Establishment of Wedding Halls and Nagashima Bridal Association

YAMADA Shin’ya

Nowadays, in general, a wedding ceremony is held in Christian or Shinto style, followed by a celebration party, which is often held at a hotel or dedicated wedding hall. In many cases, a ceremony takes place not in a religious facility but in a ceremonial space attached to the hotel or wedding hall. The prototype of this form was established from the end of the Taisho period to the beginning of the Showa period (in the early 20th century), and at that time, permanent Shinto-style wedding halls were built at the Imperial Hotel, Tokyo Kaikan, and the like.

It has been suggested that during the period, the form of hotel and hall wedding was being developed by Nagashima Bridal Association, a company providing mobile Shinto wedding services. Nevertheless, the real state and activities of the bridal company have not been fully known. Therefore, this paper is aimed at exploring the modernization of marriage services by deeply delving into the activities of Nagashima Bridal Association.

Tozaburo Nagashima, the founder of the company, contrived mobile Shinto wedding services from a practical viewpoint of a betrothal gift merchant. His suggestion that a wedding ceremony be held at home to report to the ancestors led to creating a brand of Nagashima-style and establishing its unique position different from other Shinto wedding ceremonies. Moreover, with wedding ceremony demonstrations as well as his own high profile in the media, including newspaper and women magazine articles, he enhanced the awareness of his brand. At the same time, by having contact with the upper class and taking advantage of mobility, he began offering Shinto wedding services at hotels and assembly halls, which eventually spread to a wide range of classes such as an urban middle class. This article indicates that it was resulted from the fact that a practical person like Tozaburo Nagashima adapted himself to the situations of the time even though the consequence was not necessarily consistent with his original idea of holding wedding ceremonies at home.

Key words: Marriage services, modernization, wedding ceremonies, wedding parties, Nagashima-style, social classes