Tadaatsu Ishiguro and Periphery of Folklore Studies: Focusing on His Activity at Kyodokai

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This article examines the achievements of Tadaatsu Ishiguro who was a core figure in the history of modern agricultural policy, and his activity at Kyodokai, which was the contact point with Kunio Yanagita. The purpose is to clarify the influence of Yanagita’s interpretation of rural villages and farmers in Ishiguro’s measures and the practice by Ishiguro as a bureaucrat and a politician. The original place for his practice was the activity at Kyodokai led by Inazo Nitobe.

First, this article overviews the life of Ishiguro, and clarifies the contact point with people who were involved in his lifelong local studies and folklore studies. Next, it mentions the background of Ishiguro’s interest in rural villages, farmhouses, and farmers, and how it related to the measures he worked on later as a bureaucrat of agricultural policy. Then, the article analyzes his report at the meeting of Kyodokai in which Ishiguro participated. Based on this, it investigates the research on tenant farming practice conducted later by him, the measures for controlling the rice price with which the food control system began, and his problem consciousness shown in the measures in the rural economic rehabilitation movement in the years just before the war regime. The report by Ishiguro at Kyodokai gives a glimpse of a viewpoint that considers the historical background of rural villages based on understanding of folklore in rural villages and farmhouses, and traditional social organizations. Ishiguro is recognized as an “unrivaled research enthusiast.” He conducted nationwide research on rice production costs and research on tenant farming practices. His awareness of those large-scaled research activities is confirmed in his report on the activity at Kyodokai.

Although the consciousness toward modern rural villages and farmers common to Yanagita and Ishiguro needs to be studied more deeply, this article recognizes that it is the “cooperativity of labors in consideration of traditional practices and establishment of a rational organization based on that” and “cultivation of core figures who are capable of independent management.” A clue to studying the above seems to appear in Ishiguro’s report on his research presented at Kyodokai.

Key words: Tadaatsu Ishiguro, bureaucrat of agricultural policy, Kunio Yanagita, Kyodokai, measures for agriculture