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Continuity and Discontinuity seen in the Japanese Anthropological Tradition :
A Case of Dr. UTSURIKAWA Nenozo

This presentation will shed light on the work of Dr. UTSURIKAWA Nenozo to discuss the continuity and discontinuity seen in the Japanese anthropological tradition. He was one of the first Japanese who took the PhD in cultural anthropology at Harvard University.

(1) The Ethnology (Cultural Anthropology) course in Taihoku Imperial University (TIU) was founded in 1928 at Taihoku(modern-day Taipei). It is a landmark in the development of Japanese cultural anthropology because professional education was begun by professional anthropologists in a “Japanese” territory for the first time. The recently found letter to UTSURIKAWA from Mr. MORI Ushinosuke shows a major turning point of the history of anthropology in Taiwan. MORI was the most talented amateur anthropologist, but unfortunately “disappeared” on the ship in 1926. He told UTSURIKAWA in his letter that his role as a researcher would change (or end) after the foundation of the Ethnology course.

(2) UTSURIKAWA returned to Japan in December 1945. However, he couldn’t establish his influence over the Japanese academic world. One reason is that he died suddenly in 1947. Another reason is that his post after the war wasn’t the same as other young scholars. They took their jobs at the Civil Information and Education Section (CIE) under GHQ and absorbed anthropological knowledge from American anthropologists working there and from American academic journals. Although the academic knowledge accumulated by UTSURIKAWA was taken over partly by his student MABUCHI Toichi, cultural anthropology in Japan was newly established by those who studied “general anthropology” at CIE.