Inter-Regional Cooperation and High Economic Growth

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People live in relationships with other people, nature, and gods. The relationship with nature was most strongly affected by the high economic growth that was led by the secondary industry. Those engaged in primary industry lived their lives deeply involved with nature. In this article, focusing on their actions in regard to nature, change in folklore, influenced by inter-regional cooperation affected by the high economic growth, is considered.

In the relationship with nature, there are cases of the blessings of nature being used and cases where defensive measures are taken against the forces of nature. Regional cooperation is indispensable in either case. The use of the blessings of nature includes cutting and processing of forest resources, clearing of plowland and harvesting of crops, capture of fishery resources, securing of spring water, and use of running water. The face of forest resource use was largely changed because fuel wood production declined due to the energy revolution associated with the high economic growth, resulting in the depopulation of rural mountain villages. In flat rural villages and fishing villages, the surplus population created by the proliferation of large farm machinery and equipment and the improvement of fishing boats and tools increasingly flowed out to the cities. In contrast, protected horticulture and fish culturing were newly developed by the invigoration of the economy, resulting in a change in the relationship with nature. In these situations, works requiring inter-regional cooperation were reduced in number in the primary industry in which manpower was mainly used. On the other hand, for defense against the forces of nature, the living and life need to be protected against flood, fire, draught or dry weather, and wild beasts and birds. It was difficult for a community to confront these forces by itself, and various practices for inter-regional cooperation have been handed down. After the high-economic-growth period, mechanical force took the place of manpower, and the government and local governments gradually put their efforts into taking measures against the forces of nature, resulting in a decline of conventional inter-regional cooperation.

The reduction of opportunities for inter-regional cooperation necessarily led to the waning of the spirit of inter-regional cooperation in local communities. Nowadays, it is said that human relationships are deteriorating. This is because the decline of conventional inter-regional cooperation promoted in the period of high economic growth may gradually be taking effect.
Key words: High economic growth, inter-regional cooperation, change in folklore, primary industry, actions in regard to nature