Sea and Folk Wisdom/Tacit Knowledge

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In Part 1 (Navigation techniques and folk wisdom/tacit knowledge), I consider navigation techniques based on information found in medieval literature. First of all, I thought about the meaning of the phrase "Japanese do not voyage in the night" in the report by a missionary called Almeida (a letter written on November 17, 1563). Although this only means the same as 'they do not work during the nighttime,' in general, people who navigated ships avoided doing so at night. If the occasion demanded, they navigated waters during the night, but this carried risk. Secondly, I examined "Takakurain Itsukushima Gyokoki" written in the 4th year of Jisho (1180). In the case of a noble, night crossing was not carried out. Crossing in the night involved risk. Navigation techniques observe the current and are adjusted time accordingly. However, if you always leave port in the morning, it is possible to experience an adverse current temporarily. On these occasions, rowing power by men was used to move along a coastal current (countercurrent), a weak current or a partial tide.

Oowada Shigekiyo wrote the Diary in the third year of Bunroku (1593), he traveled by the ship from Nagoya (Hizen) to Nagasaki. He wrote in his diary, they did not go on a voyage at night.

Voyages from Ise Bay seen in "Tokitsugu-kyo Ki" crossed along the current in a short period of time in principle. However, it was impossible to reach within the time recorded in the diary on the speed of the current alone. So, wind power and manpower were needed. In the case of north-south traffic within the Bay, as voyages took a long time, it was impossible to pass within this time when the current was favorable. They were forced to navigate during an adverse current.

In the latter half of Part 1 and Part 2, tide and geographical names, obtained from interviews with locals, in the sea are reported, more specifically: (1) beach/rocky shore, (2) cape, (3) seamount and (4) shoal in Kasuga, Hirado-shima in Nagasaki prefecture and Itoshima peninsula in Fukuoka prefecture respectively.

There are un-transcribed geographical names, such as shoals which are always underwater and which are not published on maps (some of them are displayed on marine charts). These geographical names located at sea are all necessary in the fishing industry including yamami, and masuami (fixed net fishery), and are integrated in folk wisdom (fishing techniques). In reality, however, these also involve some individual wisdoms which are not openly disclosed to others and shared.

Key words: navigation technique, Takakurain Itsukushima Gyokoki, Tokitsugu-kyo Ki, shoal, yamami