

棒の手の歴史と四郷地区棒の手保存会の変遷

The History of Bonote (Hand with Stick) and its Transition in the Shigo area of Toyota City

棒の手の歴史

およそ 460 年前、日本の歴史の中には長い戦乱の時代があり、領主（大名）は領地を争って農民を集め足軽として戦わせました。戦国大名の中でも織田信長はいち早く足軽への戦闘訓練を命じています。足軽が度重なる戦の中で自分の身を守るために武術を身に付けたのが、棒の手の始まりです。

種子島に伝来された火縄銃が未だ普及しない時代であり、足軽はすべてが槍持ち足軽でした。棒と棒で訓練を行い、この「棒の手合わせ」の言葉が「棒の手」の名前の由来だといわれています。やがて長く続いた戦乱の時代が終わわり天下泰平の江戸時代に入ると、棒の手は駄馬（おまんた）の警固隊として、武術の技を神社・仏閣で奉納する演技、見せる演技へと変化させていきました。尾張では熱田神宮・守山竜泉寺、三河では猿投神社が幕府から奉納を許され、全国でも珍しい農民武芸が今日まで豊田市四郷地区にも伝わっています。

江戸中期になると、世情にあわせて行わない時もあったようです。幕府の権勢が衰える幕末には逆に盛んになり、幕末から明治期がもつとも盛んに行われましたが、大正中期に衰退をはじめ、昭和3年の昭和天皇御大典祭、警固まつりを最後に翌年、昭和4年（1929年）に起きた世界大恐慌の混乱で、この地域すべての棒の手が途絶えてしまいます。戦後昭和30年に入ると四郷地区で棒の手復活が叫ばれるようになり、昭和36年の四郷八柱神社の例大祭に於いて先人の情熱と努力により、棒の手の奉納を行うことができました。

現在の棒の手

現在の四郷地区棒の手保存会は、5地区3流派（天道自治区の鎌田流、上原自治区の鎌田流、下古屋自治区の藤枝校藤流、井上自治区の見当流、高町自治区の見当流）で会員数約240名を超える団体であり、5地区で子供の頃に棒の手を体験した子供達は3000名を超え、また地域の多くの方からも伝統民俗芸能の伝承と青少年の育成の場として認識されています。大阪万博、愛知万

博、豊田市民野外劇、愛知県民俗芸能祭、姫路城神原康政サミット、ハヅカリー・スロ/キア遠征など、多数の演技依頼を受けて棒の手を披露し、評価をいただいています。

The History of Bonote:

About 460 years ago, there were regular disturbances throughout Japan due to domestic conflicts. Each feudal lord of an area fought fiercely against other rulers in order to conquer new territories. As a result of this, each lord gathered ordinary farmers to fortify themselves in numbers and strongly encouraged the farmers to learn to fight as soldiers. Lord Nobunaga Oda is considered a pioneer who was said to have been able to transform farmers into the most fearsome of warriors. The farmers had to master a particular method of fighting and defense in order to protect themselves when on the battlefield. This is the origin of the term: Bonote.

By this era, primitive guns had been introduced to Japan but were only sparsely owned, therefore, the main method of fighting, at that time, was with spears and the people trained using sticks (bo). In Japanese, to have a fight with another person translates to: "Te awase." This means putting the hands (te) together. So, combining these words and the weapons the farmers used, these methods of fighting among local farmers became known as, Bonote.

After a while, the era of war ended. In the Edo period, the significance of Bonote changed to a votive offering at local Japanese shrines and temples. Bonote later transformed into a performance used to entertain audiences. The act was performed on a limited scale at shrines or temples, such as the Aisuta shrine, the Moriyama-Ryusen temple in the Owari area, and the Sanage shrine in the Mikawa area, under the permission of the central government. In the Shigo area in Toyota City, near the Sanage shrine, this traditional act is continued to the present day.

In the middle of the Edo period, due to a time of calm, Bonote was ceased, as it became unnecessary. However, by the end of the period it was resumed. The span of time from the end of the Edo period to the Meiji period is considered the "golden age of Bonote." The middle of the Taisho period saw another decline in

the need for Bonote. In 1929, influenced by the world economic crisis, the people in the area discontinued the art. However, after World War II, in the middle of the 1950's, the people in the Shigo area began to desire its revival and at the Shigo Yahashira shrine, people eventually gathered again to perform Bonote as a dedication during rituals.

Bonote today:

There are 5 local associations for the preservation of Bonote in the Shigo area, and 3 styles of the art (the styles include the Kamata style, practiced in the Tendo area; the Kamata style in the Uwahara area, the Fujimaki-Kento style in the Shitagoya area; the Kento style in the Inoue area, and the Kento style in the Takamachi area).

These associations today boast more than 240 members and, as an aggregate, more than 3,000 people take advantage of the opportunity to observe Bonote.

Many people in these areas began to value Bonote as a good way to hand down the tradition to the younger generations, as well as a sound method for the development of the mind and body of the youth.

This association of members has performed Bonote at the Osaka World Expo, the Aichi World Expo, the Outdoor Festival in Toyota City, the Traditional Act Festival in Aichi prefecture, Himeji Castle, and on international stages in Hungary and Slovakia. The art has become very popular among many audiences.

