Kunio Yanagita and Study on Entertainment; Study on Entertainment by Kunio Yanagita

MATSUO Koichi

In current academia, Yanagita is considered to be negative about entertainment as a material of tradition, or the study on folk entertainment.

From the end of Taisho to the beginning of Showa (around 1930), entertainment such as singing, dancing, performing a play, etc. or so-called folk entertainment handed down in today's regions came to the forefront as subjects of folklore studies. At the beginning, Kunio Yanagita also became involved in the subject, and had interest and expectations in entertainment as a folkloric material and its study.

Before and after the war, studies on folk entertainment were deepened and developed more rapidly by researchers including Yasuji Honda. Such studies came mostly under the influence of theater studies (theories), and apparently did not respond exactly to the expectations of Yanagita.

As for the works on the folk entertainment of Yanagita, there are “Nihon-no-matsuri” (1942 (Showa 17)), which analyzes the role and the function of entertainment in religious services, and “Imo-no-chikara,” “Miko-ko,” “Kebozu-ko,” “Zoku-hijiri-enkakushi,” etc. which draw attention to religious persons and entertainers in the private sector, which shows that he produced many important works also in the study of entertainment.

This article clarifies the characteristics of those studies on entertainment by Yanagita by comparing them with the work of Shinobu Orikuchi, who also left important works in the study of folk entertainment in the same period, and also investigates the possibility of the study by the folkloric method in the studies of entertainment in the currently urbanized private sector.

Key words: Kunio Yanagita, folk entertainment, Shinobu Orikuchi, festival and entertainment, festival, clown