
Reconsidering Yaichiro Yamaguchi's Tohoku Study : Understanding the Dynamics of Local Communities and Practicing Field Studies

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Yaichiro Yamaguchi was born in 1900 in Fukushima Prefecture, in an area that was at that time a village called Niitsuru, and spent his entire life conducting research in various parts of Tohoku. The 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami spurred an increase in the attention paid to Yamaguchi's work in recent years. After the 1933 Sanriku earthquake, Yamaguchi started exploring Sanriku and examining the state of reconstruction and livelihood in disaster-stricken areas. Since the 2011 Tohoku earthquake, his work has been regarded highly, and his book *Tsunami to Mura* was republished to wide acclaim. For this reason, Yamaguchi has become widely recognized as a researcher on tsunami-stricken areas, but in fact, he tackled various issues throughout his life in the region of Tohoku, and achieved unique results.

For instance, from the Showa era to the postwar period, he pursued a participant observation research practice by creating a record of life while living in a farm village, and this developed into a practice of youth education for the improvement of rural life. Yamaguchi then lived as a schoolteacher for a long time, and through school classes and extracurricular activities, put in place initiatives to cultivate young students' understanding of local culture and their ability to identify problems. In addition, he organized regional conferences with colleagues and juniors, and through research activities and fieldwork, contributed to the formation of diverse regional networks. Throughout these efforts, Yamaguchi always emphasized fieldwork. He particularly focused on natural disasters, wars, depopulation, regional development, and other critical situations in daily life, and applied various academic approaches in his attempts to solve such problems affecting life in the region.

This paper re-evaluates Yamaguchi's field study practice, by giving a thematic overview of the main work Yamaguchi pursued throughout his life and tracing its evolution. This does not simply mean providing new data for academic history research. In today's disaster-prone world, it is also our task to question the nature of humanities research based on fieldwork.

Key words: Yaichiro Yamaguchi, Tohoku, Fieldwork, Practice, School Education