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Chapter 7

Social Consciousness of Factors for Success and Sense of Inequality

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Introduction

Past surveys revealed that Ainu people had endured harsh living conditions or experienced discrimination. What of their social consciousness in daily living? To investigate the matter, the current chapter focuses on the social consciousness of Ainu people. This type of awareness serves as a foundation for young people to consider advancing to higher levels of schooling, employment, or life as a whole. To learn about Ainu people's ways of thinking or aspirations, it is imperative to ascertain their levels of social consciousness. Here we examine the matter from the two perspectives of factors for success in society and sense of inequality by age group, employment condition, gender, and social class.

Factors for Success in Society

What factors are considered important for promoting success in society? Table 7-1 summarizes the responses to our question on this topic with several options as answers. More than half of respondents cited personal effort (63.5%), followed by personal ability (37.0%). Those citing luck or chance and good education accounted for approximately 20% (21.0%, 20.3%). Comparison of these results with those from the Seventh World Youth Survey (Table 7-2) indicates that higher percentages of respondents cited personal effort, personal ability, and luck or chance as factors for success in society in the World Youth Survey, but the percentage of those citing good education was higher in the Hokkaido University survey.

Table 7-1 Factors for success in society (up to two answers) Units: No. of people, %

	Family standing and social rank/parents' social status	Personal ability	Personal effort	Good education	Luck or chance	Connections with influential people	Other	No response	Valid cases
Actual number	561	2,109	3,623	1,157	1,197	595	98	716	5,703
Percentage	9.8	37.0	63.5	20.3	21.0	10.4	1.7	12.6	100.0

Table 7-2 Seventh World Youth Survey (2003, Japan) Units: No. of people, %

	Family standing and social rank/parents' social status	Personal ability	Personal effort	Good education	Luck or chance	Don't know/ no response	Valid cases
Percentage	2.8	53.6	75.6	9.1	40.1	2.0	1,042 (100.0)

Next, we look at the figures by gender. Table 7-3 indicates that 72.7% of men and 72.6% of women cited personal effort, followed by personal ability at 42.9% and 41.8%, respectively—there was little difference between men and women. That is, both genders had a strong impression that success in society came from personal effort and personal ability.

Table 7-3 Factors for success in society by gender (up to two answers)

Units: No. of people, %

		Family standing and social rank/parents' social status	Personal ability	Personal effort	Good education	Luck or chance	Connections with influential people	Other	Valid cases
Men	Actual number	256	1,054	1,786	507	617	328	50	2,456
	Percentage	10.4	42.9	72.7	20.6	25.1	13.4	2.0	100.0
Women	Actual number	304	1,055	1,834	648	579	266	48	2,525
	Percentage	12.0	41.8	72.6	25.7	22.9	10.5	1.9	100.0

Note: Excluding those whose answers were unknown and those indicating no response

Now, we consider responses by age group (Table 7-4). Examination of factors for success in society by age group showed significant differences in regard to personal ability, good education, and luck or chance ($P > 0.01$). Personal ability was selected by many respondents aged under 30 and those in the 30–39 age group (46.6%, 48.4%). In contrast, this factor was chosen by less than 40% of those in higher age groups—39.3% of those aged 60–69 and 35.8% of those aged 70 or over.

Those choosing good education made up roughly 20% of all respondents, but the corresponding figure was relatively low among those aged 30–39 (16.5%) and those aged 40–49 (21.7%). On the other hand, those choosing luck or chance accounted for the highest percentage among those aged under 30 at 29.1%, and the percentage dropped in higher age groups. The corresponding figure among those aged 70 or over was 15.2%—nearly half the number for those aged under 30.

These results justify the assumption that respondents selected different factors for success because they saw things differently based on their experience in society rather than because of individual personalities.

