

Development of Terraced paddy fields and its Adaptation to Disaster in Modern Period, Japan

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The 1st purpose of this study is to clarify the process of terraced paddy fields development. The 2nd purpose is to reexamine the relation between terraced paddy fields development process and disaster. Terraced paddy fields are so historical and cultural landscape. The historical interaction between human activities and natural environment is hidden in the landscape. The terraced paddy fields are also one of such landscape.

This study covers the period from Meiji Era to World War II. And, the area selected for study is a Kinki district and the Chugoku Mountains. This study utilizes cadastre and cadastre map. The social and economic change of the region was clarified using the statistical materials after Meiji period. The more detailed economic activity was asked to people of an area. The actual condition of forest desolation and flood damage was clarified by the administration document.

The result, in the village with terraced paddy fields, the development of terraced paddy fields in modern period advanced with the independence of small landowners and tenancies. And, conversion of farm lands to paddy fields, their livelihood was traditionally based on a combination of rice cultivation and forestry. This is the actual condition of livelihood in the village with terraced paddy fields. However the forest cover was destructed by too much felling. But terraced paddy fields were good use of forest environment. On the other hand, developing and maintaining terraced paddy fields, and the damage caused by flood damage was reduced. The person who owned the paddy field both sloping ground and lowlands had reduced damage.

Developing and maintaining terraced paddy fields reduced the damage caused by disaster. Thus, people adapted the disaster. Also by the existing research, the relation between the development of terraced paddy fields and disaster was pointed out. This research presented it concretely.