling.

Travel guidebooks may be classified in terms of (1) the guide of the itinerary, (2) the local guide, (3) the guide by subject, and (4) the pinpoint guide. This article deals with the travel guidebooks of (1). The guide of the itinerary provides information on Kaido (highways) and railway lines, and the early modern guidebooks of this type were called Dochuki travel diaries.

In Japan, Dochuki travel diaries were first published around the Meireki Period, and their form had been established and fixed by the Enpo Period. Various Dochuki travel diaries were published in the 1700s, including those with illustrations alone. However, they seem unlikely to have become widespread, due to the low literacy rate and high prices. Dochuki travel diaries became popular after being published by lodging associations such as the Naniwa-ko group, etc.

When the Tokaido Line was inaugurated in Meiji 22 in the modern period, the Dochuki travel diaries disappeared. Private publishers started publishing railway guidebooks in the late Meiji 20s, although they decreased dramatically in the Taisho Period.

Japanese National Railways published a railway guidebook in Meiji 38, which they continued to release almost every year since Meiji 42 until the end of the Taisho Period. It published a total of eight classic "Japan Guide" books since Showa 4.

The railway guidebooks by private companies decreased in the Taisho Period because of diversification. During the early modern period, people traveled to visit shrines and temples such as pilgrimages to Ise Shrine, but the travel itself was also part of the enjoyment, including the actual journey. In the modern period, however, this process has disappeared, and traveling has simply become a transfer from one point to another. The aim of traveling became diversified following the development of railways and buses, and a number of guidebooks by region or subject were published. With this background in mind, guidebooks on itinerary disappeared.

Key words: guidebook of Tokugawa government, guidebook along on a railway line, walking tour, railway, naniwa-ko group