Project on Study of Japanese Fountain Pen

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In recent times, the fountain pen has penetrated various aspects of life of Japanese people, as a writing instrument having replaced the conventional brush. In this article, I consider a project devoted to study surrounding the fountain pen as part of a wider study of reading and writing in ethnography. To date, many studies concerning fountain pens have been conducted, based specifically on the application of lathe technology and the issue of the practice of the craftsman involved in the same. Fountain pens have pen barrels containing ink and enable writing by supplying the appropriate amount of ink to the tip. In Japan, the manufacturers in operation to date were founded in the 1910s, whereupon the production of domestic fountain pens became active. However, information on minor manufacturers remains scarce, and this shortage needs to be compensated for by writings based on hearings, etc. In this article, I considered the characteristics of fountain pen manufacture with writings based on discussion with Messrs. Shuichi Tsuchida in Tokyo and Kiyoshi Kato in Osaka, who were engaged in the small-scale manufacture of fountain pens with the motto of “making by hand”. Consequently, the need for analysis was determined, in cooperation with the metal working industry, skill acquisition process, issue of artisan spirit, the god of vocation in modern times and consumers' perspective.

Key words: reading and writing, craftsman, making by hand, manufacturing industry