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Final Chapter

Survey Report Summary

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This report has examined the living conditions of the Ainu and their related awareness based on the results of a quantitative survey. This chapter aims to summarize the report by giving a brief rundown of matters that the survey highlighted. Issues to be examined in depth in the future will also be outlined.

Characteristics of Survey Subjects, Ainu Heritage, and Ethnic Consciousness

The examination of the survey subjects' characteristics in Chapter 1 produced almost the same results as those of the Hokkaido Ainu Living Conditions Survey in 2006: subjects living in Iburi, Hidaka, and Ishikari Subprefectures accounted for approximately 70% of all respondents. It was confirmed once again that many Ainu people lived in these regions.

The number of family members indicated the same trend as that seen in the Hokkaido government survey of 2006, but differed slightly from that of the Population Census in 2005 in that there were fewer one-person households and a higher number with five or more family members.

In regard to population distribution by age group based on household questionnaires, respondents in their fifties made up the highest percentage. The average age was 41.5 years, which was slightly younger than the corresponding figures in the Hokkaido government survey (2006) and the Population Census (2005).

The ratio of men to women was roughly 50:50 both for household and individual questionnaires, and little gender gap was observed. With regard to birthplaces, 90% of respondents were born in Hokkaido. Many lived in Sapporo, but only a few cited it as their birthplace. The population of Sapporo as a whole had increased because people relocated there from across the prefecture due to professional opportunities and other factors. Ainu people appear to have followed this movement.

With regard to Ainu people's places of residence, one researcher has suggested that a phenomenon of distinct residential segregation is seen between non-Ainu Japanese people in Ishikari and Kamikawa Subprefectures, and Ainu people in Hidaka and Iburi Subprefectures based on differences in distribution between the Hokkaido population overall and the Ainu population by Subprefecture (Matsumoto 2001:150). While it is true that this survey also confirmed the presence of many Ainu residents in Iburi and Hidaka as opposed to the small populations indicated by the Hokkaido data, many people lived in locations other than their birthplaces, and Ainu people also exhibited population movement toward Sapporo in the same way as the overall Hokkaido population. Many non-Ainu Japanese people also lived in areas that were home to significant numbers of Ainu residents. Considering these facts, it may be an exaggeration to say that residential segregation is taking place. Discussions on such segregation would require clarification of social relations/exchanges with non-Ainu Japanese people in specific communities, including those with many Ainu residents.

Chapter 2 highlighted Ainu heritage and ethnic consciousness.

With regard to heritage, the survey confirmed advanced mixed parentage with Wajin, as has already been pointed out. Respondents whose parents were both Ainu descendants made up less than 20% of the total. It was

also confirmed that many respondents had mixed parentage not only in their own generations but also in those of their parents and grandparents.¹

Naturally, the patterns and significance of mixed parentage progression seemed to vary from generation to generation. At least two types of mixed parentage are conceivable: one resulting from marriage with Wajin, and the other stemming from the adoption of Wajin children by Ainu parents. An increasing number of Ainu people appear to have married Wajin in more recent years, but this type of adoption is thought to have taken place for a long time.

In fact, there were many cases of such Wajin adoption from around 1887, and some suggest that one of the motives for this was the promotion of mixed parentage (i.e., biological assimilation) (Baba 1972). This is because adopted Wajin would be raised as Ainu children and marry Ainu. However, there is also another school of thought that suggests Ainu originally engaged in adoption as a customary practice based on the concept of mutual assistance. As an extension of this idea, they adopted children of impoverished Wajin (including abandoned children) who settled in Hokkaido for land-development purposes in the Meiji era and thereafter, as well as children born out of wedlock with male Wajin as fathers (Yoshida 1996). Based on this view, the Ainu did not adopt Wajin for the purpose of promoting mixed parentage; rather, the adoption of Wajin resulted in advanced mixed parentage.

Either way, mixed parentage increased over a long period of time from the Meiji era onward, and the results of this survey gave a glimpse of the phenomenon. Future research challenges will include more in-depth clarification of the actual situation in this regard.

As for ethnic consciousness, only about 10% of respondents said they felt constantly aware of their Ainu heritage, with nearly half indicating that they were usually not particularly aware of their ethnicity at all. In regard to future lifestyles, less than 20% said that they wanted to live positively as Ainu. This trend showing reduced awareness of Ainu status was conspicuous among those under 30.

However, this weaker ethnic consciousness cannot be viewed simply as a manifestation of passive consciousness or taken as an attempt to conceal ethnicity. Rather, it seems possible that the phenomenon may be a manifestation of skepticism toward ethnicity-based distinction or the result of positive consciousness among individuals identifying themselves as global citizens.

