Rural Community and Rural Play: Focusing on the Northern Area of Fukuchiyama City in Kyoto

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In the Edo Period, kabuki was performed not only in three major cities such as Kyoto, Osaka, and Edo, and the castle town, but also in villages across the country, and won popularity among people. This is the so-called "village play." The village play means literally the "play performed in a village," and is classified basically into two kinds. One is a play performed by amateur villagers and called "ji-shibai (local play)" or "ji-kyogen (local kyogen)." The other is "kai-shibai (paid play)." This is also called "uke-shibai (contracted play)" or "yatoi-shibai (hired play)," which meant a play performed by a company of professional actors touring the regions and paid by a village. Both of them were mostly kabuki performances, but also included a puppet play (2).

There were studies on the village play before the war, but they did not attract attention. After the war, full-scale studies on the village play started. One of the most important studies among them is "Comprehensive Studies on Rural Theater - Focusing on kabuki and puppet play -" (Ohfu, 1971) compiled by Ichiro Tsunoda who conducted nationwide research on the village play from Showa 30s (1955-1964) to Showa 40s (1965-1974).

This work of Tsunoda covers nationwide rural theaters for kabuki performance, but does not include sufficient investigation on the village play in Kyoto. Particularly for Fukuchiyama City in Kyoto, it does not have full-scale research except for the study on puppet play.

Therefore, this article studies the village play and the rural theater in Kyoto, which are hardly mentioned in past studies, by taking the village play in the region of Fukuchiyama City as an example, particularly the village play in the region of Kaminojo, Issumori, and Amaza, which has a close relationship with the cult of Mount Mitake. These villages belonged to Sasaki Manor-shimoyamaho in the Middle Ages, and have a very close relationship with the Grand Festival of Mikatsu Hachiman Shrine.

Key words: Rural kabuki, Village play, Shishinden dengaku, Mount Mitake, Amaza