Vocabulary and Context of Minorities: Masao Shiba and *Fukugo*

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The tradition of *fukugo* and *takarago* a child with disability brings the family a fortune was brought into folkloric discussion by Tomoya Ono and Masao Shiba. This “tradition” has hardly been described before their work. Therefore, on the occasion of the International Year of Disabled Persons in 1981, it was criticized as a “reinterpreted folklore.”

In the paper entitled “Folklore and Social Conditions: Over the word *oko,*” this paper argues that such “reinterpretation” of the word had already taken for granted parents of “children with disabilities” in 1970. Thus, we should rather discuss the change of recognition by which such a word became visible as a “tradition” and regarded as something worth mentioning.

This paper presents the background of the studies of Masao Shiba, who is one of the authors of the book. Shiba was a student member of the folklore society at Toyo University and took a job in the welfare of handicapped persons after graduation. He learned about the words *fukugo* and *takarago* from the notes of the parents of children with disabilities. While knowing the negative meaning of those words, he tried to resuscitate them as words that enable people with disabilities to live normally in local communities. As a result, he presented those words to people as “wisdom of people in the past” and “tradition.”

Next, this paper studies the context in which the words *fukugo* and *takarago* were placed before they were labeled as a person with disability. It shows that the words that gathered under the concept of a “person with disability” had the meaning of a “fool,” a “useless person,” and a “person who cannot be independent from parents,” and that they belonged to a different category from a “person with disability.”

By clarifying the above, this paper shows the following: [1] A figure (Masao Shiba) who used the framework of “tradition” and “folklore” strategically to attain his purpose became involved in the formation of the folkloric “knowledge”; [2] By the change of recognition over the “person with disability,” the words that belonged to a different category in the past lost their former context and were placed in a new context.

Key words: Vocabulary, *Fukugo*, Person with disability, Single person, Minority, New context