
工部省と岩倉使節団

The Ministry of Public Works and the Iwakura Mission

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明治4年11月に欧米諸国へ向けて出発した岩倉使節団には、各省の官僚が理事官、その随員として派遣され、省務に関わる諸項目を調査することになっていた。前年閏10月の創設から一年も経たない工部省もまたその例外ではなく、人数は少ないが、肥田為良理事官や大島高任ら数名が欧米各国で調査に当たっていた。それに加えて、周知の通り、伊藤博文工部大輔も副使として使節団幹部に名を連ねていたのがあった。

もともと工部省は、鉄道、電信、造船、灯台、技術者養成など、西洋諸国を念頭に置いて、それに近づくべく事業を着実に実施することを目的に設立された官庁であり、インフラ整備と共に、いわゆる殖産興業を担当した省として位置づけられる。西洋を視察、調査する岩倉使節団とは目指す方向性が同じであったから、工部省にとってもこの使節団の意義は大きかったように見えるが、実際にはどうであったのだろうか。従来、このような検討は必ずしも十分にはなされてこなかったようであり、その点で、工部省研究としても一定の意味を持つものとなるだろう。

本報告では、このような問題意識のもとに、工部省における岩倉使節団の意義について検討を加えたい。すなわち、(1)まずは、当該期の工部省に関する研究成果を踏まえて、岩倉使節団における工部省理事官らによる調査の位置づけを概観する。次に、(2)工部省における使節団理事官らの人選、理事官らによる調査内容について基礎的な考察をする。その上で、(3)その後の工部省、さらには日本全体において、彼らの調

The Iwakura Mission that departed for the United States and Europe in December 1871 was accompanied by officials from each ministry, who, in the capacity of councilors and their aides, were charged with investigating matters relevant to their ministry's jurisdiction. The Ministry of Public Works established the previous December, hardly a year earlier, was no exception. A small number of men from the ministry were appointed to the mission and surveyed conditions in the countries it visited. They included the councilor Hida Tameyoshi and Ōshima Takatō. In addition, Itō Hirobumi, then vice-minister of industry, was, famously, one of the mission's vice ambassadors.

The Ministry of Public Works was established with the mandate of steadily implementing projects in such areas as railways, the telegraph, shipbuilding, lighthouses, and technical training, so that Japan could start catching up with the West. Besides installing infrastructure, its remit can be considered to have included promoting industrial development. Because it had the same aims as did the Iwakura Mission on its observation and study tour of the West, one would assume that the mission was of great importance to it. But was it? This question has not been adequately discussed, and elucidating it is of some importance for the study of the Ministry of Public Works.

This paper addresses itself to the above question by discussing the Iwakura Mission's significance for the Ministry of Public Works. First, drawing on research findings on the ministry during this period, I will sketch what place the survey work conducted by the ministry's representatives occupied in the ministry. Second, I will offer some basic observations on the process of appointing members to the mission from the ministry and

査がいかなる意味を持ったのかについて、知識、人材の面から若干の検討を加える。最後に、(4)工部省と岩倉使節団に関わる今後の研究課題を確認し、可能ならば殖産興業全体と同使節団にも視野を広げて若干の展望を試みたい。

岩倉使節団の意義は諸方面で少なからずあっただろうが、上記テーマに関してはどうであったのか。本報告は、この使節団を歴史的に多角的に捉え直す一材料とするべく、主に工部省との関係から、同使節団の新たな側面を明らかにしようとするものである。

the nature of their survey work. Third, I will briefly examine what significance their survey work subsequently possessed for the ministry itself and for Japan as a whole, in terms of both knowledge and people. Finally, I will identify areas where further research is needed on the Ministry of Public Works and the Iwakura Mission. If possible, I will also take a broader view by offering some tentative observations on the mission as it relates to the Meiji government's promotion of industry in general.

The Iwakura Mission was of considerable significance in many regards. But how significant was it for the Ministry of Public Works? This paper attempts to shed light on a new aspect of the mission, primarily in connection with the Ministry of Public Works, in order to provide material for a historical reassessment of the mission in all its complexity.