From these results, it is difficult to judge whether or not those in younger generations will feel less and less aware of their Ainu heritage in the future because ethnic consciousness is formed in society. Unlike before, it is now becoming easier for Ainu people to express their Ainu heritage and feel proud of it. In the Diet, the Prime Minister has formally recognized the Ainu as an indigenous people, and various support measures for them are now being explored. It is also true that future efforts to hand down ethnic consciousness from generation to generation may have a significant impact. Accordingly, we cannot deny the possibility that ethnic consciousness will be aroused and rebuilt among those belonging to younger generations.

It was furthermore not possible from the results of this survey to show that all those in older generations had the same ethnic consciousness. Rather, the results suggested that ethnic consciousness varied even among individuals in more mature age groups.

A column was also included on the questionnaire for respondents to freely indicate their opinions and impressions of the survey, and a wide variety of sentiments were expressed indicating that Ainu people had a range of views, including those on ethnic consciousness. What stood out the most among the various opinions and impressions about ethnic consciousness was the expression of views emphasizing a wide gap in awareness

between ordinary Ainu people and Ainu people promoting social movements. They included widespread criticism and opinions expressing feelings of discomfort about approaches to social movements and the individuals who promote them. Many respondents also indicated that they had never been particularly conscious of their Ainu heritage. Conversely, many also earnestly said that Ainu ethnic consciousness was indelibly marked in their hearts because of bullying by Wajin. In addition, a significant number of respondents expressed complex feelings from having been bullied not by Wajin but by Ainu people themselves. Some were also not Ainu but had an Ainu spouse, and were willing to learn Ainu culture as the Ainu way of thinking had resonated with them.

Attempts had previously been made to schematically express the diversity of Ainu people by identifying two schools of opposing thought among them: ethnically conscious Ainu vs. ethnically unaware Ainu, and those critical of using Ainu culture as a commercial tourism resource vs. those not critical (Ito 1996). However, the opinions and impressions expressed by this survey's respondents clearly show that the ethnic consciousness of Ainu people has a more complex structure.²

This diversity of ethnic consciousness appears to have been created against the backdrop of government policies for the Ainu, relations with non-Ainu Japanese people, ways to promote social movements as Ainu people, and the like. Given this situation, there seems to be a need for more detailed study on diverse ethnic consciousness and related changes as well as the background involved.

Labor, Social Welfare, Education, and Health

Chapters 3 and 4 examine labor, income, and social welfare.

In this survey, employment conditions with high percentages among Ainu people were regular employees, part-time and temporary workers, self-employed workers, and family employees. However, the percentage of regular employees was lower than the corresponding figure from the Hokkaido data, and the percentages of unstable employment conditions (such as part-time and temporary workers and family employees) were high. In terms of occupation, the percentages of agriculture, forestry, and fisheries workers, craftspeople, manufacturing workers, and other related workers, and service workers were high, while in terms of employee numbers, many respondents were working for small-scale establishments. While 26.2% in Hokkaido as a whole were working for small-scale establishments with fewer than 10 employees, the corresponding figure among Ainu people was as high as 45.9%.

When these employment conditions, occupation, and employee numbers were combined, individual incomes were naturally low. Even regular employees had low levels of income if the companies they worked for were small. For those who work for large companies with more than 1,000 employees, those in non-permanent positions could not expect high incomes. Low individual incomes led to low annual household incomes, and both the individual and household incomes of respondents were noticeably lower than those shown by the Hokkaido data. While the average annual household income in Hokkaido was 4.406 million yen, that of Ainu people was only 3.692 million yen.

The ratio of public assistance recipients was also significantly higher among Ainu people than in Hokkaido as a whole (5.2% among the Ainu as opposed to 3.9% in Hokkaido). This number was much higher than the 3.8% figure found from the Hokkaido Ainu Living Conditions Survey of 2006. In particular, female-headed Ainu households tended to be facing dire financial straits, with a total of 20% of such households receiving public assistance. The breakdown by region indicated that the ratio was high in Tokachi Subprefecture.

Considering these outcomes, it must be concluded that the Ainu education and livelihood support programs

implemented by the Hokkaido government based on the Hokkaido Utari Welfare Measures and the Measures to Promote the Improvement of Ainu Living Standards have failed to fill the gap in living standards between the Ainu and residents of Hokkaido as a whole. This underlines the need for an all-out examination of why such disparities have been left unbridged. The absence of such an investigation may result in low prospects for Ainu living standard improvement as well as the repetition of government policies with no clear effects.

Chapter 5 highlighted the situation regarding education.