Table 7-4 Factors for success in society by age group (up to two answers)

Units: No. of people, %

		Family standing and social rank/parents' social status	Personal ability	Personal effort	Good education	Luck or chance	Connections with influential people	Other	Valid cases
Under 30	Actual number	81	385	589	192	240	81	19	826
	Percentage	9.8	46.6	71.3	23.2	29.1	9.8	2.3	100.0
30-39	Actual number	61	305	463	104	168	86	8	630
	Percentage	9.7	48.4	73.5	16.5	26.7	13.7	1.3	100.0
40-49	Actual number	114	423	752	220	269	125	18	1,016
	Percentage	11.2	41.6	74.0	21.7	26.5	12.3	1.8	100.0
50-59	Actual number	144	493	865	300	278	158	20	1,191
	Percentage	12.1	41.4	72.6	25.2	23.3	13.3	1.7	100.0
60-69	Actual number	84	322	591	220	161	91	20	819
	Percentage	10.3	39.3	72.2	26.9	19.7	11.1	2.4	100.0
70 or over	Actual number	69	160	324	108	68	42	12	447
	Percentage	15.4	35.8	72.5	24.2	15.2	9.4	2.7	100.0

Note: Excluding those whose answers were unknown and those indicating no response

Now, we examine the same factors by employment condition—a qualitative aspect of experience (Table 7-5). The characteristics outlined below were identified in regard to personal effort, personal ability, family standing and social rank/parents' social status, and good education.

On the whole, the factor selected by the largest number of respondents was personal effort. The percentage of those choosing this answer was the highest among proprietors/executives of establishments (79.6%) in all employment conditions, followed by self-employed workers (78.9%). Nearly 80% of respondents in these two employment conditions ascribed success in society to personal effort. However, the corresponding figures among part-time workers, temporary workers, contract employees and seasonal workers (68.9%), and those without employment (71.9%) were around 70%. As for personal ability (chosen by the second largest number of respondents), many proprietors/executives of establishments (47.5%) and regular employees (47.2%) cited this factor, but the percentages of self-employed workers and those without employment who chose it were relatively low (36.7%, 38.8%).

While the percentage of those selecting family standing and social rank/parents' social status was the lowest among proprietors/executives of establishments (6.2%), the corresponding figure was relatively high among part-time workers, temporary workers, contract employees and seasonal workers (13.3%), and those without employment (14.5%).

As for good education, the lowest percentage of those selecting this factor was among proprietors/executives of establishments (13.6%), and the second lowest was among family employees (16.5%). On the other hand, the highest percentage of those choosing it was among students (36.4%) followed by those without employment (28.3%).

These results indicate two trends. First of all, the factors of personal effort and personal ability were selected by a large number of respondents with stable employment conditions (such as proprietors/executives of establishments) but by only a small number of those with unstable employment conditions (such as part-time and temporary workers and those without employment). The second trend was the opposite of the first one: the factors of family standing and social rank/parents' social status and good education were selected by a large percentage of those without employment and part-time and temporary workers, but by a small percentage of proprietors/executives of establishments and self-employed workers. That is, those in stable positions in society ascribed their success to their ability and effort, whereas those in unstable positions attributed success not to personal effort but to family standing and social rank, parents' social status or educational background. This is also apparent from the different trends in answers by household income (Table 7-6). That is, more than 70% of respondents replied that personal effort was important to succeed in society in all four household income brackets, but the number of those valuing personal effort gradually increased among those with higher incomes. Among respondents with annual incomes of under 3 million yen, 70.5% chose personal effort, and this figure increased to 78.8% among those with annual incomes of 9 million yen or over. Conversely, the number of those citing good education decreased among respondents with higher annual incomes.

Table 7-5 Factors for success in society by employment condition (up to two answers)

