A Formation of Yanagita Kunio’s Folklore Study and Archaeology Study

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This paper examines the remarks and activities of Kunio Yanagita to understand how his archaeological research affected the process of his developing folklore studies. In the early 20th century, when he started his academic pursuits, he relied mostly on archaeological approaches to research subjects. From the 1920s to the early 1930s, following the launch of the journal, “Minzoku (Ethnography),” he developed folklore studies. At that time, he still kept a strong interest in archaeology, yet did not go as far as building personal connections in the field. As Yanagita strove to establish folklore studies as an academic discipline, his efforts attracted much criticism. From the mid-1930s, at the final stage of his establishing folklore studies as an academic discipline, archaeology made great progress and, at the same time, folklore studies gained wide acceptance. During this time, Yanagita seems to have tried to make of folklore studies a new rival to archaeology in the field of historical research. Eventually, however, a relationship of trust was built between Yanagita’s folklore studies and archaeological studies, despite the certain distance they kept from each other. Thus, the above analysis reconfirms the great difficulty in modern times of attaining interdisciplinary collaboration and integration.

Key words: “Ishigami Mondo,” “Minzoku,” the origin of Japanese, archaeology, historical research, modernization