One Consideration about Fish Peddling Using Railway: Examples of the Kankan Corps and the Fresh Fish Train in the Ise-Shima Region in the Postwar Period

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Fish peddling from fishing villages to towns or farming villages, as a primitive trade form, has been the subject of studies. Previous studies, however, were mainly conducted on fish peddling on foot or by cattle and horse before the development of modern transportation, and there have been few reports about fish peddling by railway, which became prevalent over the country after World War II. In this paper, focusing attention on fish peddling in the Ise-Shima region as an example of the only one remaining collective fish peddling by railway, a concrete image of it and changes are clarified from interviews with the persons concerned, and the role that the peddling played is considered.

In the Ise-Shima region in Mie Prefecture, fish peddling to the Osaka area using trains operated by Kintetsu Corporation (hereinafter referred to as Kintetsu) started in the latter half of the 1950s. As peddling became more active, problems between peddlers and general passengers increased. In 1963, the Ise-Shima Fish Peddling Association was formed, and fresh fish trains only for its members started operation. The members resided in fishing villages on the coast of Ise Bay, and the number of members exceeded 300 in its peak period.

Most of the members were peddlers who resided around the Ryoushi-cho in Matsuzaka City. From long ago, this region has been home to many people engaged in the fishing industry, and from the prewar period, fish peddling to neighboring areas on foot or by bicycle was conducted. After the war, they began selling Japanese littleneck shell and salt mackerel to the Nara area by Kintetsu and gradually expanded the peddling to the Osaka area, carrying fresh fish such as righteye flounder and mullet. Along with the expansion, the tools they used changed from bamboo cages to tin cans. Many of the members in this region, who started trading at roadside stands, had their own shops called “Iseya” in Osaka City. In Osaka with its tradition of fish culture of mainly quality fish from the Seto Inland Sea, the new brand “Ise” and the direct-from-the-farm style, which was not common at that time, attracted people and led to the successful acquisition of customers. It is considered that by using shopping streets that were more familiar among ordinary people as their places of activities, it played the role of expanding the lower end of fish food culture in Osaka among the public.

Key words: Fish peddling, Railway, Tin can, Osaka, Ise