Units: No. of people, %

		Family standing and social rank/parents' social status	Personal ability	Personal effort	Good education	Luck or chance	Connections with influential people	Other	Valid cases
Proprietors/executives of establishments	Actual number	10	77	129	22	40	33	3	162
	Percentage	6.2	47.5	79.6	13.6	24.7	20.4	1.9	100.0
Regular employees	Actual number	115	552	863	272	309	130	26	1,169
	Percentage	9.8	47.2	73.8	23.3	26.4	11.1	2.2	100.0
Part-time and temporary workers	Actual number	137	455	712	256	256	133	14	1,033
	Percentage	13.3	44.0	68.9	24.8	24.8	12.9	1.4	100.0
Self-employed workers	Actual number	52	214	460	102	164	82	9	583
	Percentage	8.9	36.7	78.9	17.5	28.1	14.1	1.5	100.0
Family employees	Actual number	45	171	307	70	92	46	8	423
	Percentage	10.6	40.4	72.6	16.5	21.7	10.9	1.9	100.0
Other	Actual number	4	19	32	9	11	2	2	45
	Percentage	8.9	42.2	71.1	20.0	24.4	4.4	4.4	100.0
Unemployed	Actual number	121	324	600	236	174	98	18	835
	Percentage	14.5	38.8	71.9	28.3	20.8	11.7	2.2	100.0
Students (currently enrolled)	Actual number	5	35	55	28	20	7	3	77
	Percentage	6.5	45.5	71.4	36.4	26.0	9.1	3.9	100.0

Note: Excluding those whose answers were unknown and those indicating no response

Table 7-6 Factors for success in society by annual household income (up to two answers)

Units: No. of people, %

		Family standing and social rank/parents' social status	Personal ability	Personal effort	Good education	Luck or chance	Connections with influential people	Other	Valid cases
0 – under 3 million yen	Actual number	253	793	1,374	507	431	238	45	1,950
	Percentage	13.0	40.7	70.5	26.0	22.1	12.2	2.3	100.0
3 million – under 6 million yen	Actual number	192	800	1,261	408	433	223	37	1,755
	Percentage	10.9	45.6	71.9	23.2	24.7	12.7	2.1	100.0
6 million – under 9 million yen	Actual number	36	230	387	96	120	55	6	497
	Percentage	7.2	46.3	77.9	19.3	24.1	11.1	1.2	100.0
9 million yen or over	Actual number	36	158	298	50	107	40	5	378
	Percentage	9.5	41.8	78.8	13.2	28.3	10.6	1.3	100.0

Note: Excluding those whose answers were unknown and those indicating no response

Existence of Inequality

Above, we examined how opinions regarding factors considered important to succeed in society were affected by age, present employment condition, and household income; and in particular, how respondents tended to choose different factors depending on whether their present employment condition was stable or unstable. Then, how strongly do Ainu people feel a sense of inequity? It is clear that a gap between sense of fairness and recognition of the current state of affairs is responsible for a stronger sense of injustice (Mabuchi 2000). Since the largest number of respondents chose personal effort as a factor for success in society, it can be said that they believed it fair for those making more effort, to succeed in society. If this is the case, then they may conversely feel a sense of discrimination when things do not go smoothly despite their efforts. Now, to what do Ainu people attribute such factors of injustice?

The largest combined number of those answering that they felt a strong sense or some sense of inequality was that of respondents who chose discrimination arising from educational background (66.4%), followed by discrimination arising from income/assets (61.8%), discrimination arising from occupation (60.0%), and discrimination arising from racial/ethnic background (57.4%) (Table 7-7).

For those replying that they felt no sense of inequality, the smallest percentage was that of respondents choosing educational background, followed by income/assets, occupation, and racial/ethnic background.

As such, it was clarified that the sense of inequality usually felt by Ainu people can be ascribed to capital disparities such as educational background, income and assets, as well as to attributes such as racial/ethnic background.

Table 7-7 Sense of inequality

Units: No. of people, %

		Strong	Some	None	Don't know	No response	Total
Inequality arising from gender	Actual number	920	2,259	859	570	1,095	5,703
	Percentage	16.1	39.6	15.1	10.0	19.2	100.0
Inequality arising from educational background	Actual number	1,904	1,883	477	465	974	5,703
	Percentage	33.4	33.0	8.4	8.2	17.1	100.0
Inequality arising from occupation	Actual number	1,464	1,958	678	529	1,074	5,703
	Percentage	25.7	34.3	11.9	9.3	18.8	100.0
Inequality arising from income/assets	Actual number	1,847	1,679	545	573	1,059	5,703
	Percentage	32.4	29.4	9.6	10.0	18.6	100.0
Inequality arising from family standing/social rank	Actual number	1,328	1,757	890	620	1,108	5,703
	Percentage	23.3	30.8	15.6	10.9	19.4	100.0
Inequality arising from racial/ethnic background	Actual number	1,443	1,832	818	631	979	5,703
	Percentage	25.3	32.1	14.3	11.1	17.2	100.0