There was a significant difference between the educational backgrounds of Ainu people and those of non-Ainu Japanese people. Although respondents in younger generations had gone on to higher levels of education, a discrepancy from the educational paths of non-Ainu Japanese people remained. Even among respondents aged under 30, those going on to university accounted for only 20.2%. The fact that the percentage of university entrants surpassed 50% in Japan as a whole in 2005 brings this gap into sharp relief. The high percentages of high school and university dropouts also stood out,³ and financial difficulties faced by Ainu households underpinned this situation. In fact, most of those who had to give up on the idea of going on to higher levels of schooling cited financial constraints as the reason.

Educational background significantly affects the average individual annual income - this is a fact common to all rather than being limited to Ainu people. Low levels of educational attainment in the Ainu population are believed to be a major factor contributing to low individual and household incomes, as has previously been pointed out. In turn, financially constrained household environments become detrimental to higher levels of educational achievement, which then leads to financial difficulties. It can be said that this pattern has been repeated from generation to generation, with poverty and poor education tending to be reproduced. In this regard, there is a need for measures to sever this vicious cycle by improving conditions to ensure that Ainu people can receive better education.

However, gaps in academic background and educational achievement have also been highlighted among non-Ainu Japanese people as a problem related to gaps in academic background between social classes. Various causes have been pointed to, including economic and cultural factors as well as general awareness of education and academic backgrounds (Onai 2005:174-94). Accordingly, there is a need to approach issues related to academic background and educational achievement among Ainu people from various angles.

In this regard, an important point to consider is whether issues with academic background and educational achievement among Ainu people are unique to them, or whether they will be resolved if generally discussed issues of disparity among social classes are resolved, as is the case with discussion over issues related to academic background and educational achievement among children in dowa (assimilation) districts (Onai ed. 2009:80-1).

Chapter 6 reported on health risk factors.

The results clarified that the percentage of Ainu people habitually enjoying smoking, drinking, and gambling was higher than the corresponding figures obtained from general national and prefectural surveys.

In other countries, it has been pointed out that indigenous populations tend to have a high number of individuals with alcohol and gambling dependence issues.⁴ Although this survey did not investigate the presence or absence of dependence, or examine the reasons for the high percentages of respondents enjoying smoking, drinking, and gambling, it was confirmed that health care must be viewed as an important consideration.

It should be added that impressions of this survey given by respondents included views that Ainu people should refrain from heavy drinking. Such responses stated that many Ainu people regrettably used to become addicted to alcohol, neglecting their children's education and their families and lacking a sense of responsibility as

members of society, and that their past still hinders them from fully restoring their rights as an indigenous people.⁵

On the other hand, the percentage of Ainu people undergoing health checkups—an important health-care factor—showed little difference from the national average. However, it was confirmed that in some regions (e.g., Kamikawa, Soya, and Abashiri Subprefectures), the percentages of health care recipients were low, although the numbers of habitual smokers and drinkers were not particularly low. In these regions, there is a particular need to investigate health conditions.

Social Consciousness, Religious Consciousness, and Policy Proposals

Chapter 7 examined the social consciousness of Ainu people from the two perspectives of factors for success and sense of inequality.

The investigation of Ainu social consciousness revealed two types—a consciousness that was no different from that of non-Ainu Japanese people, and another that was forced on them because of their Ainu heritage.

Like non-Ainu Japanese people, many respondents believed that success in society came from personal effort and personal ability, and the number of those choosing family standing and social rank/parents' social status, which was influenced by Ainu heritage, was small. Moreover, respondents with and without stable positions in society tended to choose different factors. The former—those in stable conditions—ascribed success to personal ability and effort, whereas the latter attributed it to family standing and social rank/parents' social status and good education.

On the other hand, when respondents were asked whether they felt a sense of unfairness, their answers revealed that, while such a sense arising from capital disparities (such as educational background and income/assets) was strong, there was also a deep-rooted sense of injustice stemming from racial/ethnic background factors. Women, those in unstable employment, those with low annual household incomes, and people middle-aged or older felt a strong sense of unfairness.

It was thus difficult to shed light on the identity of Ainu people other than pinpointing a sense of inequality arising from racial/ethnic background. The same phenomenon was found for factors for success and sense of inequality in the form of Ainu people feeling less aware of their ethnicity and having diverse levels of related awareness. However, the sense of discrimination arising from racial/ethnic background, which was unique to Ainu people, can also be considered to form the basis of other aspects of social consciousness. If this is the case, then this sense can be viewed as part of the Ainu identity in terms of social consciousness. It can therefore be thought that in-depth studies of relations between the sense of inequality arising from racial/ethnic background and other aspects of social consciousness might yield significant results.

Chapter 8 highlighted religious consciousness and challenges related to cultural transmission.

