

The mystery of Kebari in the Hakusan Mountains

The Hakusan Mountains (also called The Kaetsu Mountains, The Kaga Echizen Mountains) is the mountain area that spans Ishikawa, Fukui, and Gifu. The main peak Mt. Hakusan (2,702 m) is worshiped as a sacred mountain, and the three worship routes (Zenjo-do) from Kaga, Echizen, and Mino to the summit of Mt. Hakusan are opened and are still used as mountain trails.

Hakusan Shiramine region is the worship route from Echizen side to Mt. Hakusan, and Hakusan-onsen in Ichinose has been used as a hot-spring cures area by many mountain climbers since ancient times. The Ushikubigawa River flowing through Shiramine region is a river in the upper reaches of Tedorigawa River, and many river fishermen appeared to supply Iwana to the ryokan (inns) in 1868 - 1926. They crossed the watershed of border and went to fishing by staying to the Ogamigogawa River and the Oshirakawa River on Gifu side, and on Fukui side, they went to fishing to the Takinamigawa River and the Uchinamigawa River, the tributaries of Kuzuryugawa River, but there is no record of fishing on the Itoshirogawa River, although the distance is almost the same as other rivers. It may be due to the fact that Itoshiro region has long been in close contact with Mino side and there were commercial fishermen. In the Ushikubigawa River in Shiramine region, Kebari that was tied with a carrion crows' head feathers with white downy barbs was used.

Itoshiro area is located upstream of the Itoshirogawa River in the Kuzuryugawa River system that flows through Gifu and Fukui and in the middle of worship route from Mino to Mt. Hakusan, and had been crowded with many worshipers since ancient times. Most of Itoshiro village was merged from Fukui to Shirotori-cho (currently Gujo City), Gifu in 1958. Since the construction of the dams in the lower part in 1919 and 1923, Yamame of the Itoshirogawa River drastically decreased as Sakura-masu (cherry salmon) run-up disappeared. Mr. Suetaro Suko, the head of fishery cooperative, commissioned Mr. Seiryu Ikuta, a commercial fisherman in Shirotori-cho, to import Amago from the Nagaragawa River in 1929, and then released it several times. "Gujo-zuri (Gujo fishing)", a traditional fishing method for Amago bait fishing was also handed down at the same time. At the Itoshirogawa River, kebari that was tied with a hackle of white web (downy barbs) was used but the commercial fisherman Tomoyoshi Kubota used Kebari that was very similar to "Kebari of Mino Gujo area" in the 1935s. It can be inferred that it was handed down from the Nagaragawa River at the same time as the import of Amago.

Kebari of the Ushikubigawa River in Shiramine region that was tied with a carrion crows' head feathers with white downy barbs, and kebari of the Itoshirogawa River that was tied with a hackle of white web (downy barbs) are both very rare and unique kebari. If there was exchange in Shiramine region and Itoshiro region, the explanation of similarity of two kebari is easy, but if there was no region exchange, it is wonder why were two kebari with similar ideas born separately in the adjacent areas. I'd like to know the origin of the two kebari and their relevance, but the truth is a mystery.

The worship route from Kaga side used to go from Chugu (Yoshinodani Village) and Ozo (Oguchi Village) through Haraidani Valley, a tributary of the Ozogawa River, but the road was closed due to the great flood in 1934, but it was changed to two paths on the ridge along the valley in 1987. Perhaps because the road was abandoned for a long time, no information on kebari that was handed down in Chugu and Ozo areas can be found.

References:

- Tachibana, R. (2005). Trout and Char Fishing at the Sources of the Tadori 1. Annual report of Hakusan Nature Conservation Center. 32, Ishikawa: Hakusan Nature Conservation Center.
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**Hakusan Shiramine area
Ushikubigawa River**



Okumino Itoshiro area



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Okumino Itoshiro area



**Mino Gujo area
Nagaragawa River**