The High-Economic-Growth Period and Change of Lifestyles: From the Theme of the 6th Exhibition “Modern Times”

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In the corner of “the high-growth period and change of lifestyles” section of the 6th exhibition “Modern Times” in the main building, housing development as a symbol of new urban life, which was born in the high-growth period, and life in rural villages, which disappeared due to dams newly built for supplying electric power and water resources to urban areas, are considered in contrast with each other. As related research information, change of life in the high-economic-growth period and the subsequent changes in people’s thinking and sense of values are analyzed in this article. Through the analyses, the following points at issue are raised. First, ethnographic study is to follow and grasp the changes of life that rapidly progressed in the high-economic-growth period and subsequently to analyze these changes with a view to tracing the history. Secondly, viewpoints of both change and continuation are necessary for an understanding of the era. Specifically, people in the 30th year of the Showa Era (1955 to 1964) had a craving for housing development, and people in the 40th of the Showa Era (1965 to 1974) wanted their own detached house in the suburbs. The change was very speedy. In the villages that sank under water because dams were constructed, the previous self-sufficient mountain life was lost, while fall festivals at village shrines still continue as do village people’s social gatherings. Thirdly, one of the issues arising during the high-growth period was a completely new problem of life, which was mass disposal resulting from mass production and mass consumption. Just as symbolized in the “Tokyo Garbage War,” it is not just that the problem of garbage as material existed, but that the problem of garbage as people’s feelings about filth and uncleanliness existed. Actual efforts to overcome the problem were verified. Fourthly, the actual places where the ie’s “killing itself or being killed,” which Kunio Yanagita once pointed out regarding the mass movement of the population from rural villages to cities after the Japanese-Russo War, occurring on a scale quite different from the conventional scale were identified, and I strongly felt that it was necessary to collect a wider range of research information on them. The fifth point, the most important one, is that the term “lifestyle revolution” and the concept of it must not be used lightly. People’s awareness as well as their lifestyle was changed through the high-economic-growth period. The most remarkable alteration of awareness was “personalization” or “privatism.” But it is not the case that these changes led to the establishment of personalism and individualism. The same populism or populist principle as the conventional one still remains, and the group mentality, in which it is easy to become ensnared
in advertising and fashion, has not changed. It means that in the new lifestyle ushered in by the high-economic-growth period, only daily goods and production tools were changed by machines and electricity, but people's way of thinking and decision-making methods did not change. In other words, the high-economic-growth period brought a large change of life through energy innovation and technical innovation. It was a change of life that was basically led by politics and economy, policy and capital, not a change resulting from any intrinsic motivation or demand arising from living in villages and towns. Changes of life in the high-economic-growth period were mainly changes of form brought by extrinsic influence and they were not intrinsic or active changes. This point is significant, and it should therefore not be called "lifestyle revolution."

Key words: Housing development, dam, it's killing itself or being killed, life innovation, personalization or privatism