It was learned that the largest number of respondents cited Buddhism as their household religion, followed by those without particular religious beliefs. Respondents choosing these two answers accounted for 80% of the total. Among new religions, Soka Gakkai members accounted for the largest percentage. Based on these numbers, it can safely be said that the religious consciousness of Ainu people was similar to that of Japanese people as a whole.

As for Ainu people's traditional views of religion and religious rituals, only a fraction of the population practiced them, and levels of recognition of them as past events were also low. It was learned that indigenous peoples do not necessarily preserve traditional ethnic culture and religious culture in their original forms. Although those learning traditional culture again, and those willing to learn, clearly did not constitute the majority, respondents commonly expressed an interest in finding *Ainu puri* (Ainuness) in coexistence with nature, which

showed a glimpse of the Ainu spirit in traditional culture.

However, it is possibly not necessarily to clarify the process behind the formation of *Ainu puri*, on which respondents were asked to elaborate. There is a need to clarify in future studies whether they acquired *Ainu puri* through their daily lives or through conscious educational efforts by way of communication among them, or alternatively whether it came from the influence of various media.

Chapter 9 outlined Ainu policies and measures that have been implemented in Hokkaido and looked back on policy proposals made by Ainu people, then summarized the characteristics of the survey outcomes.

The results indicated that policy wishes expressed by many respondents included the expansion of support for improving academic achievement, the creation of a society free of discrimination and with respect for human rights, the expansion of employment measures, and the introduction of Ainu language and Ainu culture in school education. These items had always ranked highly in organized policy proposals by Ainu people, and it was clarified that they were also common demands among the ordinary Ainu population.

In the question at issue, we included policy proposals concerning the restoration of various rights that Ainu people had been previously deprived of, such as those related to land and traditional fishing methods. Nevertheless, the number of respondents supporting these policy proposals was unexpectedly small. On one hand, it can be thought that this resulted from weaker consciousness of historical issues combined with weaker levels of ethnic consciousness. On the other hand, however, since respondents' concerns tended to focus on extrication from impoverished Ainu lifestyles, proposals that were not directly related to Ainu people may not have drawn attention. As efforts to support Ainu people gather momentum in society, more careful examination of these policy proposals will be necessary when formulating related measures

Conclusion

A variety of matters were thus highlighted as a result of this survey. Some of them had previously attracted less attention, and the outcomes also reconfirmed other matters that had already been pointed out. However, the most important aspect was that many issues needing to be investigated on a deeper level had surfaced in regard to actual living conditions and consciousness among present-day Ainu people as well as their relations with society.

These issues are significant when we consider support measures for Ainu people, as they indicate that some problems cannot be resolved simply by extending or expanding conventional support measures. At the same time, the various problems highlighted by this survey have also produced targets for research. Hence, they should be carefully handled for the purpose of future research development.⁶

To conclude this report, it can be said that the survey's greatest contribution is the elucidation of many issues to be addressed in relation to actual problems as well as the identification of related research challenges.

Notes

- 1) The Survey on Former Aborigines published by the Hokkaido government in 1922 showed that of 18,821 Ainu people as of December 31, 1916, 13,557 (72.0%) were pure-blooded Ainu, 4,550 (24.2%) were of mixed parentage, and 714 (3.8%) were Wajin (Hokkaido Government 1922: 114-5).
- 2) Some respondents expressed criticism of this survey in response to the question asking for their impressions of it. One indicated a belief that conducting a survey only among members of the Hokkaido Utari Association would not clarify the actual situation. Another had taken part in many such surveys, but the fact that livelihoods had never become easier as a result made the respondent skeptical about how this survey might be helpful. We plan to use these criticisms and questions in future investigative research activities.
- 3) Ayumi Watarai also pointed out the low percentages of those going on to university and the high percentages of high school and university dropouts (Watarai 2007).
- 4) Examples include alcohol dependence among Native Americans and First Nations in Canada (Brian 1994), alcohol abuse problems among Indigenous Australians (Aborigines), Maori and Native Americans (Saggers and Gray 1998), and dependence on alcohol, drugs, and gambling among Native Americans (French 2000). In past research, biological, cultural, political, economic, and other factors have been pointed out as background matters related to alcohol dependence and other addictions (Saggers and Gray 1998: 68-88).
- 5) Heavy drinking among Ainu people has been pointed out since the Meiji era (1868 to 1912). Representative assertions of this include one by teacher training college vice-principal Eitaro Iwatani (Oguma 1998: 61-2).
- 6) To investigate these issues on a deeper level, we interviewed a total of 114 Ainu residents of Sapporo and Mukawa in November 2009. The results will be sorted and analyzed for announcement in due course.

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