Openness and Closed Character of Zako: Case Example in Hashimoto City, Wakayama Prefecture

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This article studies the cause of the openness and closed character of zako. Specifically, it focuses on zako in two adjacent villages in Hashimoto City, Wakayama Prefecture. While zako in Kashikodo is open, zako in Mukasoi is closed. Zako in Kashikodo has promoted openness since the Meiji Period, thus creating a difference between two kinds of zako in the Meiji Period. In Mukasoi, a dispute over zako occurred in the Edo Period, and "zairicho" was created, which led to the enhancement of the membership. This may have caused the closed character of zako in Mukasoi. To explain the reason for the openness and closed character of zako, we should consider not only the location condition, degree of urbanization, and religious situation, but also the historic background.

Key words: Zako, Openness and Closed Character, Zairicho, Dispute, Hashimoto City, Wakayama Prefecture