Changes of Recognition about Archaeology in Kunio Yanagita

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We researched in changes of concept to archaeology in Kunio Yanagita (柳田國男) according to the parts related to archaeology in his writings, and divided them into five stages.

Stage(1) (1895~): He was widely interested in the history of Japanese society and directly participated in archaeology and anthropology. He focused on the history of villages and their boundary. He opposed to the overemphasis of pottery, stone tools and ancient tomb, and gradually parted from archaeology. He expanded his own studies in the “Regional Research (郷土研究)” magazine.

Stage(2) (1917~): Through study about South Sea Islands and visit to Western countries, he knew the international trend of anthropology, and tried to establish anthropology of international standards in Japan. He criticized study of unearthed human bones running alone in academic society and the boom of talking about “prehistoric” in general public in Japan, to seek the alliance between humanities and natural science inside of Japanese anthropology, and cooperation with archaeology for the study about “outside of (literature) history”.

Stage(3) (1929~): Interrupting the organization of anthropology, he concentrated on the establishment of “national folklore”. He recognized the development of archaeology, and by comparing with archaeology, he established the methodology to extract the transition process of national culture from the comparison of modern cultural complex. During wartime, he advocated the cooperation of folklore in each Japanese colonies, but objected to imagining historical continuity between ethnic groups because of the phenomenon like distribution of archaeological remains. He tried to reveal a unique culture of each ethnic groups based on their own inner life.

Stage(4) (1946~): To clarify the cause of the defeat, and to create a people comprising criticism ability, he dedicated to build the history education emphasized afterwards of early modern period. Against to the boom of Toro (登呂) site excavation, which reduce interests in regional histories since the middle ages, he drew up a curriculum to cultivate the foundation of social analytical skills from the transition of the familiar material culture, but ended in failure.

Stage(5) (1952~): Betting the recovery of his study, he constructed a comprehensive model of immigration motive based on the social environment of islands and the money economy of continent nation, and hypothesized that the ancestor of Japanese was the rice population who came to Japan.
by sea via Ryukyu islands, against to the commonly accepted theory on Japanese archaeology that rice was handed down from Korean peninsula in Yayoi period. But he could not produce enough counterevidence to archaeology.

Now we can understand that Kunio Yanagita sought direction of his study in reference to archaeology throughout his life.

Key words: earthen mound, Yama-bitō (Japanese indigenous people in mountain), outside of (literature) history, anthropology, Toro site excavation