Here, we examine trends in answers from men and women. The percentage of those indicating that they felt a great sense of inequality was higher among women for all the six factors of gender, educational background, occupation, income/assets, family standing/social rank, and racial/ethnic background (Table 7-8). When the percentages of those indicating a great sense or some sense of discrimination were combined, the figure was also higher among women. It can therefore be said that more women than men on the whole felt a stronger sense of inequality. Examination of the percentages for each factor indicates that the largest gap between men and women was for inequality arising from gender. Those answering that they felt a great sense or some sense of discrimination accounted for 63.7% among men and 73.9% among women—a difference of approximately 10 percentage points. This means that women were more strongly conscious than men with regard to gender issues—the issues over which women experienced a sense of unfairness in terms of educational achievement, employment, promotion in rank, income and marriage because they are women, irrespective of their Ainu heritage.

Table 7-8 Sense of inequality by gender

Units: No. of people, %

			Strong	Some	None	Don't know	Total
Gender	Men	Actual number	357	1,056	513	291	2,217
		Percentage	16.1	47.6	23.1	13.1	100.0
	Women	Actual number	562	1,203	346	278	2,389
		Percentage	23.5	50.4	14.5	11.6	100.0
Educational background	Men	Actual number	884	904	276	223	2,287
		Percentage	38.7	39.5	12.1	9.8	100.0
	Women	Actual number	1,019	979	201	241	2,440
		Percentage	41.8	40.1	8.2	9.9	100.0
Occupation	Men	Actual number	683	952	356	248	2,239
		Percentage	30.5	42.5	15.9	11.1	100.0
	Women	Actual number	780	1,006	322	280	2,388
		Percentage	32.7	42.1	13.5	11.7	100.0
Income/assets	Men	Actual number	873	819	290	259	2,241
		Percentage	39.0	36.5	12.9	11.6	100.0
	Women	Actual number	973	860	255	313	2,401
		Percentage	40.5	35.8	10.6	13.0	100.0
Family standing/social rank	Men	Actual number	614	816	503	293	2,226
		Percentage	27.6	36.7	22.6	13.2	100.0
	Women	Actual number	712	941	387	326	2,366
		Percentage	30.1	39.8	16.4	13.8	100.0
Racial/ethnic background	Men	Actual number	653	875	460	296	2,284
		Percentage	28.6	38.3	20.1	13.0	100.0
	Women	Actual number	787	957	358	334	2,436
		Percentage	32.3	39.3	14.7	13.7	100.0

Note: Excluding those whose answers were unknown and those indicating no response

Next, we look at differences in perceptions of inequality by employment condition. Table 7-9 compares the combined number of respondents answering that they felt a great sense or some sense of unfairness for each factor. As a whole, the numbers among self-employed workers, family employees, and students were relatively low compared with those in other groups. That is, workers belonging to organizations, such as proprietors/executives of establishments, regular employees, part-time and temporary workers, felt a greater sense of inequality.

By way of example, let us consider the strong sense of inequality felt by Ainu people in regard to educational background from the viewpoint of employment condition. The combined number of those indicating a great sense or some sense of discrimination arising from educational background exceeded 80% among proprietors/executives of establishments, regular employees, and part-time/temporary workers. This percentage was nearly 10 points lower among students, family employees, and self-employed workers. The number among students was relatively small because they had not yet worked in the real world and had not actually felt a sense of inequality. In addition, self-employed workers and family employees were considered to have had few opportunities to feel disadvantaged over differences in educational background. On the other hand, it is assumed that proprietors/executives of establishments had often experienced cases in which their educational background was highlighted because of their high social rank. It is also likely that many regular employees had had difficulties in employment because of their educational background. Furthermore, it is assumed that part-time and temporary workers ascribed their unstable employment conditions to their educational background.

The extent of inequality felt by respondents also varied with household income. A trend was seen in which those with higher household incomes showed a lower overall percentage in terms of feeling a sense of injustice (Table 7-10). In the income bracket of 9 million yen or over, those who answered that they felt no sense of discrimination stood out, indicating that those with more resources felt a weaker sense of unfairness.

