

Suisan (Fisheries) and *Kindai Nihon Gyogyo Keizaishi (Economic History of Fisheries in Modern Japan)*: Important Contributions in Studies of the History of Fisheries in Japan

Nobutake Koiwa

(Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology)

The purpose of this paper is to review several of the most important contributions to the literature of Japanese fisheries. In addition to numerous economic issues, Kazuo Yamaguchi (1907-2000) published numerous books on the history of pre-modern and modern Japanese fisheries. Of these, the most significant was *Suisan (Fisheries)*.¹ The book, published with the help of many young scholars, dealt with many of the issues in modern fisheries that were relevant at the time. Another important contributor was Yukichi Habara (1882-1969) whose books and numerous articles focused on the history of Japanese fisheries from ancient to modern Japan. Habara also collected numerous documents and books on fisheries from all over Japan and this collection is currently held in the Habara Library at Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology. Among his books, *Kindai Nihon Gyogyo Keizaishi (Economic History of Fisheries in Modern Japan – Vol. 1 and 2)*² is the most important as it explores the institutional structure of fisheries in modern Japan, with particular emphasis on the Meiji era.

According to Tetsu Yamaguchi of the Jomin Bunka Kenkyujo (Japan Institute of Culture of Common People) at Kanagawa University, fisheries research in Japan can be divided into three periods.³ The first was during the Meiji era when the modernization of fisheries was being undertaken as a matter of urgency and officials undertook numerous research efforts. The second was pre-WW II when Keizo Shibusawa established the privately owned Attic Museum. The principal aims of the Attic Museum were the collection of tools employed on a daily basis by people, and to undertake research in fisheries history. The museum hired scholars and offered

scholarships for fisheries history research outside the museum. In 1942 the Attic Museum was renamed Jomin Bunka Kenkyujo. Kazuo Yamaguchi was a member of the museum. The third period occurred after WW II and accompanied the numerous institutional reforms to fisheries and many other areas of society imposed by the United States of America. The Japanese government subsequently promulgated new fisheries laws and undertook fisheries research. During the latter two periods, some research into fisheries history was conducted outside the Attic Museum and its affiliated institute. Of these, the contributions of Yukichi Habara were particularly notable. Habara later taught at several universities in Japan, and became a member of board of directors at Jomin Bunka Kenkyujo after WW II. Yamaguchi joined Hokkaido and Tokyo University where he taught economic history. The work of both Kazuo Yamaguchi and Yukichi Habara was undertaken during the second and the third periods of intensive research into fisheries.

1. Kazuo Yamaguchi, *Suisan* (Tokyo: Kojunsha Shuppankyoku, 1965)
2. Yukichi Habara, *Kindai Nihon Gyogyo Keizaishi* (Vol. 1 and 2) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1957)
3. Tetsu Yamaguchi, "Gyogyo ni okeru rekisi to minzoku (History and Folklore in Fisheries)" *Rekisi to Minzoku (History and Folklore)*, 17, 2001.