

Historical consideration on regional structure in the Seto Inland Sea

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[SYNOPSIS]

This study aims to reconstruct the regional structure by rediscovering the exchanges and economic and cultural values that have been nurtured through the history, focusing on the Seto Inland Sea and its surrounding areas from the viewpoint of urban history.

The Seto Inland Sea has served as a major artery for commerce and industry, with active trafficking and transportation of goods by boat since ancient times. Ports of call, such as unloading and unloading of goods and the port for awaiting of the favorable tide, have evolved into port towns, creating a vibrant urban culture. However, in the post-war automobile society, land-based regional structures changed, and cities and settlements centered on boat transportation had lost their vitality. With the bridge formation, the number of boats decreased dramatically, and many people flowed from the island to the main island.

Therefore, as a clue to evoke the original identity, we have tried to rebuild the regional framework from a historical perspective.

In this study, we first restored the Seto Inland Sea route. We could confirm that the route connecting the Kyushu region to the Kinki region was developed and was most active around the 1920s. In addition, the tendency of location of cities or dense settlements was shown along the routes of Jinori, Okinori and Motorsailer. In the Geiyo Islands, many densely populated villages were located on the seaside, which made it clear that villages have been formed in close ties with the sea. We have also learned that villages have developed in relation to industry, with Oshima (Ehime Prefecture) as an example. Furthermore, taking the Hijigawa basin as an example, we could clarify the regional structure consisting of the Seto Inland Sea and the inland area. We were able to draw an image of the region that was made up of industries such as boating and the timber industry.

These regions of various sizes have fostered the economy and culture and formed unique cities and settlements with the development of boating. From this point of view, it is important to rethink the regional framework from this perspective and evoke the accumulation of historical culture when considering regional regeneration.