Differences were also seen among different age groups (Table 7-11). The combined number of those indicating that they felt a great sense or some sense of unfairness was the highest among those aged 40-49 for the five factors of gender, educational background, occupation, income/assets, and family standing/social rank. The second highest number was for the age group either before or after this one. Those aged 40-49 felt a strong sense of unfairness because they were in the prime of their working lives and were therefore supporting society and had many things to feel inequality about. Meanwhile, those aged under 30 had had little social experience away from their families, thereby being spared from incidents that might give them a strong sense of injustice.

It should be noted that the number of respondents who indicated a sense of injustice arising from racial/ethnic background, unlike the other five factors, was the highest among those aged 60-69. This number was lower among those in younger generations, suggesting that the situation regarding ethnic discrimination in society had gradually improved.

Table 7-9 Sense of inequality by employment condition (those indicating a strong sense or some sense of unfairness)

Units: No. of people, %

		Proprietors/ executives of establish- ments	Regular employees	Part-time and temporary workers	Self- employed workers	Family employees	Other	Unemployed	Students (currently enrolled)
Inequality arising from gender	Actual number	96	797	725	317	264	32	537	52
	Percentage	67.2	70.9	74.5	60.6	66.0	69.6	67.8	67.6
Inequality arising from educational background	Actual number	122	926	833	413	304	36	638	57
	Percentage	84.1	80.9	84.0	76.8	75.2	76.6	78.7	74.1
Inequality arising from occupation	Actual number	109	860	781	358	270	37	572	51
	Percentage	76.8	76.2	79.3	68.2	67.3	82.2	71.9	66.3
Inequality arising from income/assets	Actual number	111	868	776	391	288	36	595	50
	Percentage	78.1	76.6	79.4	74.7	71.7	81.9	75.0	65.8
Inequality arising from family standing /social rank	Actual number	96	749	704	323	247	33	537	46
	Percentage	68.0	66.6	72.6	61.9	62.3	71.7	68.2	60.5
Inequality arising from racial/ethnic background	Actual number	107	762	732	358	250	29	588	47
	Percentage	72.2	67.0	74.6	66.4	61.9	61.7	72.2	60.3

Note: Excluding those whose answers were unknown and those indicating no response

Table 7-10 Sense of inequality by annual household income

Units: No. of people, %

			Strong	Some	None	Don't know	Total
Inequality arising from gender	0 – under 3 million yen	Actual number	411	778	326	232	1,747
		Percentage	23.5	44.5	18.7	13.3	100.0
	3 million – under 6 million yen	Actual number	302	901	302	166	1,671
		Percentage	18.1	53.9	18.1	9.9	100.0
	6 million – under 9 million yen	Actual number	85	233	79	76	473
		Percentage	18.0	49.3	16.7	16.1	100.0
	9 million yen or over	Actual number	59	170	89	48	366
		Percentage	16.1	46.4	24.3	13.1	100.0
Inequality arising from educational background	0 – under 3 million yen	Actual number	775	661	177	187	1,800
		Percentage	43.1	36.7	9.8	10.4	100.0
	3 million – under 6 million yen	Actual number	702	731	147	127	1,707
		Percentage	41.1	42.8	8.6	7.4	100.0
	6 million – under 9 million yen	Actual number	168	199	55	58	480
		Percentage	35.0	41.5	11.5	12.1	100.0
	9 million yen or over	Actual number	127	137	58	50	372
		Percentage	34.1	36.8	15.6	13.4	100.0
Inequality arising from occupation	0 – under 3 million yen	Actual number	587	712	246	213	1,758
		Percentage	33.4	40.5	14.0	12.1	100.0
	3 million – under 6 million yen	Actual number	555	753	223	148	1,679
		Percentage	33.1	44.8	13.3	8.8	100.0
	6 million – under 9 million yen	Actual number	115	208	78	68	469
		Percentage	24.5	44.3	16.6	14.5	100.0
	9 million yen or over	Actual number	98	136	81	50	365
		Percentage	26.8	37.3	22.2	13.7	100.0
Inequality arising from income/assets	0 – under 3 million yen	Actual number	765	562	195	237	1,759
		Percentage	43.5	31.9	11.1	13.5	100.0
	3 million – under 6 million yen	Actual number	675	666	172	162	1,675
		Percentage	40.3	39.8	10.3	9.7	100.0
	6 million – under 9 million yen	Actual number	156	187	64	69	476
		Percentage	32.8	39.3	13.4	14.5	100.0
	9 million yen or over	Actual number	114	126	75	54	369
		Percentage	30.9	34.1	20.3	14.6	100.0
Inequality arising from family standing/social rank	0 – under 3 million yen	Actual number	571	624	298	251	1,744
		Percentage	32.7	35.8	17.1	14.4	100.0
	3 million – under 6 million yen	Actual number	487	698	300	182	1,667
		Percentage	29.2	41.9	18.0	10.9	100.0
	6 million – under 9 million yen	Actual number	109	179	101	82	471
		Percentage	23.1	38.0	21.4	17.4	100.0
	9 million yen or over	Actual number	88	104	116	55	363
		Percentage	24.2	28.7	32.0	15.2	100.0
Inequality arising from racial/ethnic background	0 – under 3 million yen	Actual number	670	632	261	239	1,802
		Percentage	37.2	35.1	14.5	13.3	100.0
	3 million – under 6 million yen	Actual number	469	735	301	196	1,701
		Percentage	27.6	43.2	17.7	11.5	100.0
	6 million – under 9 million yen	Actual number	105	203	88	86	482
		Percentage	21.8	42.1	18.3	17.8	100.0
	9 million yen or over	Actual number	89	121	102	56	368
		Percentage	24.2	32.9	27.7	15.2	100.0

Note: Excluding those whose answers were unknown and those indicating no response

Table 7-11 Sense of inequality by age group (those indicating a strong sense or some sense of unfairness) Units: No. of people, %

		Under 30	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70 or over
Inequality arising from gender	Actual number	519	431	725	788	451	230
	Percentage	64.9	70.0	74.1	70.9	66.9	60.7
Inequality arising from educational background	Actual number	583	478	860	959	576	289
	Percentage	72.4	77.2	86.2	84.0	80.2	73.0
Inequality arising from occupation	Actual number	541	459	776	860	500	247
	Percentage	67.4	74.3	78.7	77.3	73.3	65.0
Inequality arising from income/assets	Actual number	538	460	789	894	522	284
	Percentage	67.5	74.3	80.4	79.9	75.7	73.4
Inequality arising from family standing/social rank	Actual number	477	409	697	768	460	237
	Percentage	59.9	66.5	70.9	69.6	68.2	63.4
Inequality arising from racial/ethnic background	Actual number	475	398	714	819	543	287
	Percentage	59.4	64.2	71.6	72.7	75.5	70.2

Note: Excluding those whose answers were unknown and those indicating no response

Summary

Here we have examined the social consciousness of Ainu people.

First of all, for the question about factors for success in society, respondents with and without stable positions in society tended to choose different factors. The former—those in stable conditions—asccribed success to personal ability and effort, whereas the latter attributed it to family standing and social rank/parents' social status, and good education.

Next, respondents were asked if they felt a sense of inequality. The results revealed that, while the sense of inequality arising from capital disparities (such as educational background and income/assets) was strong, there was also a deep-rooted sense of unfairness stemming from racial/ethnic background factors. Although the presence of discrimination issues was expected, the survey revealed that more than half of respondents felt a sense of injustice arising from these factors. This is a state of affairs that cannot be overlooked. Furthermore, examination of this sense of inequality by gender, employment condition, income, and age group revealed various trends. As a rough summary, it can be said that women, those in unstable employment, those with low annual household incomes, and those middle-aged or older felt a strong sense of unfairness.

The investigation of Ainu people's social consciousness thus revealed two types—a consciousness that was no different from that of Wajin, and another that was forced on them because of their Ainu heritage. It is reasonable to think that if they consider their unstable living conditions inevitable due to the continuation of disparities, the Ainu sense of inequality will manifest itself in different forms.

References

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